

Committee on the Application of Standards

Date: 19 May 2025

Governments appearing on the preliminary list of individual cases have the opportunity, if they so wish, to supply on a purely voluntary basis, written information before 19 May 2025.

▶ Information on the application of ratified Conventions supplied by governments on the preliminary list of individual cases

India (ratification: 1960)

Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)

The Government has provided the following written information.

Article 1(1)(a) of the Convention. Discrimination based on sex. Sexual harassment

In relation to the measures to prevent sexual harassment, the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013 (SH Act), provides a legal framework for workplaces across India. It mandates the formation of internal committees (ICs) in establishments with ten or more employees and local committees (LCs) at the district level for smaller establishments.

In order to ensure centralized maintenance of data on complaints, the Sexual Harassment Electronic-Box (SHe-Box) portal was launched on 29 August 2024. It allows women, including those in the informal sector, to file complaints directly or through representatives, ensuring data privacy and ease of access. Those who are unable to access ICs or LCs may file complaints through Legal Services Clinics, Para-Legal Volunteers (PLVs) or the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) helpline.

The SHe-Box ensures confidentiality – only the chairperson of the relevant IC or LC can access complaint details. It has a real-time monitoring dashboard for State/District nodal officers and officials from Central/State ministries. This ensures tracking and prompt action.

Training for State/District nodal officers and other stakeholders is also conducted, enhancing their capacity to assist women. One hundred forty-seven individual trainers and 121 organizations who provide awareness-raising, sensitization and training to IC members/employees have been “onboarded” the portal. Outreach is driven through Hubs for Empowerment of Women (HEWs) at State/District levels. The District Hubs (DHEWs) play a key role in spreading awareness about the SH Act and the SHe-Box, linking women to support systems.

Further, helplines such as NALSA, Women Helpline and the National Commission for Women's (NCW) 24x7 helpline, assist women in using the SHe-Box.

Owing to special campaigns, the following have been achieved:

- 97 of 102 central ministries/departments and 855 attached offices onboarded;
- 740 local committees and 768 Master District nodal officers uploaded;
- 393 district officers and 9,845 district offices integrated;
- 6,651 private organization headquarters onboarded.

Efforts are ongoing to ensure that the remaining ministries/LCs/private organizations/districts are onboarded.

Centralized data collection on complaints has recently begun on the She-Box portal. With guidance from the ILO country office, we plan to enhance the portal to capture detailed data on outcomes, penalties and remedies.

With regard to section 14 of the Act, it is stated that to prevent misuse, the SH Act includes safeguards under this section and Rule 10 of the SH Rules. Action may be recommended against a complainant only if the complaint is found to be false and malicious. Mere inability to prove a complaint does not attract penalties unless malice is clearly established after due inquiry.

However, the Ministry of Labour and Employment is in discussions with the Ministry of Women and Child Development to consider holding wide consultations for strengthening the Act and increasing existing safeguards for the complainants against misuse of section 14.

Articles 1–3. Measures to address discrimination based on social origin

We appreciate the Committee of Experts' suggestion for an assessment on the progress made in addressing caste-based discrimination. We are seeking assistance from the ILO country office to give technical support to design the assessment and train our resources.

With regard to the study by National Commission of Scheduled Castes, we are seeking collaboration with the ILO country office to make progress in this area.

Certain additional measures have been undertaken to advance equality of opportunity and treatment for all men and women, irrespective of social origin. We are implementing 240+ schemes across 39 central ministries for the welfare of scheduled castes.

These initiatives are being monitored under the Development Action Plan for Scheduled Castes (DAPSC). The schemes cover various aspects of scheduled castes' welfare such as employment generation, scholarships, free coaching, hostels, venture capital, incubation centres and so on. Some key statistics are given below:

- Since 2017–18, the budget allocation under the DAPSC increased from 52,719 crores to 138,362.5 crores in 2024–25.
- Under the Mahatma Gandhi rural employment generation scheme (MGNREGS), 65.5 million scheduled caste households availed themselves of this scheme to find employment over the last five years (up to July 2024).
- 84 million scheduled caste/scheduled tribe (ST) students benefited from scholarship schemes.

