

women's performance in civil services exam: 34 per cent milestone

The latest round of hiring for the **elite** All India Civil Services **has yielded** a **heartening statistic**: More than one-third of the new **recruits**, or 34 per cent, are women. Women took the top four ranks; 12 of the top 20 are women. **Women toppers** of the three-stage exam, considered one of the toughest in the world, for recruitment to the higher **bureaucracy**, **are** not an **unusual** feature. But the **substantive increase** in women in the latest **intake is** heartening. Of a total 933 recruits based on a written test and an interview, 320 are women. The number of women recruits was 215 in 2021 (25.8 per cent), 238 in 2020 (28.5 per cent), and 220 in 2019 (23.9 per cent). **That** the women who finally **make it** to an **array** of all-India services are selected through an objective and **rigorous** process **makes** their high **representation** a milestone, when the corporate world is **struggling** with **gender diversity** at its senior levels.

It will **fall to** the government to **ensure** that this statistic of 34 per cent is not just a **flash in the pan**, but **endures** and improves, with a **non-discriminatory** work culture in a male-dominated **eco-system**. Some measures are already built into the system, **for instance** in the set pay structures and **redressal mechanisms**, **unlike** in the private sector where

paying women less than men at the same level **is rampant**. Many new recruits, both men and women, **claim** that the main **attraction** of a career in government **is** the opportunity to serve the country. Many may simply **revel** in the power and **prestige** of the job, and the opportunities for upward **social mobility**. More women in high-profile jobs should **inspire** all women to work.

But the **prospect** of the closing gender gap in the mid to top **rungs** of government **seems** to have made little positive impact on the other more **sobering** statistic — the formal participation of working age women in the nation's **workforce** overall has dropped **precipitously** from 32 per cent in 2005 to 25 per cent in 2021 (according to the World Bank). **One** of the world's fastest growing **economies is** also where women continue to be **held down** by **patriarchy** — the more **affluent** a woman's family background and the more highly educated she is, the less likely she is to take up work outside the home, with family pressures on her to act as caregiver, increasing **concerns** of safety at the workplace and the **abysmal** public transport in most cities. India can never **attain** its true **economic potential** until women participate in greater numbers, not just in the civil services, but in the workforce as whole.



[Practice Exercise]

- Red/blue colouring of words in the sentence indicates subject verb relationship; where 'red' denotes 'subject' and 'blue' denotes 'verb'.

Vocabulary

1. **Milestone** (noun) – Achievement, highpoint, aim, target, landmark
2. **Elite** (adjective) – Superior, high-class, top-notch, exclusive, select श्रेष्ठ
3. **Yield** (verb) – Produce, generate, give, provide, deliver देना
4. **Heartening** (adjective) – Encouraging, uplifting, inspiring, reassuring, comforting उत्साहजनक
5. **Statistic** (noun) – Figure, data, number, measure, fact आंकड़ा
6. **Recruit** (noun) – Newcomer, novice, entrant, beginner, rookie भर्ती
7. **Bureaucracy** (noun) – Administration, officialdom, system, establishment, management दफ्तरशाही, अधिकारी-वर्ग
8. **Unusual** (adjective) – Uncommon, atypical, out-of-the-ordinary, rare, strange असामान्य
9. **Substantive** (adjective) – Significant, meaningful, important, considerable, major ठोस
10. **Intake** (noun) – Influx, entry, admission, enrollment, incoming प्रवेश
11. **Make it** (phrase) – Succeed, achieve success, accomplish, prevail, triumph सफल होना
12. **Array** (noun) – Assortment, range, collection, variety, selection सिलसिला
13. **Rigorous** (adjective) – Strict, severe, stringent, exacting, tough कठोर
14. **Representation** (noun) – Portrayal, depiction, image, presentation, reflection प्रतिनिधित्व
15. **Struggle** (with) (verb) – Battle, grapple, wrestle, confront, challenge संघर्ष करना
16. **Gender diversity** (noun) – Gender diversity is equitable or fair representation of people of different genders लिंग विविधता
17. **Fall to someone** (phrase) – Be someone's responsibility or duty किसी की जिम्मेदारी बनना
18. **Ensure** (verb) – Guarantee, assure, confirm, secure, make certain सुनिश्चित करना
19. **A flash in the pan** (phrase) – something that happened only once or for a short time and was not repeated एक बार की चमक
20. **Endure** (verb) – Last, continue, persist, remain, go on चालू रहना

