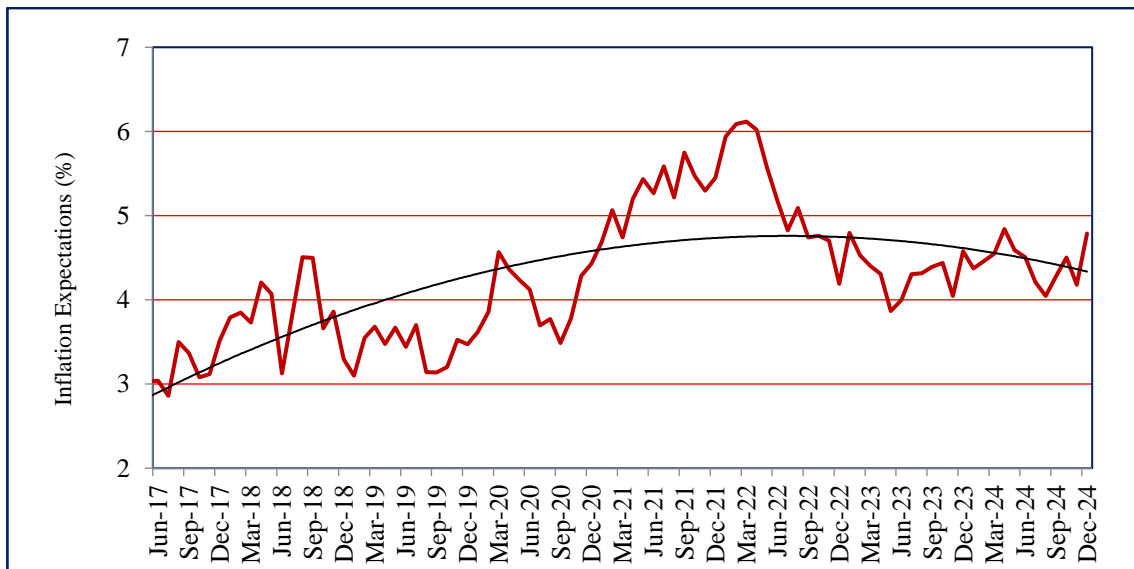


Business Inflation Expectations Survey (BIES)¹ – December 2024

A. Inflation expectations

- One year ahead business inflation expectation, as estimated from the mean of individual probability distribution of unit cost increase, has increased sharply by 61 basis points to 4.79% in December 2024 from 4.18% reported in November 2024. This print of inflation expectation is the highest in the last 7 months. Firms' average inflation expectation during the past 12 months, however, has remained around 4.44%. The trajectory of one year ahead business inflation expectations is presented in Chart 1.
- The uncertainty of business inflation expectations in December 2024, as captured by the square root of the average variance of the individual probability distribution of unit cost increase, has declined further to 1.81%, from 1.89% reported in November 2024.

Chart 1: One year ahead business inflation expectations (%)



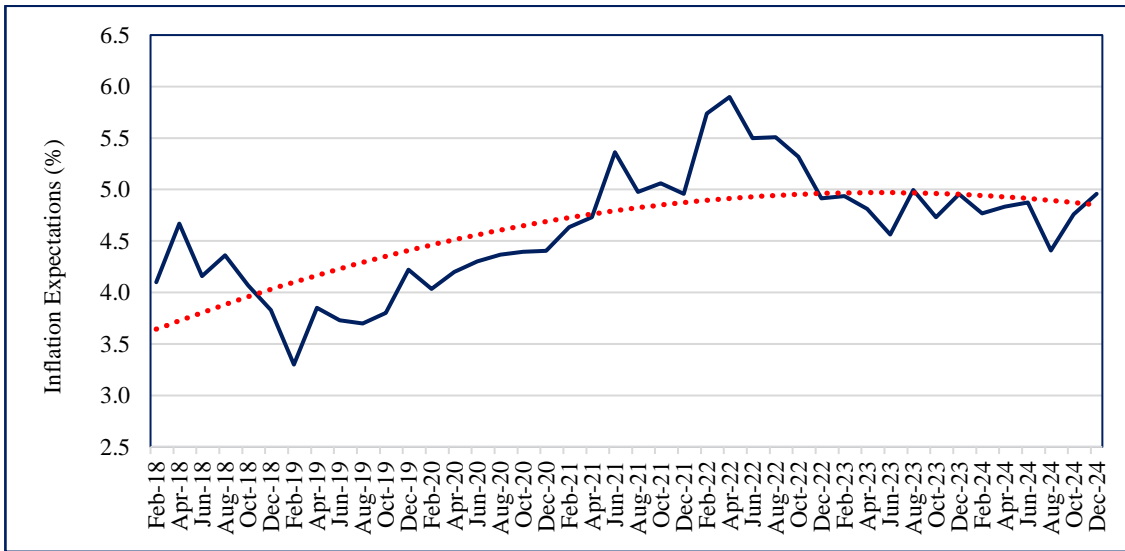
- Respondents were also asked to project one year ahead CPI headline inflation through an additional question using a probability distribution. This question is repeated every alternate month, coinciding with the month of RBI's bi-monthly monetary policy announcement.

