

Gender Equality and Gender Budgeting: A Study on Women Empowerment in Indian Scenario

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Abstract

Women Empowerment symbolizes the development of economic, social, political, legal and spiritual power of a woman in parity with men. However, in our male-dominated society, a huge disparity is viewed from the point of being born as male or female, when the social roles, rights, responsibilities and opportunities are determined. The women are considered as the weaker sex and are restricted to family and household chores. They are deprived of the right to be educated, employed, get health care facilities, etc. It can be said that empowerment of women is a vital step in improving women's status in India. Women empowerment and gender equality are two sides of the same coin. The government authorities and national/international agencies have made many efforts by formulating schemes and policies for eradicating the problem of gender inequality. One of the steps in this regard is the introduction of the concept of gender budgeting. It is a people-centered budgeting that creates a link between gender equality and economic policy. Although, over these years, a drastic improvement has been witnessed in the status of women of India, mainly, due to the development of education, communication, change in family life and mindset of people. Still, the ground realities seem to be antagonistic to women. Disparity in health care facilities, education, employment among men and women can be seen. Women are largely victimized. In light of the above, the study is focused upon examining the status of gender equality in India and the role of gender budgeting in improving the gender equality in India.

Keywords: Empowerment, Gender Equality, Women, Employment, Gender Budgeting.

Introduction

In our male-dominated society, a huge disparity is viewed from the point of being born as male or female, when the social roles, rights, responsibilities and opportunities are determined. Boys and girls, men and women are expected by society to play certain roles and behave in a certain manner based on traditions, religions and other beliefs. These behaviors are learned and shape the gender norms in a society. Unfortunately, gender norms create disadvantage for women. The women are considered as the weaker sex and are restricted to family and household chores. They are deprived of the right to be educated, employed, earn money, get health care facilities, etc. Men generally control the household decisions, that how to use the family's assets. Cultural beliefs also restrict women's opportunities. However, gender inequality doesn't make sense in any form and any level. By marginalizing the rights of women, we deny ourselves from the opportunity to lift millions of men, women and children out of poverty. The results of these issues are the women remain poor, dependent on males and agriculture production does not reach its potential perpetuating poverty and hunger in the developing world.

It can be said that empowerment of women is a vital step in improving women's status in India. Women empowerment and gender equality are two sides of the same coin. The social norms that limit women's opportunities need to be understood and changed. By taking gender transformative approach, we can influence and bridge the gaps in access to resources and services among men and women in a lasting manner. Change is needed on many levels and both men and women must be involved for it to happen. The government authorities and national/international agencies have made many efforts by formulating

schemes and policies for eradicating the problem of gender inequality. One of the steps in this regard is the introduction of the concept of gender budgeting. It is a people-centered budgeting that creates a link between gender equality and economic policy.

Gender Budgeting

Before going further we should clear about the concept of Gender Budgeting. The term 'Gender Budgeting' is used to describe various government initiatives that seek to address gender concerns in the domain of public expenditure and policy.

"Gender budget initiatives analyze how governments raise and spend public money, with the aim of securing gender equality in decision-making about public resource allocation; and gender equality in the distribution of the impact of government budgets, both in their benefits and in their burdens. The impact of government budgets on the most disadvantaged groups of women is a focus of special attention."

(International Development and Research Centre - IDRC, 2001)

The overall goal of gender budgeting is to achieve a gender-equality-oriented resource distribution in all areas of resource allocation in India. Further, the gender perspective should be integrated into every phase of budgetary decisions and into the drawing up of budgets. This implies a change of priorities that focuses on the implementation of gender equality of women and men.

Gender Budgeting in India

In India, the crucial players of these innovative processes have been UN Women and the Ministry of Women and Child Development in collaboration with the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP), and the Ministry of Finance. The process of GRB began in the year 2000-01 in India. The national institute of public finance and policy has been the pioneer of gender budgeting in India in 2005. The inclusion of a chapter on "gender inequality" in the Economic Survey of India, 2000-2001 can be considered as the first step with respect to the role of institutions, i.e., the Finance Ministry, in the GRB process. The formal allocation of funds for women began with introduction of 'Women's Component Plan' in 1997-98 through the IX Plan. However, gender sensitivity in allocation of resources started with the Seventh Five Year Plan, when the Plan introduced the concept of monitoring of 27 beneficiary oriented schemes for women.

