

Gender Gaps: With Special Reference To India

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ABSTRACT

Gender Gap refers to differences between women and men, especially with regard to economic, social, political, intellectual, and cultural. "Gender inequality is an important aspect which deserves special attention. Women and girls represent half the population, and our society has not been fair to this half. Their socio-economic status is improving, but gaps persist....The emergence of women in public spaces, which is an absolutely essential part of social emancipation, is accompanied by growing threats to their safety and security..... the issue of safety and security of women is of the highest our concern. There can be no meaningful development without the active participation of half the population. Hence, "Gender Inclusive Development" should be our main aim for the overall development of our country. We have to find out the ways and means, how women could be involved in the development process. In India, despite several years of planed development, improvement observed in education and, to a lesser extent, in health women's improved capabilities do not seem to have been translated into an equal participation between men and women in economic and political activities.The main message of the World Development Report (2012) is gender equality and inclusive development. This Paper is an attempt to focus on various aspects of Gender gap with a special reference to India.

Keywords: *Gender Gap, Gender Equity Issues, Causes, Social Attitude, Women empowerment, Policy Measures.*

Introduction

"Gender inequality is an important aspect which deserves special attention. Women and girls represent half the population, and our society has not been fair to this half. Their socio-economic status is improving, but gaps persist....The emergence of women in public spaces, which is an absolutely essential part of social emancipation, is accompanied by growing threats to their safety and security the issue of safety and security of women is of the highest concern to our Government. There can be no meaningful development without the active participation of half the population and this participation simply cannot take place if their security is not assured". Hence, "Gender Inclusive Development" should be our main aim for the overall development

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of our country. We have to find out the ways and means, how women could be involved in the development process. In India, despite several years of planned development, improvement observed in education and, to a lesser extent, in health women's improved capabilities do not seem to have been translated into an equal participation between men and women in economic and political activities. The main message of the World Development Report (2012) is gender equality and inclusive development. Greater gender equality enhances productivity and improves other development outcomes, including prospects for the next generation and for the quality of societal policies and unequal. Economic development is not enough to shrink all gender disparities-corrective policies that focus on persisting gender gaps are essential. This report points to four priority areas for policy going forward. First, reducing gender gaps in human capital-specifically those that address female mortality and education. Second, closing gender gaps in access to economic opportunities, earnings, and productivity. Third, shrinking gender differences in voice and agency within society. Fourth, limiting the reproduction of gender inequality across generations. These are all areas where higher incomes by themselves little do to reduce gender gaps, but focused policies can have a real impact. Gender equality is at the heart of development. This Paper is an attempt to focus on various aspects of Gender gap with a special reference to India.

Gender Gap

It refers to differences between women and men, especially with regard to economic, social, political, intellectual, and cultural. The Global Gender Gap measure was introduced by the World Economic Forum in 2006 to examine four critical areas of inequality between men and women. The four parameters are: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment. The index has benchmarked 156 countries across the globe in 2021. The data show that it will take 135.6 years to bridge the gender gap worldwide and the pandemic has impacted women more severely than men. The gap is the widest on the political empowerment dimension with economic participation and opportunity being next in line. However, the gap on educational attainment and health and survival has been practically bridged.

Brief Review of Gender Gap across the Globe

The gender pay gap stems from the difference in the number of men versus women who work despite the continued efforts of activists and policy makers, in many ways, gender equality is still a pipe dream. Research shows gender discrimination mostly against women and in favour of men in many realms, including at the workplace and there is a problem of unequal pay. Unequal pay

refers to situations where women are paid less than men for doing the same work. Women get less money compared to men despite having more skills and work experience. Pay inequality between men and women is not just restricted to the traditional full-time workplace. It exists in the freelancing world too. Research shows that men out-earn women doing the same freelancing job and this gap worsens as experience rises. India has slipped 28 places and has been ranked 140th among 156 nations participating in the rankings. The most gender equal country in the world is Iceland continues to be top, and it has been in the first position for 12 years. A 2017 report by Flexing It, a freelance platform, which studied what India's experienced independent professionals earn across skills, industries, and gender, shows that women professionals with over 16 years of work experience earn 45-50% lower fees compared to their male counterparts. A US Study of over 1.8 million Uber drivers found that female drivers make 7% less per hour, even though the algorithms that determine pay for the ride-hailing service are gender blind. Research from UK-based Website Planet shows some women are paid half as men for similar freelance work. According to Prof. Linda Babcock, who has co-authored *Women Don't Ask: The High Cost of Avoiding Negotiation – and Positive Strategies for Change* has said that men are four times more likely than women to ask for a raise, and when women do ask they typically request 30% less than men do. In a Study of 78 master's degree students, she found that just 12.5% of women negotiated for their starting salary versus 52% of men. A 2016 survey of over 2,000 workers, published by Glassdoor, found something similar as well. Almost 70% of women accepted the salary they were offered and did not negotiate, a 16% point difference when compared to men, the survey concluded. A major reason for this is that women underestimate themselves. "... we don't actually know what we are worth. Through a quirk of biology and culture, we undervalue ourselves. What's more, even if we do realize our value and then ask for it, we often suffer consequences of another sort. People find us bossy, or uncompromising, or difficult. They don't want to work with us," says Joanne Lipman in her book, *That's What She Said: What Men Need to Know (and Women Need to Tell Them) About Working Together*.

