Gender Priorities for the G20:
A Monograph for the Jindal Global Centre for G20 Studies

Prepared by the Jindal School of Liberal Arts and Humanities (JSLH)

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Introduction

India holds the presidency of the G20 in 2023, with tenure until November 30, 2023. One notable benefit is the opportunity for India and South Asian countries to draw attention to the cultural and economic characteristics of the region. To achieve the G20 Agenda, the G20 nations acknowledged the particular vulnerabilities that impede the achievement of the targeted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in many regions.

"Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" or "One Earth · One Family · One Future" - is drawn from the ancient Sanskrit text of the Maha Upanishad. By choosing this theme, Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasized the value of all life, in keeping with the pledge to emphasize inclusivity among countries at various levels of economic development, including, high-income, upper middle income, lower middle income and low-income, as well as Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Meeting in Maharashtra from December 13-16, 2022, the Development Working Group (DWP) stated that the goals and priorities represent those of India and the G20, but also the Global South. (G20 Secretariat, 2022) The SDGs, targeted for 2030, are reflected in the priorities that look beyond the GDP and consider the causes of inequality. The current G20 agenda prioritizes several critical concerns that effect all G20 countries and contribute to disparities within a country and among nations. According to the Indian Ministry of the Interior, sessions will focus on "areas of interest to us, such as matters relating to inclusive and resilient growth; progress on SDGs, green development and Lifestyle for Environment (Mission LiFE); technological transformation and public digital infrastructure; reforming multilateral institutions; women-led development; and international peace and harmony." (G20 Secretariat, 2023)

Women20 (W20) Engagement Group under G20, which was launched in 2015 during the Turkish Presidency, met under India's presidency met in Aurangabad on February 27th - 28th, 2023, and met again at Jaipur, Rajasthan on April 13th-14th and at the W20 Summit in Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu on June 15th-16th, 2023. The W20 Group is guided by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of "removing barriers to women-led development and ensuring an enabling environment and ecosystem for women to realize their full potential, transforming their lives as well as those of others." (G20 Secretariat, 2023)

Currently, the G20 nations acknowledge that the realization of the 17 SDGs by 2030 can only be achieved with the full recognition and implementation of Goal 5 ("GENDER EQUALITY - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls").

Gender in the SDGs

Among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, (SDGs) P.M Narendra Modi has voiced the need to transition from women's development to women-led development. The idea that there can be no development without women is the theme of SDG 5 - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. The UNICEF description of Goal 5 states further that, Gender equality is a human right. It is also a precondition for realizing all goals in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. (data.unicef.org). A close look at the principal targets of SDG 5 makes clear why Gender Equality cuts across all 17 SDGs and its relevance to the G20. The main points of SDG 5 as summarized in UNICEF Data are:

- **5.1** End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere

- **5.2** Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation

- **5.3** Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage, and female genital mutilation.

- **5.4** Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure, and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate

- **5.5** Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life

- **5.6** Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed by the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences

- **5. A** Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance, and natural resources, under national laws

- **5. B** Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women

- **5. C** Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels (https://unric.org/en/sdg-5/)

This monograph examines in detail the above-mentioned factors that serve to further guide the meaning of Gender Equality as delineated in SDG 5. The following sections examine the implication of fully realizing SDG 5 across the G20 member countries and make recommendations to further progress. In keeping with India's presidency, these articles allude to situations taken from India, South Asia, and the Global South. Although the G20 cannot create legislation, the G20 participants can make recommendations. The analysis presented here represents qualitative information that will provide the reader with a nuanced understanding of the over-arching presence of gender inequality and offers recommendations for meaningful change.

Gender as Portrayed in Religion and Culture

The first step towards realizing gender equality is the recognition and elimination of barriers that prevent women's equality. Cultural beliefs, supported by deeply rooted religious tradition, place beliefs about women's inferiority, caste stratification, and sexual identity in a realm qualified as "truth" and sanctioned by godly injunction. Patriarchy as a social and political practice is also rooted in religious tradition and accepted cultural norms.

Gender equality, religion, and caste

Religion and gender equality have a complicated and intertwined relationship. On one hand, religious traditions have often been used to justify patriarchal norms and limit the rights and opportunities of women. On the other hand, many religious communities have also been at the forefront of advocating for gender equity and challenging oppressive power structures.

