



Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (FPRW) Project

For Prelims: [Confederation of Indian Textile Industry \(CITI\)](#), [International Labour Organisation \(ILO\)](#), [Promoting Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work \(FPRW\)](#), [ILO Convention No. 138](#), [Convention No. 182](#), [Commercial Crops](#), [White-Gold](#), [Pink Bollworm](#), [Parkinson's Disease](#).

For Mains: Issues Related to [Child Labour](#), Significance of Cotton and Textile Industry in Indian Economy

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

The [Confederation of Indian Textile Industry \(CITI\)](#) and the [International Labour Organisation \(ILO\)](#) have jointly launched the project titled [Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work \(FPRW\)](#).

- It will help create **awareness** and share **technical know-how** and knowledge about the best labour standards.

What is ILO's Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (FPRW) Project?

- **About FPRW Project:**
 - It is a **commitment** by governments, employers' and workers' organisations to uphold **basic human values** that are vital to our social and economic lives.
 - The **ILO Declaration** on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (FPRW) was adopted in **1998** and amended in **2022**.
 - Increasing concerns about the **social impact of globalisation** led the members of the ILO to recognize **four categories** of labour standards, expressed in **eight conventions**.
 - In **2022**, four categories were **amended** to become **five categories** with the addition of the **occupation of safety and health conventions**, expressed in **ten conventions**.
- **Five Categories of FPRW Project and Related Conventions:**
 - **Freedom of Association and the Effective Recognition of the Right to Collective Bargaining:** It is the prerogative of workers and employers alike to form and manage their own organisations, free from **external interference**.
 - Through **collective bargaining**, employers and workers discuss and negotiate their relations, in particular terms and conditions of work.
 - **It is enforced by conventions like:**
 - Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise **Convention (No. 87)**, 1948
 - Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining **Convention (No. 98)**, 1949.
 - **Elimination of All Forms of Forced or Compulsory Labour:**
 - Labour should **freely join**, and employees should be **free to leave**, subject to previous notice of reasonable length.
 - **It is enforced by conventions like:**
 - Forced Labour **Convention (No. 29)**, 1930
 - Abolition of Forced Labour **Convention (No. 105)**, 1957.

- **Effective Abolition of Child Labour:**
 - [ILO Convention No. 138](#) (minimum age for entry into work or employment) and [Convention No. 182](#) (Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour) set **minimum age** requirements for work, ensuring it is not below the age for compulsory schooling, and in any case not less than **15 years**.
 - **It is enforced by conventions like:**
 - Minimum Age **Convention (No. 138)**, 1973
 - Worst Forms of **Child Labour Convention (No. 182)**, 1999.
- **Elimination of Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation:**
 - Exclusion or preference should not be made on the basis of **race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin**.
 - It provides for **equal remuneration** for men and women workers for work of equal value.
 - **It is enforced by conventions like:**
 - Equal Remuneration **Convention (No. 100)**, 1951
 - Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) **Convention (No. 111)**, 1958.
- **Safe and Healthy Working Environment:**
 - ILO Convention No. 155 aims to prevent **workplace accidents** and health issues, while No. 187 mandates continuous improvement in **occupational safety** and health to prevent injuries, diseases, and deaths.
 - **It is enforced by conventions like:**
 - Occupational Safety and Health **Convention (No. 155)**, 1981
 - Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health **Convention (No. 187)**, 2006.
- **Need of FPRW for India:**
 - **Non-Tariff Barrier to Trade:** Cotton and hybrid cotton seeds from India continue to remain in the US Labour Department's "**List of Goods Produced by [Child Labour or Forced Labour](#)**". The FPRW project will help India ease this barrier to trade.
 - **Global Obligation:** The FPRW Project of the ILO **applies to all** ILO member states whether they have **ratified it or not**. It is part and parcel of the ILO's Constitution.
 - Since India is a member of ILO, it was **needed to comply** with the FPRW Project.
 - **Sustainable Workforce:** Cotton-growing communities can foster a more **equitable, sustainable, and prosperous** environment for all workers, leading to long-term benefits for individuals and families.
 - **Socio-economic Upliftment:** The collaboration will **equip farmers with knowledge** about various government schemes and initiatives aimed at their **socio-economic upliftment**.
 - Outreach services, information dissemination and linkages with vocational training facilities for target communities can help in their betterment.
 - It is necessary to attain [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) like **SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities)**, **SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)**.