Where We Stand

According to Global Gender Gap Report 2021, India has slipped 28 places and has been ranked 140th among 156 nations participating in the rankings. It is the third-worst performer among South Asian countries, with Pakistan and Afghanistan trailing and Bangladesh being at the top. The report states that the country fared the worst in political empowerment, regressing from 23.9% to 9.1%. Its ranking on the health and survival dimension is among the five worst performers. The economic participation and opportunity gap saw a decline of 3% compared to 2020, while on the educational attainment front India is in the

114th position. The gender gap in India has widened to 62.5%, largely due to women's inadequate representation in politics, technical and leadership roles, decrease in women's labour force participation rate, poor healthcare, lagging female to male literacy ratio, income inequality. The pandemic has only slowed down in its tracks the progress India was making towards achieving gender parity. The country urgently needs to focus on "health and survival" which points towards a skewed sex ratio because of high incidence of gender-based sex selective practices and economic participation of women. Women's labour force participation rate and the share of women in technical roles has declined in 2020, reducing the estimated earned income of women, which is one-fifth that of men.

Top Ten Countries:

The most gender equal country in the world is Iceland, and it has been in the first position for 12 years. Finland is second and Norway third, with New Zealand being a close fourth, followed by Sweden. Lithuania, Serbia, Timor-Leste, Togo, and the United Arab Emirates have improved the most in the overall index.

Gender Equity Issues in India

The origin of the Indian idea of appropriate female behavior can be traced back to the rules laid down by Manu in 200 BC: "In childhood a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband, when her lord is dead to her sons; a woman must never be independent." They are not well aware of economic and political systems. So, they cannot participate in such fields without proper training. It requires a long time. They are not aware of legal provisions favoring and protecting them. Female are regarded as machines to produce children. This attitude is yet to be changed. Gender discrimination continues to be an enormous problem within Indian society. Traditional patriarchal norms have relegated women to secondary status within the household and workplace. This drastically affects women's health, financial status, education, and political involvement. Women are commonly married young, quickly become mothers, and are then burdened by stringent domestic and financial responsibilities. India has traditionally been schizophrenic in its treatment of women, worshipping them on the one hand and neglecting the girl child on the other. "While countries like China too have a male preference among children, but they have less discrimination in healthcare services made available to children. India has traditionally been "very backward" when it comes to social development and gender parameters. "We don't lack government programmes, but the challenge lies in half-hearted implementation and corruption".

The Constitution of India ensures gender equality in its preamble as a fundamental right but also empowers the state to adopt measures of positive

discrimination in favor of women by ways of legislation and policies. India has also ratified various international conventions and human rights forums to secure equal rights of women," such as the ratification of Convention on elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) in 1993. Women have been finding place in local governance structures, overcoming gender biases. Over one million women have been elected to local Panchayats as a result of 1993 amendment to the Indian Constitution. The passing of Pre-natal Diagnostic Tech Act in 1994 also is a step in removing gender discrimination. This Act seeks to end sex- determination tests and female feticide and prohibits doctors from conducting such procedures for the specific purpose of determining the sex of the fetus. The Government also announced the National policy for empowerment of women in 2001 to bring out advancement, development, and empowerment of women. As persistent gender inequalities continue, we need to rethink concepts and strategies for promoting women's dignity and rights. Article 16 of the Indian Constitution states that equal opportunity will be provided for all citizens in office employment under the state. However, the reality is different. In India, unfortunately, women's participation in the workforce in India has not been rising over the last few decades. A report by the World Bank said that India is one of those countries where less than a quarter of women have joined the labour force and only one-fifth are employed. Gender disparity is a consequence of illiteracy, women's safety concerns in workplaces, notions of family responsibility and acceptability of women in higher positions in the jobs. In a report by Inter-Parliamentary Union, India ranked 149 out of 192 countries in women's participation in Parliaments across the globe. A stark difference can be noticed when India is compared to its neighbours. As of January 2021, China stands at 86, Pakistan stands at 116, Bangladesh at 111 and Afghanistan at 71.