An example of repressive beliefs in early Christianity is the statement by Apostle Paul in the First Epistle to the Corinthians (14:33–35): "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." In Islam, some interpretations of

the Qur'an has been used to justify practices such as polygamy or the subservient position of women, while others point out that" The Koran has given women equal rights in all spheres of life … [and] the fault lies in the interpreters of the Koran". (Shah, 2006) However, throughout history, there have also been religious leaders and communities that have challenged these patriarchal norms and advocated for gender equity. In Hinduism, there are many female deities and women have played important spiritual roles throughout history.

In the wide spectrum of religious views on gender equity and the anthropology of the couple, Hinduism presents us with a special case. On the one hand, the Vedic texts feature numerous goddesses, usually (but not always), consorts of the male deities. In time, the evolution of Hinduism seems to have attributed more power and autonomy to these female divine entities, who appear supreme in numerous branches, movements, or communities forming the mosaic of the Hindu world, like Shaktism, tantrism, Kashmiri Shaivism, the cult of the yoginis, etc. One of the features that set Hinduism apart from most of the other world religions appears to be the awareness of fundamental female energy at play in the universe, a crucial force in the emergence and preservation of the material world. While Christian culture tends to envision femininity as a passive and essentially incomplete mode of existence, in the Shinto tradition in Japan, women are described as micro, or "Children of God," who serve as conduits between spirits and men, though men are then seen as the actors who implement the will of the spirit. (Okano, 1997) Hindu thought considers women the vessels of shakti, the dynamic energy that is responsible for the creation, maintenance, and destruction of the universe.

Yet the very awareness of this power has brought in a stronger need for control. The existence of numerous cults of female deities, both benevolent and terrifying, has not assuaged the patriarchy of traditional Indian society, famously articulated in Chapter IX of the Manusmriti (The Code of Manu), which denies women autonomy at any point throughout the stages of their lives: "IX.3. Her father protects (her) in childhood, her husband protects (her) in youth, and her sons protect (her) in old age; a woman is never fit for independence".

While the legal system and the institutions in many countries strive to enforce gender equality and outlaw any form of discrimination, the traditional mindset cannot be considered a thing of the past. (Okano, 1997)

Gender and caste continuity in texts

The text 'Nari Ank' is an illustration of how gender and caste hierarchy are maintained to sustain the patriarchal set up in the society and sanction various forms of social inequalities using religious beliefs. The concept of Brahmanical Patriarchy proposed by Uma Chakravarti (1993) aptly establishes the relationship between religious traditions and social practices centered on the subjugation of women.

The general subordination of women assumed a particularly severe form in India through the powerful instrument of religious traditions which have shaped social practices. A marked feature of Hindu society is its legal sanction for an extreme expression of social stratification in which women and the lower castes have been subjected to humiliating conditions of existence. Caste hierarchy and gender hierarchy are the organizing principles of the Brahmanical social order.

The need for effective sexual control over upper-caste women is aimed at maintaining patrilineal succession as well as caste purity. While the former is a requirement in all the patriarchal society the latter is a unique institution in Hindu social order. It is important to note

that in Brahmanical patriarchy the purity of women occupies a central position as the purity of caste depends on it.

Caste- and gender-based inequalities sanctioned by religious beliefs maintain the patriarchal social order and manifest in multiple forms in the rural and urban landscapes of the country. Literary accounts of Dalit experiences (for example, writings of Ajay Navaria, who unveils experiences of alienation in the face of urban (pseudo)modernity) and statistics, both, indicate the much grimmer picture of prejudice and discrimination against Dalits in urban settings. Cities often portrayed as sites of emancipation transform into sites where caste-based prejudices are practiced more implicitly.

While the villages have been the sites of the explicit practice of these inequalities (Dalit Women and Water: Availability, Access, and Discrimination in Rural India by Datta, Sinha & Parashar), these discriminatory practices unfold more subtly in the urban spaces. In villages social and economic boycotts are still used by the so-called upper castes to shackle Dalits (the case of Bhatla village in Haryana), in cities, the ostracism is rather invisiblized. For example, a study by Thorat et al. (2015) reveals caste and religion-based prejudice in urban spaces. Using a telephonic audit survey in the five metropolitan cities in Delhi NCR (Delhi, Faridabad, Ghaziabad, Gurgaon, and Noida), they unveil the prevalent caste and religion-based prejudices in the rental housing market. Dalits and Muslims experience discrimination as they are denied housing and in cases where they can get housing, they have to agree with the unfair terms and conditions. Yet another survey conducted by Thorat et al. (2018) maps the explicit prejudices and finds that "untouchability is widely practiced and that mind-sets of power, purity, and pollution persist"(p.50).

