



India's Progress in Gender Equality

For Prelims: [Human Development Report 2023-24](#), Gender Inequality Index 2022, [Reproductive health](#), [Maternal Mortality Ratio](#), [Gender wage gap](#), [National Family Health Survey-5 report](#), [World Inequality Report 2022](#), [Beti Bachao Beti Padhao](#), [Mahila Shakti Kendra](#), [National Creche Scheme](#), [Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandna Yojna](#), [Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana](#), [One Stop Centres](#), [Constitution \(106th Amendment\) Act, 2023](#).

For Mains: Issues Related to Women in India, Dimensions of Gender Inequality Index 2022.

Source: TOI

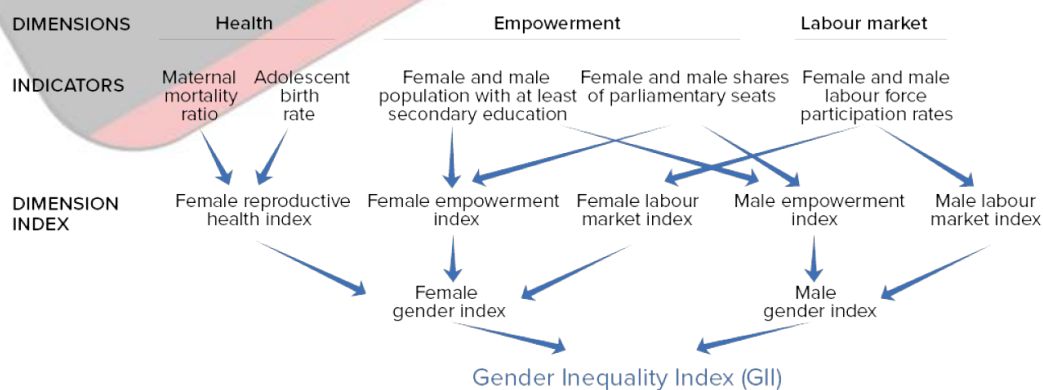
Why in News?

Recently, the **Gender Inequality Index (GII), 2022** has been released by **UNDP** in their [Human Development Report 2023-24](#).

- In GI, India stands at rank **108th** out of 193 countries, with a score of 0.437.

What is the Gender Inequality Index?

- **About:** GI is a composite metric of gender inequality using three dimensions: [reproductive health](#), [empowerment](#) and the [labour market](#).
 - It reflects the gap in human development potential due to inequality between female and male achievements in these areas.
 - GI values range from **0 (equality) to 1 (extreme inequality)**.
 - A low GI value indicates low inequality between women and men, and vice-versa.
- **Dimensions and Indicators:**



- **India's Progress:**
 - India stood at rank **122 out of 191 countries** with a score of 0.490 in the Gender Inequality Index 2021.

- The current data shows a significant jump of 14 ranks on GII 2022 vis-a-vis GII 2021.
- Over the last 10 years, India's rank in GII has become **consistently better**, indicating progressive improvement in achieving gender equality in the country.

Note

- **Maternal Mortality Ratio:** Number of deaths due to pregnancy-related causes per 100,000 live births.
- **Adolescent Birth Rate:** Annual number of births to females aged 10-14 or 15-19 years per 1,000 females in the respective age group.
- **Labor Force Participation Rate:** Proportion of the working-age population (ages 15 and older) that engages in the labour market, either by working or actively looking for work, expressed as a percentage of the working-age population.

What are the Major Issues Related to Gender Inequality in India?

- **Gender-Based Violence:** Women and girls in India often face various forms of **violence**, including **domestic violence, sexual harassment, rape, dowry-related violence, and honour killings**.
 - These issues contribute significantly to the gender inequality landscape.
 - Nearly **one-third of women in India** have experienced physical or sexual violence, according to the **National Family Health Survey-5 report**.
- **Unequal Access to Education:** Despite efforts to improve education access, disparities still exist between boys and girls in terms of **enrollment, retention, and completion rates**.
 - Cultural norms, economic constraints, and safety concerns often hinder girls' education.
- **Invisible Labour:** Women in India often perform a significant amount of **unpaid care work**, including **household chores, childcare, and eldercare**, which is often overlooked and undervalued, contributing to their economic dependency and time poverty.
- **Gender Wage Gap:** Women in India generally earn less than men for similar work, reflecting a significant **gender wage gap**.
 - This gap is prevalent across various sectors and levels of employment.
 - According to the estimates of the **World Inequality Report 2022**, in India, men earn 82% of the labour income, whereas women earn 18% of it.
- **Child Marriage:** Child marriage disproportionately affects girls, depriving them of educational and economic opportunities and exposing them to health risks.
 - According to UNESCO, **one in three of the world's child brides live in India**.
 - **Child brides include girls under 18 who are already married**, as well as women of all ages who first married in childhood.
 - The prevalence of child marriage has reduced by half from **47% in 2006 to 23.3% during 2019-21 (NFHS-5)**.
 - However, a few States such as **Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Telangana, Tripura and West Bengal** have higher prevalence of child marriage than the national average.