Gandhiji described discrimination against women as an anachronism, he said: "I fail to see any reason for jubilation over the birth of a son and for mourning over the birth of a daughter. Both are God's gifts. They have an equal right to live and are equally necessary to keep the world going." Gender inequalities in India, refers to health, education, economic and political inequalities between men and women. Gender inequalities, and its social causes, impact India's sex ratio, women's health over their lifetimes, their educational attainment, and economic conditions. When India's population is examined as a whole, women are placed at a disadvantage in several ways. Gender inequality holds back the growth of individuals, the development of nations and the evolution of societies. Amartya Sen highlighted the need to consider the socio-cultural influences that promote gender inequalities. In India, cultural influences favour the preference for sons for reasons related to kinship, lineage, inheritance, identity, status, and economic security. In extreme cases, the discrimination takes the form of honour killings where

families kill daughters or daughter in laws who fail to conform to gender expectations about marriage and sexuality.

Causes of Gender Gap in India

The following are broadly the main causes of gender gap in India:

1. **Labour participation and wages:** Over 50% of Indian labour is employed in agriculture. A majority of rural men work as cultivators, while a majority of women work in livestock maintenance, egg, and milk production. About 78 per cent of rural women are engaged in agriculture, compared to 63 per cent men. About 37% of women are cultivators, but they are more active in the irrigation, weeding, winnowing, transplanting, and harvesting stages of agriculture. About 70 per cent of farm work was performed by women in India.
2. **Property ownership Inequalities:** When compared with men, women have low levels of property ownership.
3. **Education Inequalities:** According to Mahatma Gandhi, **“If you educate a man you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you educate an entire family.”** Our predominant patriarchal system doesn't provide enough chances for women to have higher education even if they wish. Education of women would mean narrowing down of social disparities and inequities.
4. **Literacy Inequalities:** Although this gap has been reduced significantly, problems still remain in the quality of education for girls where boys in the same family will be sent to higher quality private schools and girls sent to the government school in the village.
5. **Health Inequalities:** Immunization rates for 2 year old were 41.7% for girls and 45.3% for boys according to the National Family Health Survey-3, indicating a slight disadvantage for girls. Some studies in south India have found that gender disadvantages, such as negative attitudes towards women's empowerment are risk factors for suicidal behavior and common mental disorders like anxiety and depression.
6. **Violence against women:** Domestic violence, rape and dowry-related violence are sources of gender violence.
7. **Political Inequalities:** This measure of gender inequality considers the gap between men and women in political decision making at the highest levels.
8. **Poverty:** In India of the total 30 percent people who are below poverty line, 70 percent are women. Women's poverty in India is directly

related to the absence of economic opportunities and autonomy, lack of access to economic resources including credit, land ownership and inheritance, lack of access to education and support services and their minimal participation in the decision making process. The situation of women on economic front is no better and men still enjoy a larger share of the cake. Thus, poverty stands at the root of gender discrimination in our patriarchal society and this economic dependence on the male counterpart is itself a cause of gender disparity.

9. **Illiteracy:** Despite the notable efforts by the countries around the globe that have expanded for the basic education, there are approximately 960 million illiterate adults of whom two thirds are women. Educational backwardness of the girls has been the resultant cause of gender discrimination. The disparities become more visible between male and female literacy rate.
10. **Lack of Employment Facilities:** Women are not able to resolve the conflict between new economic and old domestic roles. In both rural and urban India, women spend a large proportion of time on unpaid home sustaining work. Women are not able to respond to new opportunities and shift to new occupations because their mobility tends to be low due to intra-house hold allocation of responsibilities. Rights and obligations within a house hold are not distributed evenly. Male ownership of assets and conventional division of labour reduce incentives for women to undertake new activities. In addition, child bearing has clear implications for labour force participation by women. Time spent in bearing and rearing of children often results in de-skilling, termination of long term labour contacts. Thus, women are not being able to be economically self-sufficient due to unemployment and their economic dependence on the male counterpart is itself a cause of gender disparity.
11. **Social Customs, Beliefs and Practices:** Women are not free from social customs, beliefs, and practices. The traditional patrilineal joint family system confines women's roles mostly to the domestic sphere, allocating them to a subordinate status, authority and power compared to men. In Indian culture since very early periods, men have dominated women as a group and their status has been low in the family and society. The preference for sons and disfavour towards daughter is complex phenomenon that still persists in many places. Sons especially in the business communities are considered to be economic, political, and ritual assets whereas daughters are considered to be liabilities. Thus, anti-female social bias is the main cause of gender disparity in our society. The boy receives a ceremonial welcome on his birth where as