Facts and Figures Related to Labour Conditions

- Over **40%** of the global population lives in countries that have **not ratified ILO Convention No. 87** on freedom of association or **Convention No. 98** on collective bargaining.
- On average, **women are paid 23% less** than their male counterparts and in many countries are effectively excluded from certain occupations.
- **152 million** children aged 5-17 are in **child labour**, 72 million of them are in hazardous work and other worst forms of child labour, while 80 million more are below the minimum age for work and simply too young to be working.
- **25 million** people are victims of **forced labor**, **25%** of whom are **children**.
- At least **15 million people**, mainly women and girls, live in **forced marriage**, which can amount to forced labour.

International Labour Organization (ILO)

- The [International Labour Organization \(ILO\)](#) was established in 1919 under the Treaty of

Versailles.

- It unites **governments, employers, and workers** from 187 member states to establish labour standards, formulate policies, and create programs that promote decent work for all men and women.
- It became the first affiliated specialised agency of the United Nations in 1946.
 - It is headquartered in **Geneva, Switzerland**.
- Its founding mission is **social justice** is essential to **universal and lasting peace**.
- It received the **Nobel Peace Prize in 1969** for improving peace among classes, pursuing decent work and justice for workers and providing technical assistance to other developing nations.

UN SPECIALISED AGENCIES

UNSAAs are 15 autonomous international organizations working with the UN

Part III
ILO, WHO
and ITU

ILO



The only tripartite (govt., trade unions, employers) and the 1st affiliated UNSA

- Estd. - 1919 (Treaty of Versailles)
- Headquarters - Geneva, Switzerland
- Functions -
 - » Set labour standards
 - » Develop policies & programmes for promoting decent work for all
- Member States - 187 (India a founding member + permanent member of ILO Governing Body)

- International Labour Conference -
 - » Meets annually in Geneva
 - » aka International Parliament of Labour
- ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work 1998 (Principles) -
 - » Freedom of Association and The Right to collective bargaining
 - » Elimination of forced or compulsory labour
 - » Abolition of child labour
 - » Elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation



WHO

WHO became functional on April 7, 1948 (now celebrated as World Health Day)

- Estd. - 1948
- Headquarters - Geneva, Switzerland
- Functions -
 - » Provides leadership on global health matters
 - » Shaping health research agenda
 - » Monitoring, assessing health trends
- Member States - 194 (incl. India)

WHO's regional office for SE Asia is located in New Delhi

- World Health Assembly - WHO's decision-making body, held yearly at Geneva
- Major Initiatives -
 - » UN Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030)
 - » UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025)
 - » GLASS Initiative (AMR)
 - » WHO 1+1 Initiative (2019) (TB)

ITU



- Estd. - 1865
- Headquarters - Geneva, Switzerland
- Functions -
 - » Facilitate intl. connectivity in communication networks
 - » Allocate global radio spectrum and satellite orbits

- Member States - 193 (India a regular member since 1952)
- Important Publication -
 - » Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI)

What is Status of Child Labour in India?

- According to the last available [Census 2011](#), there were **10.1 million child labourers** in India.
- As per the [National Crime Records Bureau Report 2022](#), in 2021, around 982 cases were registered under the [Child Labour \(Prohibition and Regulation\) Act, 1986](#), with the highest number of cases registered in Telangana, followed by Assam.
- **Initiatives Taken by Government to Curb Child Labour:**
 - **Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986:** Bans the **employment of children below 14 years and adolescents below 18 years** in [hazardous occupations](#) and processes.
 - **The Factories Act, 1948:** Prohibits the employment of **children below 14 years of age in any hazardous environment** and restricts the [working hours and conditions of adolescents \(14 to 18 years\)](#) who are allowed to work only in non-hazardous processes.
 - **National Policy on Child Labour, 1987:** Aims to eradicate child labour by prohibiting and regulating it, providing [welfare and development programmes](#) for children and their families, and ensuring the education and rehabilitation of working children.
 - **Pencil Portal:** The platform aims at engaging the Central Government, State Government, District, civil society and the public in **eradicating child labour** to achieve the target of a [child labour free society](#). It was launched by the **Ministry of Labour and Employment**.
 - **Ratifying conventions of the International Labour Organization:** India has also ratified **two core conventions** of the International Labour Organization on child labour in 2017 i.e., **Minimum Age Convention (1973) No. 138** and **Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (1999) No. 182**.

