

## INDIA: INTEGRATING WOMEN IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Population (2013) (Estimated,000)	1.252
Population Density (2011 -per sq. km)	382
Human Development Index (HDI -2014)	135
Global Gender Gap Rank (2014)	114

SOCIAL INDICATORS		
	Male	Female
Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) (2013)	0.282	
Percentage of Women in Parliament (2014)	89	11
Life Expectancy at birth in years (2013)	64.7	68.3
Labour Force Participation rate	80.9	28.8
Population with at least some secondary education (% aged 25 and above)	50.4	26.6
Estimated Gross National Income (GNI) per capita (USD) (2013)	7,833	2,277
Maternal mortality Rate (MMR) (deaths per 100,000 live births) (2010)	200	
Adolescent birth rate (births per 1,000 women aged 15-19) (2010-15)	32.8	



## INDIA

### EAST AFRICA - INDIA UNITE: INTEGRATING WOMEN IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Introduction

India's is the world's largest democracy and the world's fourth-largest economy. The country has seen significant achievements in recent times. The country has brought about a landmark agricultural revolution transforming the nation into a global net exporter of food, life expectancy has more than doubled and literacy rates have quadrupled since independence. This posits the country uniquely, for leveraging global successes and overcoming varied challenges.

However, several challenges exist due to rapid urbanisation. The country has huge needs in infrastructure, health care, skill development and in providing equal access to opportunities.

### Gender Profile

India, with a score of 0.6455 ranks 114 on the Gender Gap Index and the sex ratio of 940 is the second lowest amongst the top ten most populous countries in the world. This is reflective of the distance the country

needs to cover to bridge the gaping gender gap.

### Socio-Economic Profile

While female workforce participation rates remains low (27%), wage employment has increased. The results of the 68<sup>th</sup> National Sample Survey (NSS 2011-12) estimated the percentage share of females in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector as 19.3%. Participation of women in the economy, parliament, and formal sector remains low. Recently the government has launched the National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (2015) with a specific component for women. Scope for cross-learning and partnerships with other countries is high.

### Education Profile

India has made significant progress with respect to girl's education and met its target under the MDGs. At present, in primary education the enrolment is favourable to females as Gender Parity Index (GPI) of Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is 1.03 in 2013-14. Several

initiatives have been launched to further these gains. These include: residential



schools for girls, conditional cash transfer schemes, Adolescence Education Programme, scholarship schemes, Mahila Samakhya amongst others.

### Health Profile

Over the past decade, there has been general improvement in the health profile of India. In 1990, the estimated Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) was 437 per 1,00,000 live births but presently, the MMR has less than halved, showing that India has made tremendous progress in this respect. The prevalence of HIV among pregnant women aged 15-24 years is also showing a declining trend from 0.89 % in 2005 to 0.32% in 2012-13.

### National Framework: Policies, Programmes and Initiatives

The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution, which empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women.

The National Commission for Women (NCW) was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1990 to safeguard the rights and legal entitlements of women. The 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendments (1993) to the Constitution of India have provided for **33.3% reservation of seats in the local bodies** of *Panchayats* and Municipalities for women, laying a strong foundation for their participation in decision making at the local levels.

India has also ratified various international conventions and instruments committing to secure equal rights for women. Key among them is the ratification of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1993.

The National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, 2001 set the framework to institutionalise the goal to bring about advancement, development and empowerment of women. Some of the flagship programmes launched recently which benefit women include:

- **The Jan Dhan Yojana** brought 300 million impoverished Indians into the banking sector. It is also the first substantive challenge to unregulated chit funds. This is particularly important for women who were traditionally excluded from the financial sector.
- **Swacchh Bharat Abhiyan** apart from creating an awareness for cleanliness, with this scheme, the government aims to attain a 100% open defecation-free India and a total of nearly 32 lakh plus toilets have been built until January 2015. As women often face sexual violence due to open defecation, the programme targets women's safety as part of the initiative.
- **Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao** is an ambitious schemes in the direction of women empowerment. The aim of the programme is to stop the practice of female foeticide and to encourage education and development of the girl child.
- **Amendments to the Indian Penal Code (IPC):** In 2013 amendments were made to the IPC, to create a greater deterrent against acts of rape, sexual violence and voyeurism.
- **Prevention of Sexual Harassment:** A Parliamentary statute in 2013 mandates that every workplace constitute an Internal Complaints Committee to enquire into complaints of sexual harassment, and a similar committee be constituted at the district level for victims which belong to the unorganised sector.

