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The Big Picture – Bridging Gender Gap

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Every year on **March 8**, the world observes **International Women’s Day**. The purpose is to reflect on the progress made by women in different fields, to celebrate the acts of courage and determination by ordinary women who have played an extraordinary role in the history and to call for action to bring about the necessary change towards gender equality. This year, theme is: **“Think equal, build smart, innovate for change”**.

Drishti Input:

Key Findings From International Labour Organisation’s (ILO) Report, 2019:

(A Quantum leap for gender equality: For a better future of work for all)

- 1.3 billion women were in work in 2018 as compared to 2 billion men – **a less than two per cent improvement** in last 27 years.
- Women’s **pay is 20 per cent lower** than men’s, as a global average.
- Women **remain underrepresented at the top**, a situation that has changed very little in the last 30 years. Less than one-third of managers are women.
- This is despite the fact that women are likely to be better educated than their male counterparts. Education is not the main reason for lower employment rates and lower pay of women, but rather women do not receive the same dividends for education as men.
- **Motherhood Leadership Penalty:** Only 25 percent of managers with children under six years of age are women. Women's share rises to 31 per cent for managers without young children.
- In India, women make up about **10.2 percent of managers** with children under the age of six and 16.3 percent with no children.
- In contrast, 89.8 percent managers with children under six years of age are men while this percentage is 83.7 for men with no children.
- In the last 20 years, the amount of time that women spent on **unpaid care** and domestic work has hardly fallen, and that of men's has increased by just eight minutes a day. At this pace of change, it will take more than 200 years to achieve equality in time spent in unpaid care work.

Reasons For Persistent Gender Gap

- **Primary responsibility** of taking care of family and bringing up the child is still on the women.
- Now-a-days, quite a number of women can be seen in ‘**Arts’ Field** but even the same number is missing in ‘**Science’ field**. The reason is that girls are not conditioned for mathematics, physics and chemistry.
- The women are mostly deemed fit for “**pink collar jobs**” only, such as teachers, nurses, receptionist, baby sitter, lecturer etc. which have been stereotyped for women. This denies them opportunities in other fields.
- Many women due to **family pressures** have to retreat from work force.
- Companies are interested in hiring more number of young women because it has been generally seen that the work and the **family environment, marriage and maternity** generally forces a married woman for resignation.
- Women receive **lower amount of wages** compared to men for the same work.

Suggestions To Bridge Gender Gap

- Apart from providing education to women, they need to be provided with all kinds of **opportunities and skills** without any discrimination or stereotyping.

- The **health and safety** of women should be given priority to enable them to participate in public life efficiently.
- The **disparity in pay structure** for women for same work and skill set needs to be closed at all levels.
- Women should be given the **right to decide the size of their family** i.e. number of and spacing between children. Further, all women need to be made aware about contraception.
- **Support** from the society, family and corporate is required to create a soothing working environment for a woman.
- A working couple needs to spend part of their income on domestic arrangements; otherwise the woman will get marginalized.
- The family of a woman needs to understand that she is pursuing a particular job as her passion, not just to earn some income.
- Also, life of the child needs to be planned by couple in advance so that s/he does not suffer.
- Now-a-days, companies do not want to lose their efficient employees. They are generally ready to provide much necessary break (maternity leave) to women.
 - Countries need to work with society and its adolescent population to identify gaps which are limiting women's access in any field and should try to bridge those gaps.
 - Evidence shows that women make better decisions. Therefore, their participation in top decision making bodies at corporate as well as at democratic level needs to be boosted.
- Change in the mindset is required to bridge the gaps in gender equality. Apart from family and workplace support, use of technology is required to maintain work-life balance.

For further reading see the link below:

[Global Gender Gap Report-2018](#)