21. **Non-discriminatory** (adjective) – Fair, impartial, unbiased, equal, just गैर-भेदभावपूर्ण
22. **Ecosystem** (noun) – Environment, habitat, sphere, biosphere, complex पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र
23. **For instance** (phrase) – For example, as an example, to illustrate, such as उदाहरण के लिए
24. **Redressal** (noun) – Correction, remedy, resolution, rectification, reparation सुधार
25. **Mechanism** (noun) – Process, system, method, procedure, technique तंत्र
26. **Unlike** (preposition) – Dissimilar to, different from, not like, not similar to, अलग
27. **Rampant** (adjective) – Uncontrolled, unchecked, unrestrained, अनियंत्रित
28. **Claim** (verb) – Assert, state, declare, proclaim, दावा करना
29. **Revel** (verb) – Delight, relish, enjoy greatly, celebrate, खुश होना
30. **Prestige** (noun) – Status, reputation, esteem, आदर-प्रतिष्ठा
31. **Social mobility** (noun) – Social mobility refers to the shift in an individual's social status from one status to another`
32. **Inspire** (verb) – Motivate, stimulate, influence, stir, encourage, प्रेरित करना
33. **Prospect** (noun) – Outlook, expectation, possibility, hope, outlook आशा
34. **Rung** (noun) – Level, position, rank, पायदान
35. **Sobering** (adjective) – Serious, solemn, grave; creating a more serious, sensible, or solemn mood. गंभीर
36. **Workforce** (noun) – Labour force, workers, employees, कर्मचारियों
37. **Precipitously** (adverb) – Steeply, sharply, abruptly, अचानक
38. **Economies** (noun) – Countries in terms of GDP
39. **Hold down** (phrasal verb) – Restrain, hinder, impede, काबू में रखना
40. **Patriarchy** (noun) – a society in which the oldest male is the leader of the family पितृसत्ता
41. **Affluent** (adjective) – Wealthy, rich, prosperous, well-off, धनी
42. **Abysmal** (adjective) – Terrible, appalling, dreadful, awful, appalling भयानक
43. **Attain** (verb) – Achieve, reach, accomplish, get, प्राप्त करना

44. **Economic** (adjective) – Financial, fiscal, monetary, आर्थिक

45. **Potential** (noun) – Possibility, capability, capacity, ability, aptitude क्षमता

Summary of the Editorial

1. The recent All India Civil Services recruitment revealed that 34% of the new recruits are women, a significant increase from past years.
2. Women claimed the top four ranks in this round and represented 12 of the top 20.
3. This high percentage of women recruits is noteworthy considering the highly rigorous and objective selection process of the exam.
4. In comparison, there were 215 women recruits in 2021 (25.8%), 238 in 2020 (28.5%), and 220 in 2019 (23.9%).
5. This achievement is a milestone in a society where the corporate world is still struggling with gender diversity in senior positions.
6. It is crucial for the government to maintain and improve this trend and not let it be a fleeting occurrence.
7. The government sector offers a non-discriminatory work culture in comparison to the private sector where pay disparity between men and women is still prevalent.
8. Many recruits, both men and women, find the opportunity to serve the country as a significant attraction of government service.
9. The increase in women in high-profile jobs should inspire more women to participate in the workforce.
10. Despite this, the formal participation of working-age women in India's overall workforce has decreased from 32% in 2005 to 25% in 2021, according to the World Bank.
11. This decrease continues even as India is one of the world's fastest-growing economies.
12. Women continue to be hindered by societal norms, with affluent and highly educated women often facing pressure to stay at home.
13. Concerns about safety at the workplace and inadequate public transport also contribute to women's low workforce participation.
14. The editorial highlights that India cannot reach its full economic potential until more women participate in the workforce.
15. Thus, while the increase of women in the civil services is a positive trend, there is still significant work needed to improve women's overall participation in the workforce.