### Women's Movement in India

The women's movement in India, over the last three decades has resulted in some significant achievements:

- The 70s decade brought women into **mass movements**. For example the Chipko movement in the Garhwal Himalayas raised the issue of environmental degradation and linked it to women's increasing toil for fuel and fodder in the face of such degradation. A very important women's organisation that emerged during this period was the **Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA)** which developed women's cooperatives and credit banks aimed at empowering women economically. 'Autonomous' women movements also emerged. Important examples are the **Mathura rape case (1978)** and the **Maya Tayagi rape case (1980)**. Both were cases of custodial rape by the police, and led to nationwide protest movements by women which brought women safety into focus and subsequent legislative changes.
- The period 1975-1985 was officially declared as the **UN decade for women**. Women groups undertook a programme of concretisation of and/or organised economic activities for women. Under state patronage, **the National Perspective Plan for women** evolved (1988). Women and child development activities were channelled through state established directorates. During the same period, leading political parties also started separate women's wings.
- The contemporary women's movement in India has been focused on activism around women's bodily integrity.



The vocabulary of feminism has changed with **the Nirbhaya rape case**, in which men joined women in the protest for safety and dignity for women. The Justice Verma committee set up in the aftermath of the movement has led to landmark decisions such as fast track courts for women, stricter laws against rape and violence against women, promotion of technology and women's safety. This has led to focused activism on safety of women in public and domestic spaces, with involvement and response from different stakeholders..

### Addressing Violence Against Women

Incidents of Violence against Women (VAW) have been increasing in recent years. A total of 3,37,922 cases of crime against women were reported in the country during the year 2014 as compared to 3,09,546 in the year 2013, thus showing an increase of 9.2% during the year 2014. These crimes have continuously increased during 2010 – 2014. However, this has furthered the resolve to strengthen laws and improve justice delivery. Laws relating to VAW can be broadly classified into two categories: 1) Crimes under IPC – Rape, kidnapping and abduction, dowry deaths, torture-both mental and physical, molestation and sexual harassment 2) Gender Specific Laws – Pre-conception & Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques Act, 1994, Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971, Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005.

### Snapshot of some important laws

#### Rape Laws in India

- Section 375, 376, 376 A-D IPC deal with rape
- Section 375 provides that a man is said to commit rape if the woman is under 16 years of age, with or without her consent
- Marital Rape is an exception under the IPC if the wife is under 15 years of age

#### Practice of Dowry Legislative Framework

- The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961
- Sec 304B IPC addresses the particular offence of dowry death
- Sec 498A IPC addresses the wide-scale violence against married women for dowry

#### Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006

- Was passed with a view to make marriages below the age of 18 years for girls and 21 years for boys voidable and to provide relief in the matter of child marriages.
- Every child marriage, whether solemnised before or after the commencement of this Act, shall be voidable at the option of the contracting party who was a child at the time of the marriage.

#### Trafficking

- Legal framework on trafficking includes provisions under the Indian Penal Code, 1860 (IPC): kidnapping, abduction, procurement of a minor girl, importation of girl from a foreign country, selling and buying minors for prostitution
- The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956: In 1950 the Government of India ratified the International Convention for the Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of others. In 1956 India passed the Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act, 1956 (SITA). The Act was further amended and changed in 1986, resulting in the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act also known as PITA.



**The Way Forward**

While the struggle to secure equal rights for women in India is still far from being over, it cannot be denied that several steps - in the nature of legal enactments, executive action and judicial intervention – have been taken to improve the status of social, economic, political and physical security of women in India.

In terms of approaches, models of participation as well as technology-led solutions have been successfully implemented in several parts of the country (at the local level) to enhance

may been implemented in Africa for the purpose of women’s empowerment.

The primary areas of cooperation need to be those where there are common challenges faced by



## Women Empowerment Models in India

women from both the regions. These include lack of effective and equal employment opportunities (particularly entrepreneurship and self-employment), lack of access to quality healthcare, sexual harassment and

*\* Compiled from various internet sources. The figures may not be accurate.*

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opportunities for women and promote their safety. Going forward, India can share some of these experiences with Africa, and in turn, learn other successful models that

violence, and representation in Parliament.

A shared effort involving cooperation and partnerships at the level of governments, civil society and the private sector can help in overcoming the existing challenges.