¹ The Business Inflation Expectations Survey (BIES) provides ways to examine the amount of slack in the economy by polling a panel of business leaders about their inflation expectations in the short and medium term. This monthly survey asks questions about year-ahead cost expectations and the factors influencing price changes, such as profit, sales levels, etc. The survey is unique in that it goes straight to businesses - the price setters - rather than to consumers or households, to understand their expectations of the price level changes. One major advantage of BIES is that one can get a probabilistic assessment of inflation expectations and thus get a measure of uncertainty. It also provides an indirect assessment of overall demand condition of the economy. Results of this Survey are, therefore, useful in understanding the inflation expectations of businesses and complement other macro data required for policy making. With this objective, the BIES is conducted monthly at the Misra Centre for Financial Markets and Economy, IIMA. A copy of the questionnaire is annexed.

Companies are selected primarily from the manufacturing sector. Starting in May 2017, the "BIES – December 2024" is the 92nd round of the Survey. These results are based on the responses of around 1000 companies.

- The businesses in December 2024 expect one year ahead CPI headline inflation to be 4.96%, further up by 20 basis points from 4.76% reported in October 2024 (Chart 2). Firms' uncertainty of CPI inflation expectations remained low at around 0.90% in December 2024.

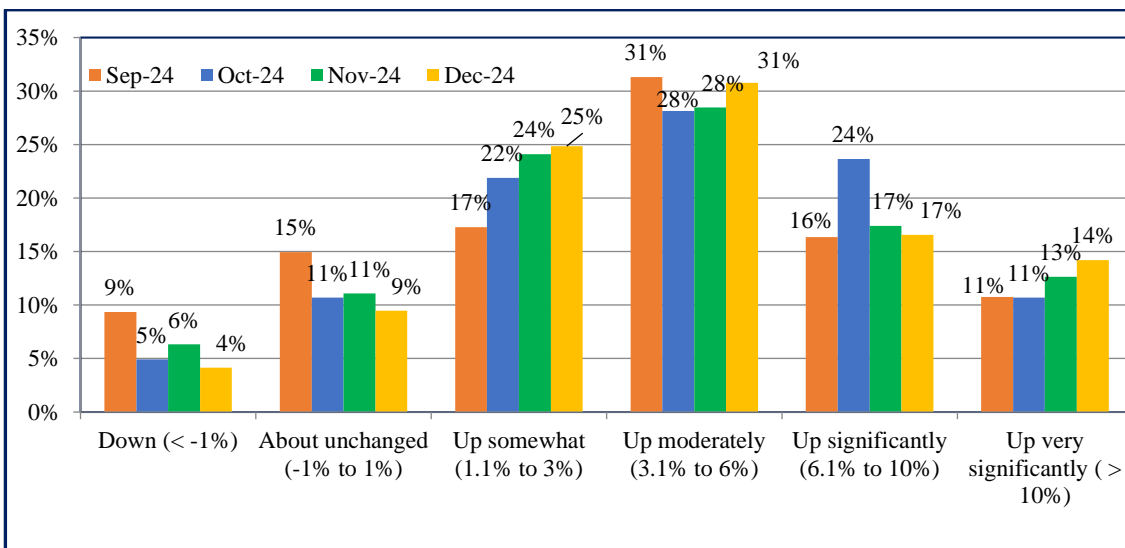
Chart 2: Expected CPI headline inflation (%) - one year ahead



B. Costs

- Overall, the cost perceptions data in December 2024 indicate increase in cost pressures. The percentage of firms perceiving significant cost increase (over 6%) has marginally increased to 31% in December 2024 (Chart 3).
- The percentage of firms reporting moderate cost increase (3.1% to 6%) in December 2024 has also increased to 31% from around 28% reported during the past three rounds of the survey.

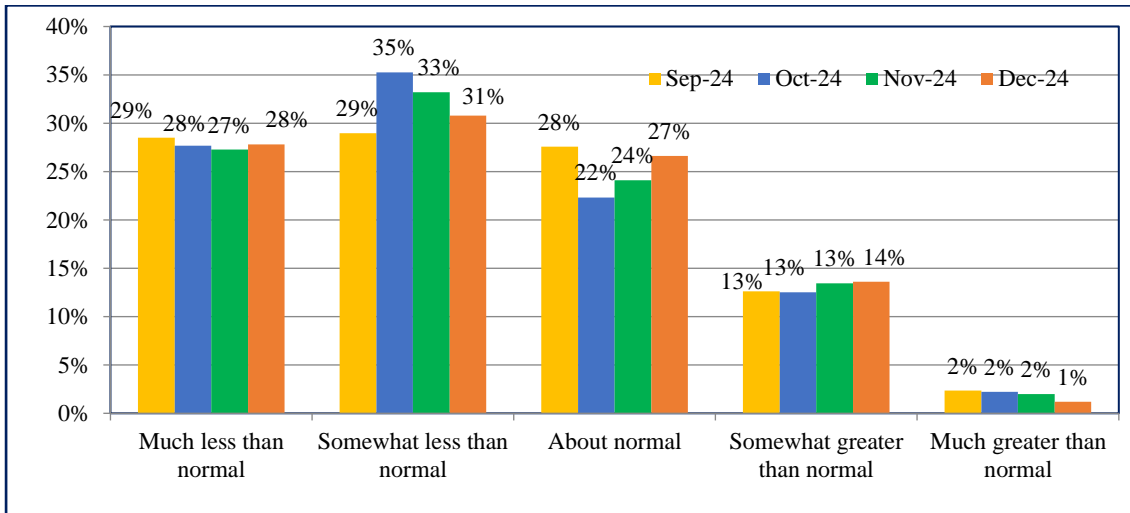
Chart 3: How do current costs per unit compare with this time last year? – % responses