- Expenditure on pre-/post-matriculation scholarships increased from 33 billion Indian rupees in 2016–17 to 60 billion rupees in 2024–25.
- The gross enrolment ratio of scheduled castes in higher education increased to 25.9 in 2021–22 from 18.9 in 2014–15.
- 4,600 billion rupees worth of collateral free loans were disbursed to scheduled caste/scheduled tribe beneficiaries through the Mudra Yojana loan scheme.
- 84 schemes of the 240+ are related to employment and occupation.

In India, the Protection of Civil Rights Act 1955 (PCR, 1955) and Prevention of Atrocities Act 1989 (PoA, 1989), aim to prevent atrocities against scheduled castes by providing enforcement, judicial machinery, rehabilitation, awareness and so on.

Awareness-raising camps are regularly conducted under the PCR Act, 1955 and the PoA Act, 1989.

From 2018 to 2022, 41,668 awareness-raising activities have been carried out.

Also, a national helpline against atrocities is operational to address grievances under the Acts. Some 7,124 complaints have been registered and 4,308 have been resolved.

With regard to affirmative action measures in the private sector, industry bodies are actively providing skills development, entrepreneurship opportunities and implementing corporate social responsibility. For instance, the Dalit Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry is promoting entrepreneurship, skilling and access to funds for budding Dalit entrepreneurs. Voluntary codes of conduct for enhanced opportunities for disadvantaged sections is being implemented by many industry associations. Capacity-building initiatives from the ILO for such industry bodies would be appreciated.

With regard to the granting of scheduled caste status to Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians, it is stated that the Justice Balakrishnan Commission of Inquiry proceedings are under way. The Commission's tenure has been extended up to 10 October 2025.

Manual scavengers

The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act 2013 (MS Act, 2013) has been in force since 6 December 2013. It focuses on identification/rehabilitation of manual scavengers and prohibition of hazardous manual cleaning.

Under the Act, hazardous cleaning and manual scavenging are defined distinctly. No person or agency can engage or employ any person for manual scavenging. There are no reports of manual scavenging in the country. However, deaths have occurred due to hazardous cleaning of sewers /septic tanks and 662 first information reports (FIRs) have been lodged against persons who engaged workers in such cleaning.

The Self- Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS) launched in 2007, was revised between 2021 and 22. An evaluation study was conducted in 2020. The following recommendations emerged:

- A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed with the National Health Authority to provide health insurance to identified manual scavengers (Ayushman Bharat Scheme).

- The National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC) signed memorandum of agreements (MoAs) with multiple banks to provide loans to manual scavengers.
- An online portal (SAMARTH) is being utilized for processing loan applications.
- A scholarship scheme is being run for children of persons engaged in cleaning.
- The target for short-term skilling and upskilling was enhanced to 20,000 and 40,000 respectively.
- Capital subsidies were increased to 500,000 rupees for sanitation, and self-employment projects up to 1.5 million rupees.

Further, the National Action for Mechanized Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE) Scheme was launched in 2023–24 in 4,800+ urban local bodies. It aims to achieve zero fatalities in sanitation work, strengthening emergency response sanitation units (ERSUs) and promote mechanization. Under the scheme:

- All 36 States/Union Territories (UTs) have started the profiling of sewer and septic tank workers (SSWs).
- 78,010 SSWs were validated.
- 46,225 personal protective equipment (PPE) kits and safety devices kit for emergency response units were dispatched.
- 28,447 Ayushman cards (health insurance) were made available.
- 586 Emergency Response Sanitation Units (ERSUs) were established and 567 responsible sanitation authorities appointed.
- 1,005 workshops were conducted on “Prevention of hazardous cleaning” in local agencies that oversee this work.

In addition to two surveys conducted for identification of manual scavengers in 2013 and 2018, a re-survey is being carried out by States/UTs. As on 12 May 2025, out of 775 districts, 661 have advised that there is no manual scavenging in their district.