Dalit women still bear the heaviest and triple burden of caste, class, and gender-based discrimination. This is also evident not only in literary practices but in statistical reports on the crimes and prejudices against Dalit women in India. Forced at the bottom of all the social hierarchies, Dalit women writers question their oppression in a patriarchal household as well as their literary portrayal by Dalit men writers. They resist being treated as victims through the pen of Dalit men and reclaim their identity as survivors.

The NCRB (2021) report as analyzed by The National Coalition for Strengthening SCs and STs (PoA) Act (NCSPA) reveals that atrocities or crimes against Scheduled Castes (SCs) have increased by 1.2% in 2021. According to the analysis, sexual violence against Dalit and Adivasi women has also significantly increased (16.1 % for SC women and 26.8% for ST women). Furthermore, a report was launched by Equality now with Swabhiman Society – an organization dedicated to organizing Dalit women in Haryana to eradicate caste-based oppression at the grassroots level, in November 2020. The report highlights the difficulties and barriers that sexual violence survivors in the Dalit community face at different levels forcing them to "compromises and extra-legal settlement".

Communities of Dalit Christians and Muslims also have been the target of prejudices and discrimination in the country. It is naively assumed that conversion to another religion marks the end of the taboo and stigma associated with caste status, but the reality is complex. A 2008 report by National Commission for Minorities presents ample evidence of discrimination against Dalits in Muslim and Christian communities.

Recommendations

- There is an urgent need to develop more robust and rigorous methods for mapping and measuring prejudices against Dalits, SCs, and STs to deal with the subtle forms of discrimination more prevalent in urban spaces.

- Experiences of discrimination against Dalits, SCs, and STs in the Christian and Muslim communities must be recorded more systematically and recent studies are needed in this area.
- Efforts should be directed at better coordination among different NGOs and small organizations working against caste-based violence. This is specifically relevant in the cases of Dalit women as they already face more obstacles, social and economic both, in registering as well as fighting the cases.
- A mechanism should be instituted for monitoring the activities of religious institutions or media and countering similar instances, where authoritative religious injunctions may violate legal provisions. A relevant example is the Observatoire des Religions en Suisse, dedicated to studying the religious landscape and its evolution in Switzerland. A similar organization on the international level, researching cross-border and issuing reports on specific problems related to religious life, would be useful in informing public policies.

Gender and Economic Development

Women will not be able to achieve equality if they do not have sustainable livelihoods. Recognition of the unpaid labor women provide, access to appropriate education and skills training, and freedom from repressive formal and informal laws that control women in the home and the workplace are all points for consideration. This section examines societal and economic aspects that can either prevent or promote gender equality in broadly defined economic spheres.

Gender and decision making

Under-representation of women in different workplaces is a problem that the world at large is facing. While some countries have significantly reduced the disparities, the situation is grim for most of the countries to date. Whether one looks at the decision-making powers rested with the women in political circles, bureaucratic positions, or at the household level, the world is far from a gender-balanced society.

Gender can play a significant role in decision-making at both the national and international levels. Historically, women have been underrepresented in positions of power in government and international organizations, and their perspectives and experiences have been largely excluded from decision-making processes. This lack of representation can result in policies and decisions that do not consider the needs of all individuals, including women.

Studies have shown that women tend to prioritize different policy issues than men (Thomas, (1991)), with a greater focus on issues such as education, healthcare, and social welfare. This indicates that improving gender diversity in decision-making bodies should lead to a more comprehensive and balanced approach to policymaking, prioritising healthcare, and education.

At the international level, gender can also play a role in decision-making processes, particularly about issues such as women's rights, gender equality, and reproductive health. The representation of women in international organizations such as the United Nations has increased in recent years, leading to greater attention being paid to gender-related issues in global decision-making processes.