Players in Gender Budgeting

1. The Ministry of Women and Child Development
2. The Ministry of Finance
3. Planning commission
4. Sectoral ministries
5. Researchers and economists
6. Donors
7. Women organizations

Gender Budget Statement was first introduced in Budget 2005-06. In order to make further, refinement to the Statement, every year the Ministries/Departments are requested through the Annual Budget Circular to highlight the quantum of public expenditure earmarked in budget for women. Based on the information, the Gender Budget

Statement was prepared. This Statement indicated, in two parts, the budget provisions for schemes that were substantially meant for the benefit of women. Part A details schemes in which 100% provision is for women, Part B reflects schemes where the allocations for women constitute at least 30% of the provision.

Objective and Research Methodology

The present study aims to In light of the above, the study is focused upon examining the status of gender equality in India and the role of gender budgeting in improving the gender equality in India. The study examines the gender-wise population data about India and its major states considering variables selected:

1. Health and Survival
2. Educational Attainment
3. Economic Participation and Opportunity
4. Political Empowerment

Further, highlight the high performing and low performing states of India.

Variables	Components
Health and Survival	Sex Ratio
	Life Expectancy at Birth
Educational Attainment	Literacy Rate
	Enrollment in Primary Education
	Enrollment in Secondary Education
	Enrollment in tertiary Education
Economic Participation and Opportunity	Work Participation Rate
Political Empowerment	Women in Parliament

Sources of Data Collection

1. Global Gender Gap Report (2015), World Economic Forum;
2. United Nation Development Programme Reports;
3. Reports of Planning Commission, Government of India;
4. Census Reports of India;
5. National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development
6. National Commission on Population, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.

The data analyzed is presented in the form of Tabular and Graphical presentation for better understanding.

Analysis and Discussion

Global gender gap Index: India's Position: The **Global Gender Gap Report** was first published in 2006 by the World Economic Forum. The differences between women and men, especially as reflected in social, political, intellectual, cultural, or economic attainments or attitudes. The Global Gender Gap measure examines four critical areas of inequality between the men and the women:

