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CONFRONTING ‘LIQUID’ INEQUALITY: HOW WATER SCARCITY AND PATRIARCHY SHAPE LAW IN MAHARASHTRA’S DENGANMAL

AUTHORED BY - SAVI SHIVASHANKAR

ABSTRACT

The phenomenon known as “water wives” in Maharashtra reflects a complex intersection of environmental scarcity, entrenched gender norms, and human rights concerns. In regions such as Denganmal village, men sometimes marry multiple women to ensure a steady supply of water for their households, a practice emerging from acute water shortages, despite the area’s tropical rainfall patterns. This situation goes beyond the immediate issue of water scarcity; it highlights how environmental degradation exacerbated by climate change intensifies existing gender inequalities. Women, in particular, bear the disproportionate burden of water collection, reinforcing broader patterns of gender-based disadvantage. While state-led initiatives like the Jal Jeevan Mission and the Jalyukta Shivar Campaign have been launched to address these challenges, their effectiveness is frequently undermined by implementation gaps and persistent socio-cultural barriers. Ultimately, the persistence of the “water wives” phenomenon serves as a stark reminder of the need for more integrated and socially sensitive approaches to water management and gender equity in rural Maharashtra. It is necessary to have integrated approaches in developing sustainable water management practices and gender-sensitive policies that empower women and promote equitable access to resources. This research paper aims to analyze the impact of climate change on WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) in rural India, with a special focus on the intersection of environmental concerns, human rights, and gender inequality by critically assessing “water wives” is necessary through which a critical analysis of the water scarcity situation, the role of climate change in aggravating the crisis and its gender aspects.

KEYWORDS: Gender inequality, Water scarcity, climate change, WASH, rural Maharashtra.

INTRODUCTION

“Water is life. Women are the custodians of this life, ensuring its flow and purity.”¹

- Vandana Shiva

Water scarcity in Maharashtra presents severe challenges, particularly for women and WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene) systems. In these regions, women disproportionately shoulder the responsibility of water collection, which not only exposes them to significant health risks but also increases their social vulnerabilities. The phenomenon of “water wives”—where men take on multiple spouses primarily to enhance the household’s ability to collect water—underscores the unequal burden placed on women in water-stressed communities. Climatic stressors in Maharashtra, such as recurrent droughts and periodic flooding, further exacerbate these WASH-related risks. The degree of vulnerability varies across districts, but the overarching trend is clear: climate variability amplifies existing challenges, deepening the impact on those already at risk, especially women. In rural Maharashtra, women's involvement in securing safe drinking water has not only addressed water scarcity but also contributed to fighting poverty, oppression, and human rights violations. Water scarcity may either facilitate or impede women's access to productive resources in rural Maharashtra, creating a dynamic interaction between women and water resources.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The emergence of “water wives”—a practice first documented in Danganmal village—has now extended to more than 19,000 communities facing severe water scarcity. This phenomenon underscores the urgent need to address gender dynamics within water access policies.² The shortage of water and ecological resources significantly impacts rural women's lives, affecting their ability to obtain productive resources.³ In response, women in some villages have actively participated in water management initiatives, organising protests and awareness campaigns. These efforts have not only addressed water scarcity but also empowered women to challenge oppression and human rights violations.⁴ Despite some progress, women in Maharashtra still grapple with deep-rooted patriarchal structures and restrictive gender norms. This is especially evident in literature, where female writers face systemic obstacles and persistent societal

¹ Shiva, Vandana. *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development*. Zed Books, 1989

² Manpreet Kaur, ‘Maharashtra’s Water Brides: A Survival Strategy’ (India Water Portal, 2022) <https://www.indiawaterportal.org/articles/water-brides-maharashtra>, accessed 9 June 2025

³ R K Rao, “Women and Water in Rural India” (Oxford University Press, 1991).