C. Sales Levels

- About 28% of the firms are still reporting ‘much less than normal’ sales² (Chart 4).
- The percentage of firms reporting ‘somewhat less than normal’ or lower sales has remained around 60% in the last two rounds of the survey.

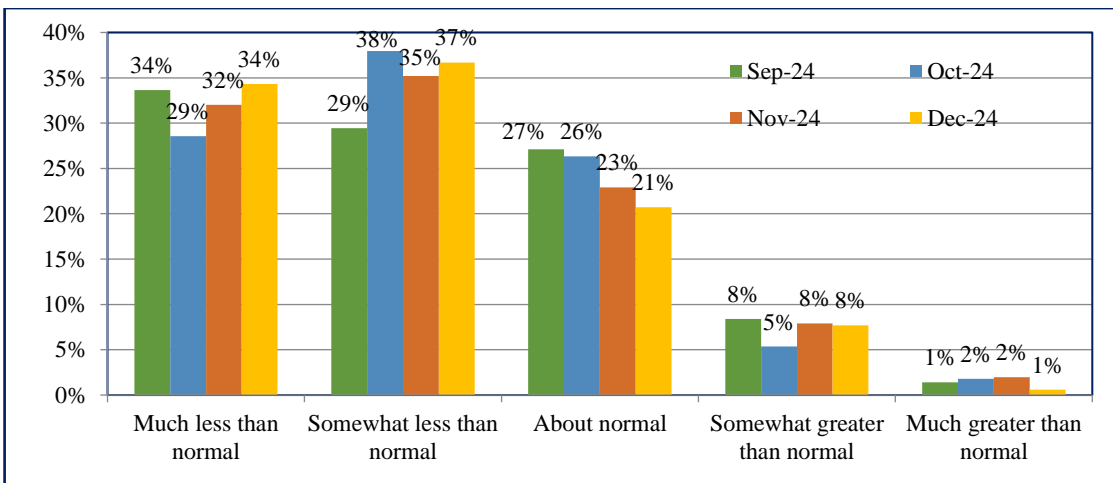
Chart 4: Sales Levels - % response



D. Profit Margins

- Over 71% of the firms are reporting ‘somewhat less than normal’ or lower profit expectations in December 2024, further up from 67% reported in the last two rounds (Chart 5).
- Overall, the profit margins expectations continue to remain subdued in December 2024.

Chart 5: Profit Margins - % response



² "Normal" means as compared to the average level obtained in the preceding 3 years, excluding the Covid-19 period.



Business Inflation Expectation Survey (BIES) – Questionnaire

A. Current Business Conditions

Q1. How do your current **PROFIT MARGINS**[@] compare with "normal"* times?

- Much less than normal
- Somewhat less than normal
- About normal
- Somewhat greater than normal
- Much greater than normal

Q2. How do your current sales levels compare with **SALES LEVELS**[@] during what you consider to be "normal"* times?

- Much less than normal
- Somewhat less than normal
- About normal
- somewhat greater than normal
- Much greater than normal

[@] of the main or most important product in terms of sales.

*"normal" means the average level obtained during the corresponding time point of preceding 3 years, excluding the Covid-19 period.

B. Current Costs Per Unit[^]

Q3. Looking back, how do your current **COSTS PER UNIT**[^] compare with this time last year?

- Down (< -1%)
- About unchanged (-1% to 1%)
- Up somewhat (1.1% to 3%)
- Up moderately (3.1% to 6%)
- Up significantly (6.1% to 10%)
- Up very significantly (> 10%)
-

[^] of the main or most important product in terms of sales.

C. Forward Looking Costs Per Unit^{\$}

Q4. Projecting ahead, to the best of your ability, please assign a percent likelihood (probability) to the following changes to costs per unit^{\$} over the next 12 months.

- Unit costs down (less than -1%)
- Unit costs about unchanged (-1% to 1%)
- Unit costs up somewhat (1.1% to 3%)
- Unit costs up moderately (3.1% to 6%)
- Unit costs up significantly (6.1% to 10%)
- Unit costs up very significantly (>10%)

%
%
%
%
%
%

^{\$} of the main or most important product in terms of sales.

Values should add up to 100%.