For effective monitoring, the Central Monitoring Committee meets regularly, chaired by the Honourable Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment (HMSJE). Regular communications are sent across all tiers of government by the HMSJE. National and regional review conferences are held along with district-level meetings.

The Government is also working with the ILO on the Promoting Rights and Social Inclusion through Organization and Formalization project (PRS). A tripartite workshop on “Promoting Decent Work for Sanitation Workers in India” was held from 30 November to 1 December 2023. While collaborating under the NAMASTE scheme, the project supported efforts in Bihar and Maharashtra for the welfare of sanitation workers. We will continue to engage in such collaborations for enhanced effectiveness.

Equality of opportunity and treatment between women and men

To promote equality of opportunity and treatment in employment and occupation, the Government is implementing various schemes for increasing the female labour force participation rate (LFPR).

As per the latest data available under the Annual Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), the estimated female LFPR on usual status for 15+ was 32.5 per cent, 32.8 per cent, 37.0 per cent, 41.7 per cent during 2020–21, 2021–22, 2022–23 and 2023–24, respectively, which indicates that female LFPR has been increasing.

The estimated female worker population ratio (WPR) on usual status for 15+ was 31.4 per cent, 31.7 per cent, 35.9 per cent, 40.3 per cent during 2020–21, 2021–22, 2022–23 and 2023–24 respectively, which indicates that female participation in the workforce has increased.

- In the percentage distribution of workers in usual status by occupation, the share of female workers increased as follows:
 - Professionals increased from 4.69 per cent in 2017–18 to 5.39 per cent in 2023–24.
 - Service workers and shops and market sales workers increased from 6.88 per cent in 2017–18 to 7.39 per cent in 2023–24.
 - Skilled agricultural and fishery workers increased from 36.42 per cent in 2017–18 to 51.95 per cent in 2023–24.
 - Craft and related trades workers increased from 9.12 per cent in 2017–18 to 9.25 per cent in 2023–24.
- In percentage distribution of workers in usual status by status in employment, the share of self-employed female increased from 51.9 per cent in 2017–18 to 67.4 per cent in 2023–24.
- For casual labour, the share decreased from 27 per cent in 2017–18 to 16.7 per cent in 2023–24.
- 39.6 per cent of women with postgraduate degrees or higher were working in 2023–24, compared to 34.5 per cent in 2017–18.
- 23.9 per cent of women with higher secondary education were employed in 2023–24, up from 11.4 per cent in 2017–18.

Taking into consideration the findings in the 2021 National Human Rights Commission of India (NHRC) report, and to promote equality of opportunity for women, the steps taken are:

- The Union Budget 2025–26 set a target of 70 per cent female workforce participation in economic activities by 2047.
- India enacted legislation for a one-third (33 per cent) reservation of seats for women in the Lok Sabha (House of People) and State Legislative Assemblies in 2023, for greater female representation in decision-making.
- 31 States/UTs have gazetted their reforms to allow women to work in night shifts.
- India has 10 per cent more women pilots than the global average.
- 20 per cent of seats in the Indian Institute of Technology (IITs) is reserved for females.
- 84 per cent loans under Standup India is given to women.
- 68 per cent of loans under the Mudra Yojana scheme is given to women-owned/operated enterprises.
- 47.6 per cent (55,816) of recognized startups are now women led.
- 43 per cent (4.19 million) of total enrolment in STEM are of women.

- 55 per cent of Jan Dhan bank accounts have been opened for women (mostly in rural areas).
- 57.14 per cent of jobs created in rural India in the last five years under the MGNREGA, are for women.
- 100 million women now connected with 9 million women self-help groups.
- Women are now eligible for permanent commission in the armed forces, including combat roles. 126 female cadets have joined National Defence Academy recently.
- 45 per cent of jobseekers on the NCS portal, which matches jobs, are women.
- In January 2024, an advisory was issued for Employers to Promote Women Workforce Participation, highlighting the importance of balancing work and caregiving responsibilities.