everyone is sad at the birth of a girl child. The preference for male child is due to lower female labour participation, prevalence of social evils like dowry and many others causes. The typical orthodox mentality is present even in this modern era leading to sex determination tests and abortion in an illegal way. Though, at present scene is changing fastly, still some parents often think that teaching a girl child to manage the kitchen is more important than sending her to school and they are feeling that it is an unnecessary financial burden to send a girl child to school as subsequently she will be married off and shifted to some other family. This orthodox belief of parents is responsible for gender disparity.

12. **Social Altitude:** Though many social activists and reformers carried their crusade against all social odds to restore honour and dignity to women, attitudinal disparities still hunt our rural masses. Despite pronounced social development and technological advancement, women in our society still continue to be victims of exploitation, superstition, illiteracy, and social atrocities. The social stigma that women are housekeepers and should be confined to the four walls of the house is perhaps a viable cause of gender disparity. They should not raise their voice regarding their fortune for the sake of the prestige of the family. In patriarchal society a lot of weightage is given to men. In the health and nutritional field, male members of family are supposed to take fresh and nutritious food in comparison to women because either they are earning members or head of the family, or they are supposed to be more important than female members. This type of social attitude is conducive to create the problem of gender discrimination.
13. **Lack of Awareness among Women:** Most of the women are unaware of their basic rights and capabilities. They even do not have the understanding as to how the socio-economic and political forces affect them. They accept all types of discriminatory practices that persist in our family and society largely due to their ignorance and unawareness. Article 15 of the Indian constitution states that the state shall not discriminate any citizen on the grounds of only sex. The irony is that there still is widespread discrimination which is a form of injustice to women. Hence at the onset of the new millennium let this generation be a historic example by putting an end to the gender – based discriminations by unfurling the flag of gender justice in all our action and dealings. If women get equal opportunities like men, they can work in every field like men. Today, if she lags behind a little, it is not her fault but the fault of traditions which have suppressed them for centuries , owing to this, her own thoughts like also hang around

only familial life and her nearest environment also does not provide favorable conditions for her devotion in the outside work. In order to change the situation along with economic growth social progress is also greatly required. Hence, the need of the hour is to effectively combat gender disparity as to promote gender equality by sufficiently empowering the women.

Suggestions

- **Globalization:** Globalization has presented new challenges for the realization of the goal of women's equality. Strategies should be designed to enhance the capacity of women and empower them to meet the negative social and economic impacts, which may flow from the globalization process.
- **Change in attitude of men:** Men should change their attitude towards women. Unless men start regarding women as their equal partners, in the growth of humanity this differentiation between men and women shall continue unabated. No single item of achievement like education, profession, legal rights or even the mixture of all these will work out a solution - the only feasible solution is the change in the mindset of men towards women. Till this is done, no amount of teaching, preaching, or bargaining will help the girl child.
- **Change in attitude of women:** There is a proverb in Telugu that "A woman is enemy to another woman". Even women have to change their attitude towards the girl child/ women. At least partly women are themselves responsible for their position. They prefer for sons.
- **Gender discrimination:** There should be full stop for gender discrimination and an end to son preference. Both and boys and girls should be treated equal in all aspects. According to United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) projection, by the year 2025 a significant share of men above 30 would still be single and that many will never be able to marry at all. Men in the states of Haryana and Punjab are already experiencing a nearly 20% deficit of marriageable women.
- **Intensive Information, Education and Communication (IEC) Campaigns:** Intensive Information, Education and Communication campaigns should be organized for raising awareness among the public regarding the serious consequences of decline in female sex ratio. In this context it is right to quote, the statement of GK Pillai, Ex-Union Home Secretary that "Whatever major steps that have been put in the last 40 years have not had any impact in the child sex ratio and therefore it

requires complete review. Every policy measure has to be looked into at the central government, state government and at the panchayat level”.