Economic Participation and Opportunity

Outcomes on salaries, participation levels and access to high-skilled employment

Educational Attainment

Outcomes on access to basic and higher level education

Political Empowerment

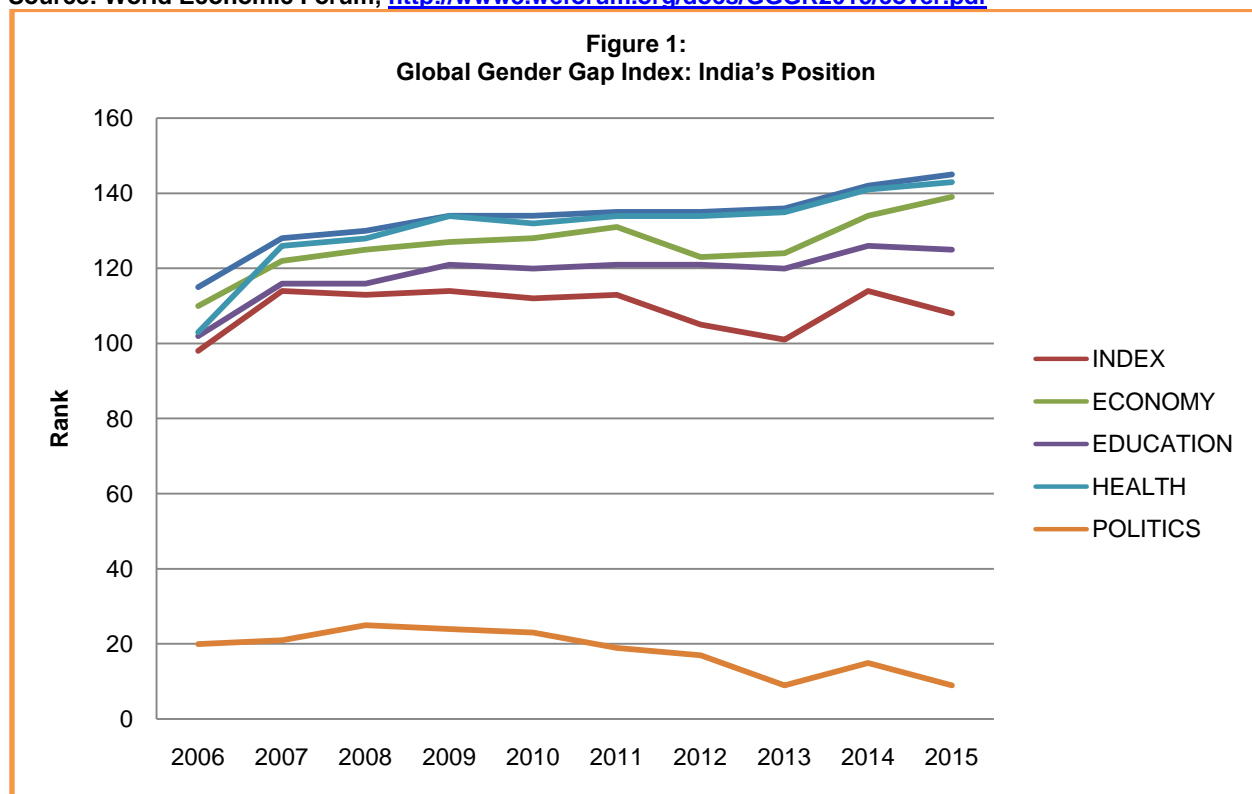
Outcomes on representation in decision-making structures

Health and Survival

Outcomes on life expectancy and sex ratio

SAMPLE		INDEX		ECONOMY		EDUCATION		HEALTH		POLITICS	
Year	No. of countries	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score
2015	145	108	0.664	139	0.383	125	0.896	143	0.942	9	0.433
2014	142	114	0.646	134	0.41	126	0.85	141	0.937	15	0.385
2013	136	101	0.655	124	0.446	120	0.857	135	0.931	9	0.385
2012	135	105	0.644	123	0.459	121	0.852	134	0.931	17	0.334
2011	135	113	0.619	131	0.396	121	0.837	134	0.931	19	0.312
2010	134	112	0.615	128	0.403	120	0.837	132	0.931	23	0.291
2009	134	114	0.615	127	0.412	121	0.843	134	0.931	24	0.273
2008	130	113	0.606	125	0.399	116	0.845	128	0.931	25	0.248
2007	128	114	0.594	122	0.398	116	0.819	126	0.931	21	0.227
2006	115	98	0.601	110	0.397	102	0.819	103	0.962	20	0.227
2006-2015 (Change)			0.062		-0.013		0.077		-0.020		0.206

Source: World Economic Forum, <http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GGGR2015/cover.pdf>



The report's Gender Gap Index ranks countries according to their gender gaps, and their scores can be interpreted as the percentage of the equality between women and men that has been closed. The table 1 shows India's position among other countries in global gender gap from 2006 to 2015. According Figure 1, the graphical presentation based on rank clearly shows that there is a mixed trend of India's position over the years. The distance between the no. of countries and the overall index,

economy, education, employment and health index determine the reduction in the gender gap. More gap signifies a reduction in gender gap and vice versa. Year 2013 depicts a reduction in the gender gap. However, the reduction does not sustain for long.