Practice Exercise: SSC Pattern Based

1. **What could be the implications of the rising percentage of women recruits in the All India Civil Services, as reflected in the passage?** [Editorial Page]
 - A. It indicates a positive trend towards gender equality in the civil services.
 - B. It reveals an inherent bias in the selection process.
 - C. It suggests that men are becoming less interested in civil service positions.
 - D. It means that the civil services exam has become easier over the years.
2. **According to the passage, which of the following measures can contribute to the sustainability and improvement of women's performance in civil services?**
 - A. Increase the pay structures of men in the government sector
 - B. Introduce discriminatory practices in the private sector
 - C. Foster a non-discriminatory work culture in the government sector
 - D. Limit the opportunities for upward social mobility in the government sector
3. **According to the passage, what could be considered as a significant barrier to women's formal participation in India's workforce?**
 - A. Women are not interested in working.
 - B. The influence of patriarchy and societal pressures.
 - C. There is a lack of educational opportunities for women.
 - D. Men are discouraged from joining civil services.
4. **Which of the following best describes the tone of the given passage?**
 - A. Optimistic
 - B. Pessimistic
 - C. Neutral
 - D. Cautious optimism
5. **What is the main theme of the passage?**
 - A. The rigors of civil service examinations in India
 - B. The discrimination women face in the corporate world
 - C. The increase in women's representation in civil services and the need for more participation in the workforce
 - D. The decreasing formal participation of working age women in the nation's workforce
6. **Which of the following conclusions can be drawn from the passage?**
 - A. The increase in women recruits in the All India Civil Services over the years indicates a substantial rise in the overall participation of working-age women in the nation's workforce.
 - B. A non-discriminatory work culture and certain measures like set pay structures are important to sustain and improve women's representation in male-dominated professions.
 - C. The corporate world has successfully achieved gender diversity at senior levels, surpassing the progress made in the civil services.
 - D. The family background and education of a woman do not influence her decision to take up work outside the home.

7. Which word is a SYNONYM for 'sobering' as used in the passage?
- A. Humorous
 - B. Lighthearted
 - C. Serious
 - D. Blithe
8. Which word is an ANTONYM for 'abysmal' as used in the passage?
- A. Dreadful
 - B. Horrible
 - C. Appalling
 - D. Satisfactory

Direction (Q9 – Q10): Read the given sentences to find out whether there is any grammatical error in them

9. What are (A)/ their reasons (B)/ to say it? (C)/No Error (D)
10. I was filled (A)/ with determination (B)/ by watching him. (C)/ No Error (D)

Comprehension

AgriTech platforms provide high-quality input for farmers which has proven to be _____1_____ in driving up crop yields. The screen flashes, and Bimal Roy's 'Do Bigha Zameen' comes to life with an opening scene of farmers _____2_____ looking at the sky. As the clouds gather, so do the farmers, expecting the rains to _____3_____ their fields. It has been 70 years since Roy's classic, and this scene is as true of Indian farmers today as it was just after Independence, looking upward for innovations to empower them. Agriculture has been the backbone of sustenance and livelihood in India, marking a significant aspect of the country's socioeconomic landscape. With 55% of our population dependent on agriculture, it remains one of India's primary industries. Traditionally, farmers in India have encountered restricted access to credible information concerning the quality of agricultural input, including seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides. The farm-to-fork food value chain is extremely protracted and is riddled _____4_____ multiple stakeholders who might not necessarily prioritize the welfare of farmers. This compels them to depend on local suppliers and intermediaries to procure such input, resulting in low valuation. Increasing intermediaries and other factors in this chain _____5_____ a reduction in transparency.