- **MTP:** Amartya Sen refers to the abortions of the female fetus after determination of the sex of the foetus as “natality inequality.” He designates the use of ultrasound as “high-tech sexism.” MTP providers need to be more vigilant when performing second-trimester abortions. While the feminist discourse on abortion advocates that abortion is a right over one’s body, sex-selective abortion in itself is a form of female violence. Effective implementation of the Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques (PNDT) Act (1994) so that families find it difficult to undertake sex determination and selective abortion.
- **Women empowerment:** In the simplest of words, basically women empowerment means the creation of an environment where women can make independent decisions on their personal development as well as shine as equals in society. Education of women is a powerful tool for improving nutrition levels, raising the age at marriage (Recently, Central government has raised the marriage age of girls from 18 to 21 is a welcome step), acceptance of family planning, improvement in self-image, and their empowerment. Hence, this should be given top priority.
- **Recognizing unpaid care work as a major human rights issue:** As unpaid care work is a major human rights issue this needs to change. Policies must recognize the role of women and girls in the provision of unpaid care; reduce the drudgery of unpaid care; and redistribute unpaid care work (from women to men, and from the family to communities and the state), thus laying the basis for true gender equality.
- **Decision-making:** Enhancing women’s decision-making power in the household and society.
- **Resources:** Ensuring that resources allocated for gender equality match the genuine objectives and commitments.
- **Financial Management:** Making sure that public financial management systems are gender-responsive, including by more rigorous tracking of expenditures.
- **Accountability:** Strengthening accountability framework for measuring progress on gender equality and Women’s empowerment commitments at the country level.
- **Economic and Financial assets:** Enhancing women’s access to and

control over economic and financial assets.

- **Reducing the gender gap:** Reducing the gender gap in secondary and higher education would be a focus area, with a special focus on girls and women, particularly those belonging to weaker sections including the SC/ST/BC/Minorities.
- **NGOs Role:** NGOs may be encouraged to promote formation of self-help groups, organize non-formal education for adult females and school dropouts, create employment opportunities for women as well as provide counseling and support services to newly married and pregnant women to discourage them from undergoing sex-selective abortion.
- **Warning Signals:** “It (the decline in child sex ratio) was expected, but it is a warning signal for the nation to wake up,” Ranjana Kumari, Ex-Director of Centre for Social Research, has said the law banning sex-based abortion “is not stringently implemented”. “The caution should be taken seriously. We are leading to a crisis situation”.
- **Regular check and serious punishment:** There should be regular check and serious punishment for sex determination tests, female feticide, infanticide, and illegal abortions.
- **Save the Girl Child Campaign:** “Save the Girl Child campaign” launched by Government of India must be intensified. One of its main objectives is to lessen the preference for a son by highlighting the achievements of young girls. To achieve the long-term vision, efforts are afloat to create an environment where sons and daughters are equally valued. Boys need to be educated at an early level with regard to giving respect and equal rights to girls.
- **Dowry:** The evil practice of dowry is widely prevalent in India. This should be curbed by implementing stringent laws and punishment.
- **Malnutrition:** In view of the high risk of malnutrition and disease that women face at all the three critical stages viz., infancy, childhood, adolescent and reproductive phase, focused attention should be paid to meeting the nutritional needs of women at all stages of life cycle.
- **Positive Economic and Social policies:** Creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women to enable them to realize their full potential.
- **Equal Rights:** The de-jure and de-facto enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedom by women on equal basis with men in all spheres-political, economic, social cultural and civil should be given.

- **Equal Access:** Equal access to participation, decision making of women in social, political and economic life of the nation, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security and public office etc. is essential.
- **Strengthening legal systems:** Strengthening the legal systems aimed at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women is the need of the hour.
- **Priorities for domestic policy action:** Addressing excess deaths of girls and women and eliminating gender disadvantage in education where these remain entrenched.
- **Closing differences** in access to economic opportunities and the ensuing earnings and productivity gaps between women and men.
- **Shrinking gender differences** in voice within households and societies.
- **Limiting the reproduction of gender inequality** across generations.
- **Stringent laws:** Laws related to SDTs and MTPs should be implemented strictly.

