Global Care Crisis - ILO

Why in news?

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UN’s ILO cautions of a severe shortage of care workers.

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Who is a care worker?

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- According to International Labour Organization (ILO), there are unpaid and paid care works.
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- Two kinds of work fall in the **unpaid category**, and these overlap suitably.
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- There are the **direct**, personal and relational care activities.
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- E.g. mother feeding a baby or a son nursing his ill parents.
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- **Indirect** care activities include cooking and cleaning and other household chores.
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- On the other hand, **paid care work** involves healthcare or other professionals.
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- It includes nurses, teachers, doctors and personal care workers.
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- They take care of patients, aged people and people with similar challenges and vulnerabilities.
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What is ILO's observation?

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- There is a shortfall in paid care - the nurses, teachers, doctors and personal

care workers.
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- Already, there are over 380 million such workers.
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- They account for 11.5% of total global jobs.
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- But this is not enough given the pace of population growth, ageing and diseases.
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What are the driving factors?

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- In 2015, ILO estimates showed that around 2 billion people were in need of care.
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- This comprised of 1.9 billion under age 15 and 0.2 billion senior citizens.
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- This number is estimated to go up, touching 2.3 billion by 2030.
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- This is a significant increase considering the way healthcare improves.
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- Besides, changes in social dynamics and the concept of family are also the reasons.
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- Growth in nuclear families and fragmentation would increase people in need of care.
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- Notably, nuclear families account for the highest share of the world's working-age population.
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What are the shortfalls and possible measures?

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- **Policies** - Governments and businesses must formulate policies to provide decent care work.
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- ILO estimates that this will need doubling the investment in the care economy.

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- It could lead to a total of 475 million jobs by 2030, which means 269 million new jobs.
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- **Pay** - In countries such as India, care workers like nurses are alarmingly underpaid.
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- Nurses and midwives constitute the biggest occupational group in healthcare.
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- Nursing remains the most feminised of the healthcare occupations, according to the ILO.
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- Low, poor wages force them to try multiple jobs, more shifts or working overtime.
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- Such practices not only endanger the quality of care work but also impact work-life balance.
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- Any policy in this regard should promote social justice and gender equality.
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- **Unpaid work** - The ILO and several rights agencies now consider unpaid care as proper work.
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- An ILO survey shows each day unpaid care work constitutes 16.4 billion hours.
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- In other words, two billion people working eight hours per day with no remuneration.
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- If this is assigned a price, it would be $11 trillion i.e. 9% of global GDP.
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- Notably, nearly 80% of this is household work, mostly done by women.
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- There is a need for more childcare and elder-care services so that more women are free to pursue careers.
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Source: BusinessLine

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