Fill in the blanks with the most appropriate combinations of words

11. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 1.**
- A. Revolution
 - B. Interval
 - C. Potential
 - D. Instrumental
12. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 2.**
- A. Adequately
 - B. Anxiously
 - C. Ostensibly

- D. Allegedly
13. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 3.**
- A. Bestow
 - B. Soar
 - C. Conferred
 - D. Endowed
14. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 4.**
- A. Of
 - B. In
 - C. With
 - D. To
15. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 5.**
- A. Endanger
 - B. Endangered
 - C. Engender
 - D. Engendered
16. **Arrange the following sentences to form a coherent paragraph.**
- P. But the tide turned in 2012 when the then US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton attended a summit of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), which has New Zealand and Australia among its members.
 - Q. China stepped up its loan diplomacy and the competition has heated up so much that both Beijing and Washington are actively seeking to sign defence pacts with these island nations
 - R. THE Pacific Island Countries (PIC) were once called antipodal as they were situated on the other side of Europe on the globe.
 - S. In keeping with this nomenclature, their annual get-togethers never drew much attention.
- A. RSPQ B.QRPS C.SQPR D.PRQS
17. **Arrange the following sentences to form a coherent paragraph.**
- P. Consignments would now be cleared for exports only after mandatory certification by government-accredited laboratories.
 - Q. WITH its ‘pharmacy of the world’ image at stake, India has amended the export policy with regard to cough syrups.
 - R. This welcome decision has been necessitated by a series of global alerts regarding cough syrups made in India.
 - S. Samples will undergo testing at designated drug labs in Kolkata, Chennai, Mumbai, Chandigarh and other cities.
- A. QPRS B.QPSR C.RSPQ D.SPRQ
18. **Select the option that can be used as a one-word substitute for the given group of words.**
- A person sent on a mission (usually official)

- A. Ethnology
- B. Emissary
- C. Diatribe
- D. Valetudinarian

19. Sentences of a paragraph are given below in jumbled order. Arrange the sentences in the correct order to form a meaningful and coherent paragraph.

- A. The most helpful thing you can do is to hold someone's hand when they most need it.
 - B. Also, jotting down notes for your seniors on ward rounds is probably not the most important thing.
 - C. My first year as a doctor in U.K. is over and this is what I have learnt.
 - D. No matter what anyone tells you, writing that urgent discharge summary is not the most important thing you will do today.
- A. DBAC
 - B. CDBA
 - C. ABDC
 - D. CBAD

20. Select the most appropriate option to fill in the blank.

In view of the excessive heat, schools in Delhi remained closed _____ a week in July.

- A. for
- B. about
- C. in
- D. to

Answers

1. A 2.C 3.B 4. D 5. C 6. B 7. C 8.D 9.D 10.C 11.D
12. B 13.A 14.C 15.C 16.A 17.B 18.B 19.B 20. A **[Practice Exercise]**

Explanations

- A. It indicates a positive trend towards gender equality in the civil services.**
The passage discusses the increasing representation of women in the All India Civil Services, with the percentage of women recruits growing from 23.9% in 2019 to 34% in the most recent round of hiring. The text emphasizes that these women are selected through an objective and rigorous process, suggesting a positive trend towards gender diversity and equality in the civil services. **Option B** is unsupported by the passage, as the selection process is described as objective. **Option C** is a speculative assumption and is not supported by the given information. Finally, **option D** suggests a decline in the exam's difficulty level, but the passage indicates that it is considered one of the toughest exams in the world, with no indication of it becoming easier.
- C) Foster a non-discriminatory work culture in the government sector**
The passage emphasizes that the 34 per cent statistic of women's performance in civil services should be sustained and improved. It suggests that this can be achieved by creating a non-discriminatory work culture, particularly in a male-dominated ecosystem like the government sector. Other measures, like set pay structures and redressal mechanisms, are already in place to help maintain this balance.
- B) The passage clearly states that one of the barriers to women's participation in the workforce in India is the influence of patriarchy and societal pressures. This includes expectations for women to act as caregivers, concerns about safety at the workplace, and inadequate public transportation. Options A, D and C are not mentioned in the passage.**
- D) Cautious optimism**
The passage indeed talks about a positive change – the increasing number of women in the All India Civil Services. This is shown as a hopeful sign, hence the optimistic part. However, the passage also points out that this trend has not translated into a similar rise in women's participation in the nation's workforce in general and highlights several challenges women face. This caution tempers the optimism, leading to the tone being described as cautiously optimistic.
- C) The passage primarily focuses on the increasing number of women in the All India Civil Services and highlights this as a significant milestone. Yet, it also underscores that while this is a step in the right direction, there is a pressing need for greater participation of women in the general workforce to truly tap into India's economic potential. This dual focus on the positive trend in civil services and the need for more extensive involvement makes option (c) the correct choice for the main theme of the passage.**