Table 2: India's High Performing and Low Performing States in Gender Equality			
High Performing States	Score	Low Performing States	Score
Health: Sex Ratio			
Kerala	1,084	Uttar Pradesh	908
Tamil Nadu	995	Punjab	893
Andhra Pradesh	992	Sikkim	889
Chhattisgarh	991	Jammu & Kashmir	883
Manipur	987	Haryana	877
Health: Life Expectancy Rate at birth			
Kerala	1.075524	Haryana	1.037313
Andhra Pradesh	1.074016	Assam	1.036066
Karnataka	1.07396	Uttar Pradesh	1.030744
Gujarat	1.063174	Orissa	1.027331
Punjab	1.062315	Bihar	1.010687
Education: Literacy Ratio			
Kerala	0.96	Chhattisgarh	0.74
Meghalaya	0.96	Jammu & Kashmir	0.74
Mizoram	0.95	Bihar	0.73
Nagaland	0.92	Jharkhand	0.72
Tripura	0.90	Rajasthan	0.65
Education: Enrolment in Primary Education			
Haryana	1.11	Arunachal Pradesh	0.96
Madhya Pradesh	1.06	Chhattisgarh	0.96
Uttar Pradesh	1.05	Goa	0.95
Jammu & Kashmir	1.03	Bihar	0.94
Assam	1.03	Mizoram	0.94
Education: Enrolment in Secondary Education			
Sikkim	1.22	Manipur	0.93
Meghalaya	1.12	Gujarat	0.91
Uttarakhand	1.06	Uttar Pradesh	0.90
West Bengal	1.04	Bihar	0.88
Haryana	1.03	Rajasthan	0.80
Education: Enrolment in Tertiary Education			
Haryana	1.08	Chhattisgarh	0.95
Madhya Pradesh	1.05	Goa	0.94
Sikkim	1.05	Mizoram	0.94
Uttarakhand	1.04	Rajasthan	0.92
Meghalaya	1.04	Bihar	0.92
Economy: Work Force Participation			
Mizoram	0.83	Bihar	0.40
Nagaland	0.81	Punjab	0.36
Manipur	0.81	Uttar Pradesh	0.35
Himachal Pradesh	0.80	West Bengal	0.34
Chhattisgarh	0.76	Kerala	0.31
Political: Minister in Parliament			
Meghalaya	0.50	Rajasthan	0.14
Punjab	0.40	Andhra	0.14
Chhattisgarh	0.38	Bihar	0.11
Madhya	0.26	Maharashtra	0.07
Haryana	0.25	Karnataka	0.04

Source: Compiled from Economic Survey, National Health Profile 2008, Census Reports.

Based on the variables and table 2, the study further shows the highest performing states of India and the lowest performing states of India:

1. In sex ratio, Kerala is the highest performer and Haryana is the lowest performer.
2. In life expectancy at birth, Kerala is the highest performer and Bihar is the lowest performer.

3. In Literacy rate, Kerela is the highest performer and Rajasthan is the lowest performer.
4. In enrollment in Primary education, Haryana is the highest performer and Mizoram is the lowest performer.
5. In enrollment in secondary education, Sikkim is the highest performer and Rajasthan is the lowest performer.
6. In enrollment in tertiary education, Haryana is the highest performer and Bihar is the lowest performer.
7. In Work force participation rate, Mizoram is the highest performer and Kerela is the lowest performer.
8. In minister in Parliament, Megalayas is the highest performer and Karnataka is the lowest performer.

Conclusion

The objective of gender budgeting is to monitor expenditure and public service delivery from a gender perspective, as a means of mainstreaming women's concerns in all activities and improving their access to public resources. Gender Budgeting is a budding area where, with better understanding and appreciation of the subject, Ministries/Departments are reviewing programmes and schemes to address major areas that have the budgetary potential to impact and address the development needs of women.

Although, over these years, a drastic improvement has been witnessed in the status of women of India, mainly, due to the development of education, communication, change in family life and mindset of people. Still, the ground realities seem to be antagonistic to women. Disparity in health care facilities, education, employment among men and women can be seen. Women are largely victimized. Research and Development organizations need to invest in programs that promote gender equality alongside improving productivity and incomes. Policies need to be implemented that increase women's access to services and resources. Committees need to support women as farmers and as leaders. When development organization, policies, committees support the successive women, we have a chance to reduce poverty and enhance prosperity of the nation.

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