⁴ V Devasia, ‘Empowering Women through Water Management: A Study from Kerala’ (1998) 13, *International Journal of Water Resources Development*, 57.

pressures that hinder their participation and recognition.⁵

Research on water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) about gender and women's empowerment has gained increasing attention. Studies have highlighted women's central role in water management, particularly in developing countries. However, there is a lack of gender-disaggregated data on water policy impacts, making it challenging to determine effective strategies for ensuring women's access to water.⁶ Although existing literature acknowledges the significance of gender in water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) sectors, relatively few studies examine pathways toward substantive gender equality. This gap largely stems from the limited availability of gender-disaggregated data and the absence of comprehensive policy frameworks that truly integrate women's empowerment into WASH strategies.⁷ There is a need for more comprehensive approaches that challenge systemic constraints on women's resources and agency.⁸ There remains a pressing need for research that explores the intersections between climate adaptation in the WASH sector and gender-specific outcomes. Furthermore, investigating how advancements in WASH influence broader metrics such as prosperity, stability, and community resilience would offer a more holistic understanding of the challenges and opportunities at hand.

CLIMATE CONDITIONS OF DENGAMMAL VILLAGE, MAHARASHTRA

The climate and geographical conditions of Maharashtra, including the Konkan region where Denganmal village is located, are characterised by a tropical monsoon climate with mean annual temperatures between 25°C and 27.5°C and average rainfall between 1600-2000 mm. Similar to the *Anup desha* in Ayurveda, the Konkan region has a lot of rainfall and wetland-like flora and fauna. Although rainfall levels are high, water scarcity remains a significant issue in this region. Major factors include, firstly, **limited Surface Storage** with insufficient facilities to capture and store rainwater. Secondly, **inadequate Groundwater** with low groundwater reserves, even after heavy rainfall. Lastly, **evaporation and Runoff**, up to 94% of rainfall is

⁵ R Patil, 'Women Writers and the Politics of Voice in Contemporary Maharashtra' (2023) 18 *Indian Journal of Gender Studies* 67

⁶ I Ray, 'Women, Water, and Development' (2007) 22, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 47.

⁷ J MacArthur, S Banerjee and L Thompson, 'Gender Equality in WASH Research: A Global Review' (2020) 36 *Waterlines*, 102.

⁸ B A Caruso and others, 'WASH and Gender: A Systematic Review' (2021) 17, *Global Health Research and Policy*, 85

lost before it can be used.⁹ The spatial distribution of pastoral groups such as the Dhangars is closely linked to environmental factors, namely, topography, climate, and the presence of appropriate vegetation to support livestock. In Maharashtra, water scarcity remains a persistent issue, particularly in rural areas like Denganmal village. Interestingly, this scarcity persists despite relatively high annual rainfall. The underlying causes are multifaceted: inadequate water management and insufficient storage infrastructure result in significant water loss. The region is characterised by intense monsoonal downpours that can trigger flash floods, which are then followed by periods of hydrological drought. It is estimated that up to 94% of rainfall is lost to evaporation and runoff. Moreover, a lack of technical knowledge regarding water conservation at the village level exacerbates the problem. The cultivation of water-intensive crops such as sugarcane in drought-prone regions further compounds water scarcity.¹⁰

CONCEPT OF “WATER WIVES”

The phenomenon of “water wives” in Denganmal, Maharashtra, starkly illustrates how acute water scarcity can fuel deeply entrenched social inequalities, particularly along gender lines. In these drought-prone regions, men sometimes marry multiple women, not out of companionship or tradition, but simply to ensure enough hands are available to fetch water for the household.¹¹ These marriages often involve women who are already marginalised widows or single mothers whose roles are thus reduced to labourers responsible for meeting the family’s most basic needs.

Despite the fact that polygamy is illegal under the Hindu Marriage Act, such practices persist in rural areas where survival often supersedes legal or ethical considerations. The arrangement effectively denies women legal rights within these marriages, while exposing them to significant social stigma should they remain unmarried or divorced. In this context, the practice is both a symptom and a reinforcement of patriarchal norms, underlining the disproportionate burden that environmental hardships place on women.

The intersection of water scarcity, caste, and gender continues to shape social hierarchies and practices in rural Hindu society. Yet, evidence suggests that when women are actively involved in water management and decision-making, communities experience tangible improvements

⁹ Nitya Rao, ‘*Women’s Access to Land: An Asian Perspective*’ (1991) 26(43) *Economic and Political Weekly* 91.

