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Global Gender Gap Report 2021: WEF

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Why in News

India has fallen 28 places in the **World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Gender Gap Report 2021**.

- Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, One Stop Centre (OSC) Scheme, Ujjawala Scheme are some the **initiatives launched by the government** to address the issue of gender inequality.
- Further, **the principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution** in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles.

Key Points

- **Global Gender Gap Report:**
 - **About:**
 - It was **first published in 2006** by the WEF.
 - It **benchmarks 156 countries** on their progress towards gender parity in four **dimensions:**
 - Economic Participation and Opportunity,
 - Educational Attainment,
 - Health and Survival and
 - Political Empowerment.
 - Over the Index, the **highest possible score is 1** (equality) and the **lowest possible score is 0** (inequality).
 - **Aim:**

To serve as a compass to **track progress on relative gaps between women and men** on health, education, economy and politics. Through this annual yardstick, the stakeholders within each country are able to set priorities relevant in each specific economic, political and cultural context.

- **India's Position:**

- **Overall Ranking:**

India is now **one of the worst performers in South Asia**, it is **now ranked 140 among 156 countries**.

- In South Asia, Bangladesh ranked 65, Nepal 106, Pakistan 153, Afghanistan 156, Bhutan 130 and Sri Lanka 116.
- India **had ranked 112th among 153 countries** in the **Global Gender Gap Index 2020**.

- **Political Empowerment:**

- India has **declined on the political empowerment index** as well by 13.5 percentage points, and a decline in the number of women ministers, from 23.1% in 2019 to 9.1% in 2021.
- However, it has still performed relatively well compared to other countries, **ranking at 51 in women's participation in politics**.

- **Education Attainment:**

In the index of education attainment, India has been **ranked at 114**.

- **Economic Participation:**

- The report notes that the economic participation gender gap actually **widened in India by 3% this year**.
- The share of women in professional and technical roles declined further to 29.2%.
- The share of women in senior and managerial positions also is at 14.6% and only 8.9% firms in the country have top female managers.
- The **estimated earned income of women in India** is only **one-fifth of men's**, which puts the country among the bottom 10 globally on this indicator.

In Pakistan and Afghanistan, the income of an average woman is below 16% of that of an average man, while in India it is 20.7%.

- **Health and Survival index:**

- On this India has **fared the worst, ranking at 155**.
The only country to have fared worse is China.
- The report points to a **skewed sex ratio** as the major factor.
 - It says the ratio can be attributed to norms of son preference and gender-biased prenatal sex-selective practices.
 - China and India together account for about 90 to 95% of the estimated 1.2 to 1.5 million missing female births annually worldwide due to gender-biased prenatal sex selective practices.

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Highlights of report

- ▶ According to WEF's Global Gender Gap Report 2021, India has closed 62.5% of its gender gap till date
- ▶ India's gender gap on economic participation and opportunity sub-index widened by 3% this year
- ▶ Highest decline on political empowerment sub-index, where India regressed 13.5 percentage points
- ▶ Women's labour force participation rate fell from 24.8% to 22.3%
- ▶ Estimated earned income of women is only one-fifth of men's, which puts India among the bottom 10
- ▶ India ranks among bottom five in discrimination against women in health and survival sub-index
- ▶ As Covid-19 impact continues to be felt, global gender gap has increased by a generation from 99.5 to 135.6 years
- ▶ Iceland is the most gender-equal nation for the 12th time in 15 years
- ▶ Top 10 gender-equal countries include Finland, Norway, New Zealand, Rwanda, Sweden, Ireland and Switzerland

Global Scenario:

- **Region Wise Rank:**

South Asia incidentally is one of the **worst performing regions**, followed only by the Middle East and northern Africa.

- **Largest Gender Gap in Political Empowerment:**

- The gender gap in political empowerment remains the largest: women represent only 26.1% of some 35,500 parliament seats and just 22.6% of over 3,400 ministers worldwide.
- In 81 countries, there has never been a woman head of state, as of 15th January, 2021.
- **Bangladesh is the only country where more women have held head-of-state positions** than men in the past 50 years.

- **Economic Participation:**

The countries with the largest gender gaps in economic participation include Iran, India, Pakistan, Syria, Yemen, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

- **Timeframe to Close the Gap:**

It will take South Asia **195.4 years** to close the gender gap, while Western Europe will take 52.1 years.

- The World Economic Forum is the **International Organization for Public-Private Cooperation**.
- It was **established in 1971** as a not-for-profit foundation and is **headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland**. It is independent, impartial and not tied to any special interests.
- The Forum strives in all its efforts to demonstrate entrepreneurship in the global public interest while upholding the highest standards of governance.
- Some **major reports** published by WEF are:
 - **Energy Transition Index**.
 - **Global Competitiveness Report**.
 - Global IT Report
 - WEF along with INSEAD, and Cornell University publishes this report.
 - Global Gender Gap Report.
 - Global Risk Report.
 - Global Travel and Tourism Report.

Source: IE