6. B) The passage provides data on the increase in women recruits in the All India Civil Services and discusses the need for a non-discriminatory work culture, as well as set pay structures, to sustain this trend (Option B). In contrast, it explicitly states that the overall participation of working-age women in the nation's workforce has decreased (disproving Option A). It also claims that the corporate world is struggling with gender diversity at senior levels (disproving Option C). Lastly, the passage suggests that the family background and education of a woman do, in fact, impact her likelihood of working outside the home (disproving Option D).
7. **C) Sobering** (adjective) – serious, subdued, far-reaching, grave, sober गंभीर
 "Sobering" means making someone serious or thoughtful, especially by presenting them with a clear and serious issue or situation
8. **D) Abysmal** (adjective) – Terrible, extremely bad, appalling, awful अत्यंत बुरा
 The word "abysmal" means extremely bad or of very poor quality. An antonym for "abysmal" would be a word that represents a positive or acceptable quality. The word "satisfactory" is antonym.
9. (D) No error
10. (C) 'by watching' बदले 'to watch' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि 'determination to do something' या 'determined to do something' का प्रयोग होता है 'to watch' will be used instead of 'for watching' as 'determination to do something' or 'determined to do something' is used.
11. **D) Instrumental** (adjective) – Contributive, vital, significant, helpful, key सहायक
 Instrumental means "किसी चीज को होने में या करने में महत्वपूर्ण योगदान देने वाला"। इस context में, AgriTech platforms को instrumental कहा जा रहा है क्योंकि वे फसलों के उत्पादन को बढ़ाने में बहुत महत्वपूर्ण हैं, या इसे सम्भव बनाने में।
- **Revolution** (noun) – Radical change, transformation, upheaval, reform, overhaul क्रांति
 - **Interval** (noun) – Gap, period, pause, interlude, break अंतराल
 - **Potential** (noun) – Possibility, capability, capacity, promise, prospect क्षमता
12. **B) Anxiously** (adverb) – Nervously, worriedly, uneasily, apprehensively, restlessly चिंतित रूप से
- **Adequately** (adverb) – Sufficiently, Suitably, Appropriately, Ample, Enough पर्याप्त रूप से
 - **Ostensibly** (adverb) – Seemingly, apparently, outwardly, superficially, on the surface प्रकट रूप से
 - **Allegedly** (adverb) – Supposedly, reportedly, purportedly, apparently, ostensibly कथित रूप से