Note:

- India has ratified several ILO conventions like:
 - Forced Labour **Convention (No. 29)**, 1930 in 1954
 - Equal Remuneration **Convention (No. 100)**, 1951 in 1958
 - Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) **Convention (No. 111)**, 1958 in 1960
 - Abolition of Forced Labour **Convention (No. 105)**, 1957 in 2000
 - Minimum Age **Convention (No. 138)**, 1973 and Worst Forms of Child Labour **Convention (No. 182)**, 1999 in 2017.

What is the Status of Cotton Farming in India?

- **About:**
 - Cotton is one of the most important [commercial crops](#) cultivated in India and accounted for around **23%** of the total **global cotton production** in **2022-23**.
 - It plays a major role in sustaining the livelihood of an estimated **6 million cotton farmers** and **40-50 million people** engaged in related activities such as **cotton processing and trade**.
 - Due to its economic importance in India, it is also termed as [“White-Gold”](#).
- **National Scenario:**
 - **Acreage under Cotton:** In **2022-23**, India ranked first globally in cotton acreage with **130.61 lakh hectares** area under cotton cultivation i.e., around 40% of world area of 324.16 lakh hectares.
 - Approximately **67%** of India's cotton is produced on rain-fed areas and 33% on irrigated lands.
 - **Cotton Yield:** In terms of productivity, India is on **39th rank** with a yield of **447 kg/ha**.
 - **Cotton Types:** India is the only country which grows **all four species of cotton** i.e., G. Arboreum and G. Herbaceum (Asian cotton), G. Barbadense (Egyptian cotton) and G. Hirsutum (American Upland cotton).
 - **G. Hirsutum** represents **90%** of the hybrid cotton production in India and all the **current Bt cotton hybrids are G. Hirsutum**.

- **Production:** India is having **2nd place** in the world with estimated production of **343.47 lakh bales** during cotton season 2022-23 i.e., **23.83%** of world cotton production.
- **Production Pattern:** Majority of cotton production comes from **9 major cotton growing states**, which are grouped into three diverse agro-ecological zones, as under:
 - **Northern Zone:** Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan
 - **Central Zone:** Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh
 - **Southern Zone:** Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.
- **Consumption:** India is also the **2nd largest consumer** of cotton in the world with estimated consumption of 311 lakh bales (5.29 Million Metric Tonnes).
 - It accounts for 22.24% of world cotton consumption of 1399 lakh bales (23.79 Million Metric Tonnes).
- **Import and Export of cotton:** India is one of the **largest exporters** of cotton i.e., **6% of world export** of 528 lakh bales (8.98 Million Metric Tonnes) in 2022-23.
 - Less than 10% of the total consumption of cotton in India is imported by the textile industry to meet their specific requirement.

Steps are Taken for Development of the Cotton Sector

- [Procurement of cotton on Minimum Support Price \(MSP\)](#)
- [Mobile App “Cott-Ally”](#)
- [Kasturi Cotton India](#)
- [PM MITRA Scheme](#)

What are the Key Challenges in India's Cotton Sector and the Way Forward?