Safety of Women is ensured:

- Where women girls can enjoy public spaces and public life without fear of being assaulted
- Where violence do not exist against women and girls in their home, street and at work place
- Where women and girls participate in making decisions that affect the community in which they live
- Where women and girls are discriminated against where their economic, social, Political and Cultural rights are guaranteed.
- Where safety guarantees human rights of all people without excluding women and girls
- Where the state and local government take actions against to provide attention, prevention and punishment for violence against women and girls
- Where the state and local government guarantee women and girls access to justice
- Insecurity and the threat of violence prevent women from participating as full and equal citizens in community life.

Sharing Responsibilities

Women

- Speak out on issues of violence and insecurity
- Support in the efforts to attain gender equality in decision-making positions
- Support women in positions of power to remain accountable and promote equality.

Men

- Listen, accompany, and support women in their drive for autonomy and empowerment
- Mobilize men and boys to challenge traditional gender roles in order to prevent violence against women and girls.
- To Women's groups, grassroots, and community organizations.
- Special efforts should be given to outreach isolated communities
- Act for a local safety policy, planning, and practices which integrate a gender approach, and which support women's safety initiatives.
- Provide greater opportunities for women's involvement.
- Allocate municipal and Panchayat funds to gender equality, community development and poverty reduction programs.

To police services

- Preventive rather than a repressive approach to violence and insecurity.
- The provision of adequate training on the causes and impacts of violence and insecurity on women.
- Development of strategies to promote women's safety and empowerment. Increase women power in police force.

Education sector

- Integrate gender awareness, anti-violence, and human rights teaching into the curriculum, and to challenge stereotypes and attitudes on gender-based violence.
- Mobilize children through empowerment strategies, including self-defense, aimed at ensuring a safer city for all.

- Girls should be motivated to take up higher education. Universal education for all below 14 years should be strictly implemented. Gender sensitive curricula should be framed to address sex-stereotyping menace.

The Role of Media:

- Contribute to community mobilization and facilitate access to services aimed at ensuring women's safety.
- Challenge gender stereotypes and inequalities through information and awareness campaigns.
- Reduce sensationalized reporting.
- The mass media must be involved in promoting a positive image of women. School and college girls should be the target audience. However, this should be combined with highlighting the issue and dangers of female feticide and skewed gender ratio.

Research community

- Encourage research on women's safety and the integration of gender in crime prevention.
- Provide research assistance and support to community-based project implementation and evaluation.

To private sector

- Partner with local organizations and municipalities, and financially support initiatives promoting women's safety.
- Audit the impacts of all decisions on the safety and security of women employees, clients, and consumers, by working with unions, women's groups and community organizations to include these issues in workplaces.

To governments

- Develop policies and programs to ensure women's financial autonomy, including women's right to own property.
- Allocate necessary resources for the development of strategies and initiatives on women's safety and security.
- Politically and financially support local governments in their efforts to promote safety.

International networks and UN agencies

- Increase the availability of electronic exchange, and of technical assistance.
- International, regional, national, and local-to-local exchanges and cooperation for sustainable development and inclusive development.
- Support the evaluation of progress made by regular international or regional conferences on women's safety.

To conclude, Gender gap can be reduced by offering high level education to girls, Social integration, Increasing women employment, Involving them in active politics and social activities, arranging social protection programmes, generating awareness among parents, giving scholarships to girls, spreading awareness against child abuse and violence, Stopping sex identification and abortions, social welfare developments by politicians, promoting NGOs to eradicate Gender Inequality, helping them become tech-savvy. The coronavirus pandemic has inevitably affected the graph of women's participation in the workforce negatively. About 10 million people lost their jobs in May this year, according to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy. Of those, who lost their jobs, women professionals have been particularly affected. McKinsey estimates that female job loss rates have been about 1.8 times higher than for males globally. Awareness of the importance of education for all genders, inclusive participation in leadership and administration, equal remuneration for equal work and promotions based on capabilities can help India to improve its stand on gender representation globally. Schemes such as *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao*, direct cash transfer to women's accounts, *Ujjwala Scheme*, *One Stop Centre Scheme*, and *Sukanya Samridhi* are steps in the right direction. There is a need for successful implementation of the existing schemes in addition to the newly introduced schemes. Very few firms have appointed one independent woman director on the board, but this number should increase. Women's reservation bill is still pending despite almost all national parties declaring commitment. Swami Vivekananda had said "A nation which doesn't respect women will never become great now and nor will ever in future. Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached". In pursuit of making India a great nation, let us work towards giving women their much deserved status. Thus, our country should be catapulted into the horizon of empowerment and equity of girls/women in all spheres to reduce the gender gap and achieve the goal of "Gender Inclusive Development".

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