At the macro level, women's participation in national parliaments or other administrative positions is a good indicator of gender balance. Gender and national and international decision-making are interconnected in many ways. Research has generally shown that gender diversity in decision-making bodies, such as parliaments, cabinets, and boards, leads to better decision-making, including improved policy outcomes, increased representation.

of diverse perspectives and experiences, and enhanced legitimacy of decisions. Various reports of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) have shown that women are severely under-represented in parliaments across the world. Consider India, for instance, women represent approximately 15 percent of the Lok Sabha (lower house of parliament in India). (IPU, 2020) The best country for women's representation is Rwanda, with more than 60 percent of women in its parliament. Cuba, New Zeeland, United Arab Emirates, and Mexico are some other countries with nearly 50% women participation. The United States has lower than 30 %, whereas many European countries are higher ranked on this scale.

Most international conventions have emphasized the importance of gender balance across all dimensions of social, economic, and political life, but the world at large is far from this objective. Positive discrimination (reservations) has been one instrument that has been used by many countries in achieving higher women's participation. Local governance in India, characterized by Panchayati Raj Institutions has reserved at least one-third of members as women. Twenty states have reserved 50% of seats for women in local governance institutions. However, at the level of state assemblies or national assemblies, this is just an unfinished target. The longer vision of Indian polity points in the direction of achieving at least one-third participation of women in national and state assemblies (2008 Women Reservation Bill) but this has not translated into law.

Gender considerations in societal and economic development

It has been nearly 50 years since the Women's Liberation Movement was launched worldwide. However, the dearth of equal opportunities and equal pay, for women persists. The 2019 report by Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), states that women in G20 countries earn substantially lower than men. Even after a decade of efforts, in the gender pay gap distribution for G-20 countries the median value for this gap is around 15%, with deviations ranging from 7-5% in Turkey and Italy to 30-35% in India and South Korea. Women's role a s caregivers and nurturers cast their work as essential to a woman's nature.

Women's roles in the formal economy are often restricted to lower-paying, meager positions. Kaitlin Lawrence (2014) ascribes this to the process of socialization that alienates women from signing up for upper managerial opportunities and joining male-dominated occupations in fields such as technology, finance, and engineering. Even if they manage to enter these lines of work, their experiences are often marred with sexist comments and progress hindered by discriminatory practices. Women's reservations in asking for just payments and rising the ranks is a characteristic of the imposter syndrome, which is prevalent among most women (Friedman, 2013). A 2021 study conducted by Grant Thornton International Ltd. revealed that approximately 31% of women hold senior leadership roles globally, revealing significant progress from 29% in 2019 (Thornton, 2021, p. 4).

The informal economy does not account for emotional and domestic labor which leaves women's contribution largely unaccounted for. A 2019 time-use survey done by the International Labor Organisation revealed that women do 4.1 times more unpaid care work than men in the Asia Pacific region, which makes-up 2/3rd of the world. Governments are slow

to change. For example, the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) was implemented in India to facilitate rural development in the education and health sector. Anganwadi Workers (AWW) and Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA), women who are grassroots workers and primary service providers under the ICDS, are not treated as government employees and instead, are given the status of honorary workers. Working primarily in the informal economy or in low-paid jobs makes it challenging for women to achieve financial independence.

Globally women are reluctant to commit to the formal workplace due to responsibilities in managing their households. Few, if any alternatives are offered to women. Faced with the reality of domestic chores and care -giving, few women can invest in their education, vocational training, income generation, political participation, rest, and leisure. Gender identity extracts a heavy toll. Transgender identity has an even darker prospect for gaining work opportunities and equality.

A 2021 research study conducted by McKinsey and Company in America also held a mirror to such bleak realities; transgender adults are twice as likely as cisgender adults to be unemployed. Such grim trends can be observed across G-20 countries. It is important to note here that the conditions "other" genders succumb to have not been researched thorough, much less acknowledged in several G20 countries.

Recommendations

Because women and *other* genders are overworked and underpaid for their contributions towards development of the society, it is necessary to acknowledge the socio-cultural context of gender identity and their subsequent struggles can help in providing an equitable platform for the neglected groups to become financially independent and self-reliant. To advance this objective, the following six measures should be taken:

- Set up mechanisms to ensure gender parity across varied sectors.
- Adopt a gender-inclusive approach to all provisions and policies.
- Provide paid paternity leaves, alongside maternity leaves, and for all genders leaves to care for sick children and elders.
- Establish inclusive HR norms to ensure just payment to all employees at the same level.
- Ensure state-funded provisions such as housing and transportation facilities for working women.
- Fund training and skill development programs for women to re-enter the workforce after breaks due to maternity responsibilities, re-location due to marriage, etc.