- **Challenges Impacting the Cotton Sector:**
 - **Pest and Disease Infestations:** Farmers regularly face **pest attack** by [pink bollworm](#).
 - This pest became a new challenge in cotton farming as it grew **resistant to Bt proteins**, showing the need for diverse and adaptive pest management strategies.
 - **Health Problems:** Farmers are exposed to **pesticides** at work which can experience acute toxicity, **respiratory problems, skin and eye irritation, seizures and even death**.
 - In the long-term, low dose pesticide exposure has been linked to [Parkinson's disease](#), asthma, mental illness and certain cancers.
 - **Unorganised Sector:** Over 90% of India's weaving industry is **unorganised**, with inadequate infrastructure compared to other Asian countries, hindering progress.
 - **Manual Labour:** The textile industry remains **labour-intensive** with slow adoption of automation, causing inefficiencies, machine underutilisation, and **productivity loss**.
 - Slow technology adoption and **infrastructure gaps** affect the industry's overall efficiency and growth.
 - **Industry Fragmentation:** Only **5%** of the apparel industry is **organised**, affecting profitability and efficiency.
 - 70% of workers have basic or **no formal education**, limiting skill development and industry growth.
 - **Water Wastage:** The Indian textile industry faces significant **water wastage**, requiring strategic minimisation to avoid long-term consequences.
- **Way Forward:**
 - **Integrated Pest Management:** It's important to promote [integrated pest management \(IPM\)](#) strategies that utilise **natural controls, trap crops, and beneficial insects** to minimise pesticide use while effectively managing pest populations.
 - **Product Enhancement:** Encouraging value addition by setting up **local cotton processing units** for ginning, cleaning, and processing cotton fibre, which will create jobs and enhance the value of the cotton supply chain.
 - **Industry Modernisation:** Utilise initiatives such as the [Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme \(TUFS\)](#) and [PM Mega Textile Parks \(PM-MITRA\)](#) to modernise ginning, spinning, and weaving facilities, improving efficiency and boosting global competitiveness.

What are the Reasons and Solutions for Child Labour in the Cotton Industry in India?

▪ Reasons:

- **Cheap and Compliant Labour:** Children are **often paid less than adults** (or unpaid) and have **weaker negotiating power** as well as being often perceived as more submissive workers.
- **“Nimble Fingers” Myth:** Employers claim that the tasks of cross-pollination, emasculation and hand-pollination are best undertaken by **pre-pubescent, female children**.
 - There is a perception that **children’s small hands and bodies** are better for tasks such as **weeding**.
- **Unskilled Work:** Cotton farming is largely a unskilled work where certain physical attributes such as **small stature and agility** increase the demand for child labour.
- **Social Norms:** Children are often expected to follow in their **parents’ footsteps** and are frequently summoned to **“help”** other members of the family, often at a young age.

▪ Way Forward:

- **National Legislation:** Governments should translate the content of **international treaties and conventions** that they have ratified into national legislation.
 - In addition, governments should ensure that labour laws are implemented and enforced.
- **Sustainable Business Practices:** Companies should act with due **diligence** across all its business operations, including at the level of **suppliers and subcontractors**.
 - Eliminating and preventing child labour need to be included in this effort.
- **Transparency and Traceability:** Brands and retailers should focus on gaining full understanding of their **supply chains**.
 - It includes **informal sector and homeworkers** where the bulk of child labour occurs.
 - Governments on the buying end of the supply chain should **curb** the **import** of products made with child labour.
- **Substitution of Workforce:** Labour can be **substituted with machines** for efficient functioning. Substituted labourforce should be **reskilled** to make them **employable** in other economic sectors.

Drishti Mains Question

Q. Discuss the importance of cotton cultivation for the development of the textile industry in India.

Q. What are the reasons for the prevalence of child labour in the cotton sector in India? How child labour in the cotton sector can be curbed for its sustainable development?

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims:

Q. Tamil Nadu is a leading producer of mill-made cotton yarn in the country. What could be the reason? (2010)

1. Black cotton soil is the predominant type of soil in the State.
2. Rich pool of skilled labour is available.

Which of the above is/are the correct reasons?

(a) 1 only

(b) 2 only

(c) Both 1 and 2

(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (b)

Q. The black cotton soil of India has been formed due to the weathering of (2021)

(a) brown forest soil

(b) fissure volcanic rock

(c) granite and schist

(d) shale and limestone

Ans: (b)

Q. A state in India has the following characteristics:(2011)

1. Its northern part is arid and semi-arid.
2. Its central part produces cotton.
3. Cultivation of cash crops is predominant over food crops.

Which one of the following states has all of the above characteristics?

(a) Andhra Pradesh

(b) Gujarat

(c) Karnataka

(d) Tamil Nadu

Ans: (b)

Mains:

Q. Analyse the factors for the highly decentralised cotton textile industry in India. (2013)