What are the Indian Government Initiatives to Promote Gender Equality?

- **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP)** ensures the protection, survival, and education of the girl child.
- **Mahila Shakti Kendra (MSK)** aims to empower rural women through skill development and employment opportunities.
- The **National Creche Scheme** offers safe environments for children, enabling women to pursue employment.
- **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandna Yojna** provides maternity benefits to pregnant and lactating mothers.
- **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana** ensures housing under women's names.
- **Sukanya Samridhi Yojna (SSY)** economically empowers girls through bank accounts.

- **Gender Budget** has been made a part of the Union Budget of India since 2005 and entails fund allocation towards programmes/schemes dedicated to women.
- **Nirbhaya Fund Framework** provides for a **non-lapsable corpus fund** for the implementation of initiatives aimed at enhancing the safety and security of women in the country.
- **One Stop Centres (OSCs)** offer integrated services for women victims of violence, including medical aid, legal assistance, and counselling.
- The **Constitution (106th Amendment) Act, 2023**, reserves **one-third of all seats for women in Lok Sabha, State legislative assemblies, and the Legislative Assembly** of the National Capital Territory of Delhi, including those reserved for SCs and STs.
 - 33% reserved seats in Panchayati Raj Institutions for women are already in place.
- The **Vigyan Jyoti programme** aims to encourage girls to pursue higher education and careers in **STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics)**, especially in the areas where women's participation is low in order to balance the gender ratio across the streams.
- Other Initiatives like **Stand-Up India**, Mahila e-Haat, Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Programme (ESSDP), and **Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY)** promote women entrepreneurs.

Global Gender Gap Report (World Economic Forum):

- The Global Gender Gap Index annually benchmarks the current state and evolution of gender parity across four key dimensions (**Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment**).
 - It is the longest-standing index, which tracks progress towards closing these gaps over time since its inception in **2006**
 - India was ranked at **127 out of 146 countries** in the **Gender Gap Report, 2023**.

Way Forward

- **Comprehensive Legal Reforms:** Strengthening and enforcing existing laws related to **gender-based violence, child marriage, and workplace discrimination**.
 - Introducing provisions related to marital rape in the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita as per the recommendations of the **Justice Verma Committee (2013)**.
- **Gender-Sensitive Education:** Implement gender-sensitive curricula and policies in schools and colleges to promote gender equality, challenge stereotypes, and ensure equal access to quality education for girls.
- **Freelancing Platforms:** Promoting and facilitating access to freelancing platforms and online marketplaces where **housewives can offer their skills and services** in areas such as content writing, graphic design, virtual assistance, social media management, and online tutoring.
- **Support for Unpaid Care Work:** There is a need to recognise and value unpaid care work performed by women and promote shared responsibilities within households. Encourage men's involvement in caregiving and domestic responsibilities.
- **Equal Pay and Workplace Policies:** **Enforcing equal pay for equal work policies**, promoting gender diversity in leadership positions, and implementing workplace policies that support work-life balance and safe working environments free from harassment and discrimination.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Which of the following gives 'Global Gender Gap Index' ranking to the countries of the world? (2017)

- (a) World Economic Forum
- (b) UN Human Rights Council
- (c) UN Women

(d) World Health Organization

Ans: (a)

Mains

Q.1 “Empowering women is the key to control population growth”. Discuss. (2019)

Q.2 Discuss the positive and negative effects of globalization on women in India? (2015)

Q.3 Male membership needs to be encouraged in order to make women’s organization free from gender bias. Comment. (2013)

Q.4 Distinguish between ‘care economy’ and ‘monetized economy’. How can the care economy be brought into a monetized economy through women empowerment? (2023)

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