Future of Work – Access and Limitations Based on Gender

World economies and employment opportunities are rapidly changing. The COVID Pandemic highlighted the prevalence of IT, AI, and LLMs as part of daily life. A minimum understanding of human-computer interaction is essential for everyone. Most criteria for achieving gender equality will require a basic understanding of the systems. Job opportunities and economic development will require a working knowledge of basic systems. Government and the public will need to balance work opportunities so that the gap between men and women does not remain so great. Several obvious obstacles discussed below limit gender equality based on education opportunities, cultural biases, and gross inequality in salaries.

Gender considerations and the future of work

It is universally accepted that technology is likely to continue playing a key role in the future of work with an increased impact on the achievement of gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls as per SDG-5. The following significant changes in the labor market are likely on account of these developments:

- There will be job categories that will face higher losses due to the exponential evolution of many technologies and automation.
- Jobs will also be gained through new job categories that emerge as a result of advances in technology and new frontiers that humanity explores (Frey, 2019; Schwab, 2018).
- Some job categories will change in terms of roles, descriptions, content, and the nature of work due to technological evolution. (Madgavkar et al. 2019)

A key factor in the transformation of job categories is the prevailing 'digital divide' (Wesley & Midgley, 2019) which often denies equal access to women of key technology enablers such as the internet at the most basic level, and access and proficiency in key technologies and their applications such as Robotics, Quantum Computing, Blockchain, The Internet-of-things, Artificial Intelligence, and others at the more advanced level.

A second key factor is access to STEM-based education and skills.

The sectoral impact of jobs lost, gained, and changed will not affect men and women to the same degree. The impact in different sectors will be different given the proportion of women employed in various job categories. For instance, the clothing and apparel sector has a larger proportion of women in the workforce for job categories such as sewing and therefore are likely to be significantly impacted in terms of jobs lost to 'sexbots' (Wesley & Midgley, 2019). Similarly, clerical jobs which are also dominated by women in many aspects of economic activity are likely to be negatively impacted. Job roles and descriptions are likely to see significant changes in other female-dominated sectors such as K-12 schooling and healthcare. (Wesley & Midgley, 2019). Job categories with an under-representation of women, such as manufacturing and transport may witness changes that enable adequately skilled women to find a larger role in them (Jivani, 2020).

Recommendations

Governments, businesses, and institutions will therefore need to address a few key imperatives to enable gender equality in the future of work. These include:

- Enabling greater access to women in education and learning at all levels and particularly greater access to STEM-based education (Jivani, 2020; Madgavkar et al. 2019).
- Providing access to key enablers of technology such as the internet to women and girls. This is important not only for access to work but also to enhance efficiency and productivity in non-work-related aspects of life (Madgavkar et al. 2019).
- Re-skilling and up-skilling women already in the workforce to enable them to stay relevant and benefit from the new emerging opportunities (Madgavkar et al.
- Balancing women's roles in paid work and 'unpaid care' work (Wesley & Midgley, 2019).
- Enhancing safety in public mobility and transport to address constraints in labor mobility (Madgavkar et al. 2019).
- Enabling more equitable access to funding for women entrepreneurs (Madgavkar et al. 2019).

Limitations of women's access to work based on gender.

Women's labor participation in India is low. Based on different rounds of the National Sample Survey, it has remained around 22-24 percent over the past three decades (Afridi et al. 2023). While both public and private sectors have recognized that it is necessary to increase the number of women in the workforce, female labor force participation remains low and is reducing, for example during and after COVID-19. Several factors driving the reduction of women in the labor force outside their households include rising household income, prevailing social stigma, and lack of access to jobs at their skill level for women who have attained a certain education level (Klasen, 2015). Chatterjee (2018) also find that a lack of suitable opportunities for women is a key reason for the lack of women in the labor force. Women who have completed their secondary level education, tend to marry men with higher educational attainment which results in higher earning potential. In general, their wives do not need to work.

India has a segregated occupational landscape. Many jobs, such as clerical and administrative positions, that in other countries employ moderately educated women, in India are almost exclusively undertaken by men. At the same time, women's traditional work spaces are not expanding (Klasen, 2015). Corporate India is expanding, however, there are few women in senior positions. Only 20 percent of India's senior corporate leadership (CXO) are women (Grant Thornton, 2018). There is a 50 percent reduction between junior and mid-level roles, compared to 29 percent on average across Asia (Wheelbox, 2018). This period coincides with the time women often get married and have children.