¹⁰ Isha Ray, ‘*Women, Water, and Development*’ (2007) 32 *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 421.

¹¹ Nidhi Tandon and others, ‘*Water Insecurity and Gendered Vulnerabilities in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis*’ (2022) 296 *Social Science & Medicine* 114767.

not only in poverty reduction, but also in the advancement of human rights and the fight against systemic oppression.

EFFECTIVENESS OF INDIAN SCHEMES AND POLICY

In response to these challenges, government initiatives like the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) and the Swachh Bharat Mission have sought to address water and sanitation gaps across Maharashtra. The JJM, launched in 2019, aims to provide tap water to every rural household by 2024. While the scheme has achieved approximately 79.5% coverage, its effectiveness remains hampered by implementation delays and limited community engagement. Swachh Bharat has likewise improved sanitation infrastructure; however, open defecation continues in nearly 7% of households in southeastern Maharashtra, an issue influenced by cultural attitudes, inadequate maintenance, and insufficient behavioural change interventions.¹²

The Maharashtra State Water Policy of 2019 emphasises equitable water distribution as a matter of state priority. However, practical challenges ranging from infrastructural breakdowns to persistent traditional beliefs continue to undermine these policy goals.¹³ This is important for empowering women, who are frequently left to handle the task of collecting water. Additionally, initiatives targeting groundwater management have been introduced to regulate its exploitation, thus promoting sustainable practices that can alleviate the severe water scarcity faced by communities. The government has also focused on enhancing water conservation through various programs, including the establishment of the “Water Resources Conservation Fund”, which encourages participation from corporate sectors and local bodies to support sustainable water management practices. The Maharashtra government initiated the Jalyukta Shivar Campaign, intending to restore streams, construct dams, and recharge groundwater reserves.¹⁴ While the campaign initially appeared to alleviate water scarcity, subsequent reports highlighted issues such as mismanagement and uneven implementation across districts, casting doubt on its sustained effectiveness. Robust watershed management practices remain fundamental for conserving water and mitigating soil erosion.

¹² Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation (Government of India), Swachh Bharat Mission: Gramin <https://swachhbharatmission.gov.in/sbmcms/index.htm>, accessed 19 June 2025.

¹³ Government of Maharashtra, Maharashtra State Water Policy 2019 <https://www.mwrra.org/policies/Maharashtra-State-Water-Policy-2019.pdf>, accessed 19 June 2025.

¹⁴ Jo MacArthur and others, ‘Gender and WASH: Measuring Gender Equality in the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Sector’ (2020) 39(4) *Waterlines* 291

The NITI Aayog's Composite Water Management Index¹⁵ has served as a key tool in evaluating water management strategies at the state level. Persistent challenges, however, indicate that assessment alone is insufficient; a more integrated approach that prioritises community engagement and education is essential for lasting improvements in WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) outcomes. Statistical analysis demonstrates that the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) has notably increased access to safe drinking water. Yet, significant challenges persist. The program's focus on community involvement and sustainable practices is critical for its continued success. Critiques regarding the scientific foundation of initiatives such as the Jalyukta Shivar Scheme contributed to its discontinuation after the 2019 elections. Despite considerable investment and observable progress, ongoing problems—such as open defecation and inequitable access to resources—underscore the need for targeted educational initiatives and greater community participation. These efforts are crucial for enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of WASH schemes in Maharashtra.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK TO ERADICATE THE PRACTICE OF 'WATER WIVES' IN MAHARASHTRA

In Maharashtra, the rise of men taking 'water wives' highlights serious environmental, gender, and human rights issues that require a multi-faceted legal and policy response. The following measures can be taken to put an end to this practice effectively.

Reforming Existing Legal Provisions

The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 (HMA), needs to be modified to outlaw the creation of polygamous arrangements due to the scarcity of water. Section 5 should state that such marriages are void ab initio, treating it as an act of coercion and forced marriage outlined in Section 12. Similarly, amendments to the *Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006* (PCMA), must declare economic and water-related distress marriages as void under Section 3.