13. **Bestow** (verb) – Grant, present, confer, award, endow प्रदान करना
Soar (verb) – Skyrocket, shoot up, escalate, surge, rise rapidly तेजी से बढ़ना
14. (be) **Riddled** (with) (adjective) – Full of, infested with, overrun by, beset with भरा हुआ
 The preposition "with" is used because it conveys the correct relationship between the "food value chain" and the "multiple stakeholders".
15. **Engender** (verb) – Cause, give rise to, bring about, create, generate उत्पन्न करना
 The verb "**engender**" is in the present tense, which is consistent with the rest of the sentence. Options A (endanger) and B (endangered) suggest risk or threat, but don't fit the context here. Option D (engendered) is past tense, and would suggest that this effect has already happened and is not ongoing, which is not indicated by the rest of the sentence
16. A) **RSPQ**
R: This sentence introduces the topic - The Pacific Island Countries (PIC). It's a good starting point because it gives basic information.
S: This sentence talks about how these countries were not noticed much in the past. This is a good follow-up to the first sentence because it tells us what was happening in this place.
P: This sentence explains when things changed - when Hillary Clinton visited in 2012
Q: This is a good sentence to end with because it tells us what's happening now - there's a competition between China and the US.
17. B) **QPSR**
Q: We start with "Q" because it introduces the topic of our paragraph. It tells us that India, known as the 'pharmacy of the world', has changed some rules about exporting cough syrups.
P: After introducing the change in the first sentence, "P" gives us more details about what this change is. It tells us that now, before being sent out of the country, cough syrups must be checked and approved by special labs approved by the government.
S: Now that we know the new rule requires checking by labs, "S" tells us where these labs are. They are in cities like Kolkata, Chennai, Mumbai, and Chandigarh.
R: Finally, we end with "R". This sentence explains why India had to make these changes. It's because there have been international concerns about the cough syrups made in India.
18. B) **Emissary** – A person sent on a mission (usually official) दूत
- **Ethnology** – Science of the races of mankind and their relation नृवंशविज्ञान
 - **Diatribes** – Bitter and violent attack in words or writing कठोर समालोचना, विवाद
 - **Valetudinarian** – Somebody who is excessively concerned with his or her own health स्वास्थ्य देखभाल
19. B) **CDBA**

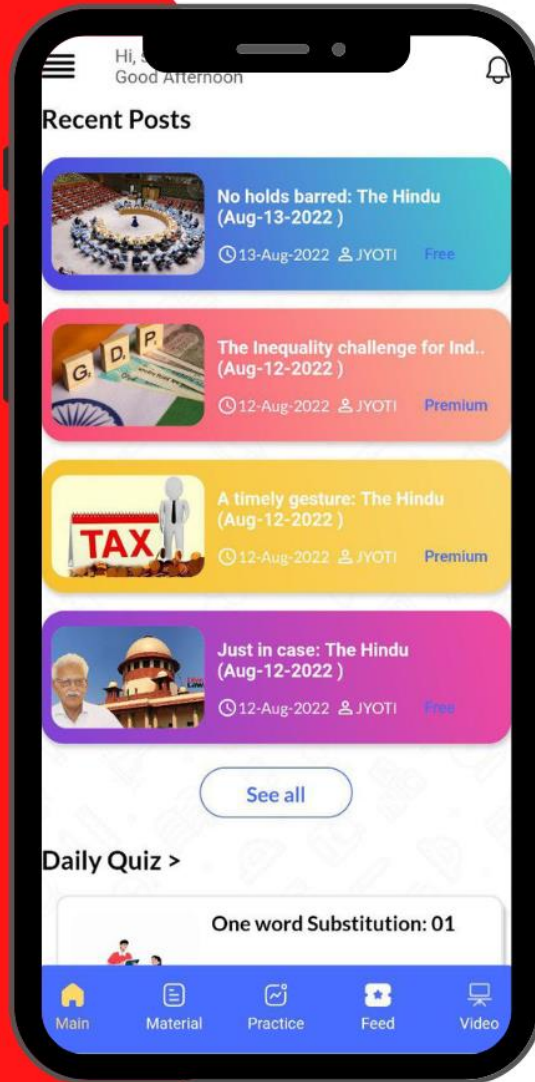
C: (My first year as a doctor in U.K. is over and this is what I have learnt) introduces the topic and is the most appropriate to start the paragraph. It is the introductory sentence which sets the context for the reader.

B: (Also, jotting down notes for your seniors on ward rounds is probably not the most important thing) comes after C as it starts with "Also" which indicates that it is adding on to a point that has not yet been mentioned. Since we haven't discussed any other points yet, it is logical to place B after C.

D: (No matter what anyone tells you, writing that urgent discharge summary is not the most important thing you will do today) naturally follows B, as both sentences focus on things that are not the most important tasks. This creates coherence in the paragraph, as the author is emphasizing what tasks are not of utmost importance.

A: (The most helpful thing you can do is to hold someone's hand when they most need it) comes last, as it provides a contrast to the tasks mentioned in sentences B and D.

20. A) The most appropriate option to fill in the blank is A. "for". It is used to indicate a duration of time.



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