Section 3 of the *Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005* (PWDVA), defining economic abuse, needs to be expanded to include survival-driven forced marriages. This would enable women made victims of polygamous marriages because of water scarcity to seek protection and compensation via the courts. Amending the *Scheduled Castes and Scheduled*

¹⁵ NITI Aayog, Composite Water Management Index: A Tool for Water Management (2018) <https://www.niti.gov.in>, accessed 20 June 2025.

Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, to acknowledge that making the same woman drink water from the vessel you drank from, is caste- and gender-based exploitation and therefore, punishment should be automatic with First Information Reports (FIRs) filed under Section 4A of the Act when women are forced into polygamous marriages.

Introducing a New Legislative Framework

Gender inequality due to water scarcity should be regulated under a separate law. It should make such coercive marriages for water access a crime under *the Indian Penal Code (IPC)* by bringing them under the definition of human trafficking that finds a place in Section 370 of the IPC/ Section 143 of BNS, 2023, as well as showing modern slavery under *the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976*.

Additionally, Water Justice Courts (WJCS) must also be set up in water-stressed districts to fast-track the adjudication of gender-based water violence cases. A Special Task Force for Water Equity (STFWE) should also be constituted under the National Commission for Women (NCW) to address gendered issues of water access. To address the economic instability faced by women subjected to exploitative marriages due to water scarcity, it is imperative to establish a State-Funded Water Rights Compensation Fund. This fund should provide direct financial aid, safe housing, and employment opportunities, thereby offering tangible support and a pathway to independence for affected women.

Enhancing Surveillance and Enforcement Mechanisms

Regarding governance and enforcement, the situation in Danganmal village highlights the necessity for Water Distress Monitoring Committees. These bodies would be tasked with ensuring equitable access to water resources for women and monitoring potential vulnerabilities. Integrating AI-driven water mapping technologies could further enhance prediction of shortages and enable timely interventions, ultimately reducing the risk of gender-based exploitation. Institutional reforms are also crucial. Modifications to the Panchayati Raj System should be enacted to mandate active female participation in local water governance and empower self-help groups to oversee water distribution. Amending the Maharashtra Gram Panchayat Act of 1958 to require that at least 50% of village water committee members are women would formalize this commitment to gender equity.

Additionally, states should develop district-level Water Vulnerability Reports that specifically

identify areas and populations at elevated risk for exploitation linked to water scarcity. Industries adopting gender-sensitive water conservation practices ought to be incentivized through tax benefits, fostering a more equitable and sustainable allocation of water resources. Collectively, these measures can create a more resilient framework for protecting women's rights and promoting social justice in water-scarce regions.

State-Level Legislative Reforms: Proposals

The Maharashtra Water Resources Regulatory Authority Act, 2005, should be amended to explicitly incorporate gender-responsive water distribution policies. Such revisions would mandate equitable access to water resources for all genders. Additionally, implementing enforceable penalties for officials who fail to uphold these standards would strengthen accountability within the system. Likewise, *the Maharashtra Prevention of Social Boycott Act, 2016*, must be expanded to treat such water-related polygamy as a perverse form of bonded labour and human trafficking.

Moreover, as under the existing *Maharashtra Groundwater (Regulation and Control of Development and Management) Act, 2009*, water audits must be conducted at the village level on an annual basis to determine which areas are highly vulnerable to gender-related water exploitation and early government intervention to prevent the development of 'water wives' practice is essential. At the district level, Maharashtra Water Vigilance Committees (MWVCs) can be constituted to identify women at risk, intervene legally in the case of coerced marriages, and monitor the success of water equity measures.

Amendments in *the Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Act, 1977*, must further be made to develop targeted special employment programs for women on water conservation in drought-prone districts and provide incentives for corporations making investments in gender-sensitive water management. It is further urged that *the Maharashtra State Legal Services Authority Act, 1997*, be amended to ensure automatic free legal aid and state-funded prosecution for women forced into said 'water' marriages.

RECOMMENDATION TOWARDS WATER SCARCITY IN DENGANMAL

It is essential to help this climate condition by constructing nalla bunds (a series of small temporary or permanent dams along the stream) to check soil and water runoff, to catch the nutrients, allowing water to go down in the soil and ultimately recharge the groundwater. Once

a few nalla bunds are constructed through local labour for storage capacity. The contour bunds are also to be constructed to create water and soil runoff into the structures.

Renovation of existing tanks can increase the water retention capacity, but the technical faults within them need to be overcome to make them hold water. These projects can be supported by donations from the community, and so much government assistance, while planting trees surrounding the tanks will increase the permeability of the soil to induce percolation. Enhancing the village's capacity to attract visitors and strengthening its environmental resilience is not merely theoretical; there are concrete examples, such as Raleghan Siddhi. Despite facing frequent droughts and limited rainfall, this village has demonstrated notable success in managing water scarcity.¹⁶

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a crucial element that can make a difference in improving WASH in the rural sector of Maharashtra through targeted interventions and by engaging with the community. Companies can play a pivotal role by funding decentralized water treatment solutions, supporting community-led sanitation initiatives, and promoting educational campaigns on water conservation. Collaborations between businesses and local non-profit organizations can facilitate the development of essential infrastructure, such as communal water supply systems, rainwater harvesting facilities, and improved sanitation in both schools and homes. These targeted interventions can significantly contribute to sustainable community development. While existing schemes like Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and Jal Shakti Mission already focus on improving WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) outcomes in Maharashtra and nationally, the following additional innovative policies and schemes can be introduced to make an even bigger difference.

1. Community-Led Innovation Fund (CLIF)

Create a state-funded grant program that supports rural communities to cultivate and execute localised WASH solutions. Informed by the Tata Trusts' social art model in Rajasthan¹⁷ CLIF might promote pilot grassroots innovations that are low-cost, like low-water latrines, decentralised water purification systems, or workshops on menstrual hygiene management. Funds could focus on the combinations of tribal and drought-prone regions, approaching CSR

¹⁶ Nivedita Prasad and others, 'Linking WASH and Women's Empowerment: A Conceptual Framework' (2023) 13(1) *Journal of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for Development* 1.

¹⁷ SR Jakhar and NS Mahala, 'Conventional Water Harvesting System in Rural Regions of Western Rajasthan and Its Contemporary Relevance' (2023), accessed 25 June 2025.

partnerships (corporate sponsorships), to scale successful pilots, such as those in Ethiopia, by World Vision.¹⁸

2. WASH-Tech Incubators

To foster innovation in addressing water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) challenges across both rural and urban settings, the introduction of incubators for affordable and scalable technologies is essential. For instance, Internet of Things (IoT) based water quality monitoring systems, solar-powered desalination units, or modular sanitation pods could be piloted in collaboration with startups. This aligns with innovations like community **Reverse Osmosis** (RO) plants in Faridabad.¹⁹, where rejected water is reused for non-potable purposes. Maharashtra could incentivise CSR investments in such ventures through tax breaks.

3. Gender-Responsive WASH Policy

Integrate gender equity into WASH governance by mandating women's representation in local water committees (e.g., 50% membership). Building upon the notable impact of Tata Trusts' menstrual hygiene initiatives and UNICEF's school-centred programs, these efforts can drive meaningful advancements.²⁰ Policies could also subsidise women-led Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to manufacture and distribute low-cost sanitary products or manage water kiosks, ensuring economic empowerment alongside improved hygiene.

4. Climate-Resilient WASH Infrastructure Scheme

Creating a link between WASH infrastructure and climate adaptation to mitigate drought risks in Maharashtra. For example: **Aquifer Recharge Credits**: Subsidising villages to regenerate traditional water bodies (johads), modelled after nalla bunds in Rajasthan and the **Greywater Recycling Mandates**: Mandate urban housing societies and industries to install decentralised greywater treatment systems, taking cues from Mysuru's projects.

5. One Health-WASH Convergence Program

On the other hand, WASH should be integrated with healthcare systems to reduce the incidence

¹⁸ T Moswatsi, 'The Impact of World Vision WASH Program on Rural Public Health in Thabana-Morena Mafeteng, Lesotho' (MA thesis, National University of Lesotho 2023).

¹⁹ A Verma, US Gaharwar, E Priyadarshini and P Rajamani, 'Metal Accumulation and Health Risk Assessment in Wastewater Used for Irrigation around the Agra Canal in Faridabad, India' (2022) 29(6) Environmental Science and Pollution Research 8623.

²⁰ AM Barrett, 'A Millennium Learning Goal for Education Post-2015: A Question of Outcomes or Processes' (2011) 47(1) Comparative Education 119.

of waterborne diseases. For example:

- Household Hygiene Audits with Health-WASH Task Forces train ASHA workers to go door-to-door conducting hygiene audits and promote behaviours (such as handwashing) on par with the Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation (PHAST, Africa).
- Telemedicine Partnerships: Connect rural clinics with virtual platforms to report and monitor WASH-related illness, allowing focused interventions.

6. Green Bonds for Circular WASH Systems

Raise capital through green bonds backed by the state for eco-friendly projects such as Sewage /Faecal Sludge Decentralised Faecal Sludge Management — Building multiple biogas plants for waste, as in Zambia and Toilet Bricks from Plastic Waste: Dispose of plastics and regulate the pressure in landfills.

7. Urban Slum WASH Accelerator

Fill in the gaps in Urban Slum through PPP Models, by means such as Pay-Per-Use Microfinancing, which installs water ATMs with a nominal fee, entrepreneur-driven, and Mobile Sanitation Units that deploy portable toilets

INTERNATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORKS REFERENCES & SUITABLE PRACTICES

The *Water Act, 2016 of Kenya*, which provides 50% of women in community water committees is a model that should be piloted in Maharashtra. The inclusion of women across all water governance bodies would help further water equity and gender justice.

Internationally, comprehensive policies and infrastructure measures have been taken in Taiwan to promote the idea of WASH to support overcoming the challenges of climate change and protecting quality water resources. Key strategies include comprehensive watershed management to boost water storage, the development of a western corridor supply network to stabilise distribution, and the creation of supplemental water sources such as reclaimed wastewater and desalinated seawater. Collectively, these initiatives aim to reinforce local water systems, increase water reuse, and enhance resilience against extreme weather events. In summary, through projects such as the Taiwan ICDF (International Cooperation and Development Fund) collaboration with the Terre des Hommes Foundation in Kenya, Taiwan

has remained committed to improving water and sanitation systems in health facilities, including the construction of WASH facilities, maintenance training, and strengthening the ability of local health systems to respond to environmental health threats.

Similar measures can be taken in rural India, making a major improvement in WASH conditions. Community-based watershed management can contribute to managing and conserving rainwater and soil. Decentralised water supply systems and ensured equal distribution of clean water, at least in villages. Moreover, refurbishment of existing sanitation infrastructure and enlisting community training programs can encourage local ownership and sustainability of WASH interventions. Utilising the Government and Private sectors to help rural area improve their sanitation facilities, and use the Toolkit for hygiene to prevent waterborne diseases. These integrated approaches will both enhance health outcomes and enable communities to successfully manage their systems over the long term.

CONCLUSION

*“In an age when man has forgotten his origins and is blind even to his most essential needs for survival, water, along with other resources, has become the victim of his indifference.”*²¹

- Rachel Carson

The situation in Maharashtra starkly illustrates the urgency of such interventions. The ongoing water crisis exacerbates environmental degradation and perpetuates social inequalities, disproportionately affecting women. Over 10,671 habitats depend on tanker-supplied water while the state struggles with declining water reserves—currently at a measly 22.83% of capacity—showing systematic neglect of both ecological sustainability and women's rights.²² This multifaceted dilemma carries significant sociological and legal implications. Addressing these interconnected issues through an integrated approach can not only mitigate the immediate impacts of water scarcity but also lay the groundwork for a more equitable society—one that prioritizes environmental health and ensures gender inclusivity.

²¹ Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (Houghton Mifflin, 1962).

²² Hindustan Times, ‘*Maharashtra's Water Reserves Drop to 22.83%*’ (Mumbai, 4 May 2025) <https://www.hindustantimes.com>, accessed 29 June 2025.