Women in the labor force, are paid less than men in every employment category and they also are hired at lower levels than men with the same qualifications. (Fletcher, 2019). It is estimated that in India, 66 percent of women's work is unpaid, compared to 12 percent for men. (Schwab, 2017) Recently, labor-force participation decreased by 9.5 % for men and 3% for women compared to 2021. However, in other areas, there has been progress, such as the increase from 14.6% to 17.6% in the share of women legislators, senior officials, and managers. (WEf, 2022, There was an increase from 29.2% to 32.9% in the share of women as professional and technical workers. (WEF, p. 28) Globally, the proportion of time spent in unpaid work by men is 19%, compared to 55% of women, which is three times as much. (WEF, 2022, p. 35)[1]

A recent study from the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad found that women aged 15-60 spend 7.2 hours a day on unpaid domestic work while men spend 2.8 hours. (Economic Times, 2023) Thus, the onus of caregiving and household work within the family is on women, together with a cultural preference for women not working, making working and rising in their careers a real challenge for many women.

Conditions that make workplaces female-unfriendly include unfair and biased treatment at work, limited opportunities for promotion compared to male colleagues, the expectation of long workdays, and sexism and harassment (Jain, 2016). MGI (2015) in a global study found a strong correlation between gender equality in society and gender equality at work. Four areas of development that were singled out as especially important for accelerating gender equality are education level, financial and digital inclusion, legal protection, and consideration and recognition of unpaid care work.

Recommendations

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[1] These figures are based on an analysis of 33 countries representing 54% of the global working-age population.

The socio-cultural challenges related to female labor participation, the significant care-giving duties that many women have in the home, as well as the sector-based approach to opportunities for women, may limit standard efforts to increase labor force participation Thus, enforcing regulatory measures and promoting education and upskilling may not work in many developing countries, including India (Andres, 2018). Therefore, it is recommended that steps be taken by governments and society to:

- Make female employment acceptable and aspirational.
- Expand work opportunities for women.
- Create an enabling environment for women so that they can manage work with obligations at home, such as flexible working hours, the opportunity to work from home, and fewer in-office hours are necessary.
- Reduce the cultural stigma of working women and men regarding sharing housework.
- Find alternatives to the burden of caregiving falling disproportionally on women.
- Facilitate women's re-entry to work.

Discrimination in Education and Safety

The quest for gender equality in education is complex in that numerous factors influence the style of pedagogy, accessibility, and cultural attitudes, among others. One aspect that is often underestimated is the presence of certain groups in the educational narrative, for example, whose story is being told, and whose reality is being addressed, within the curriculum.

Recognizing the absence of women, LGBTQ+, and tribals in the imagination of the curriculum

In recent years, the movement for inclusive public education for students who previously lacked such opportunities has gained momentum. But the question remains: Has this been achieved in the sphere of imagining the curriculum, particularly for women, LGBTQ+, and tribals?

The curriculum is ordinarily viewed as a tool for regulating and adapting modern educational systems to society's needs and trends. Using the history of education in India, a reimagination of curriculum for a free India—what must be taught, why, and how—was proposed by Gandhi, Tagore, and Sri Aurobindo. They questioned basic assumptions of the imperial and modernist views. (Puri, 2022)

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The curriculum is ordinarily viewed as a tool for regulating and adapting modern educational systems to society's needs and trends. A reimagination of curriculum for a free India—what must be taught, why, and how—was proposed by Gandhi, Tagore, and Sri Aurobindo. They questioned basic assumptions of the imperial and modernist views. Early post-colonial approaches viewed curriculum as a social, political, and cultural phenomenon, with an emphasis on the subjective experience of reality. As India entered its second decade of reforms in the 2000s, the challenge before educators were to reposition curricular knowledge as the fulcrum of sustaining a constitution-led vision of education towards equity and social justice. This opportunity came with the National Curriculum Framework (NCERT 2005) and

the National Curriculum for Teacher Education (NCTE 2009) and the National Educational Policy (NEP 2020). They established the need to re-contextualize knowledge in curriculum, alongside the passing of central legislation that made education a fundamental right. The intention was that the processes of teaching and learning would incorporate curricular concerns of equity and social justice. Therefore, questions of curriculum, linguistic, social, and economic diversity in classrooms, were to be addressed by locating learning in social-cultural contexts of gender and caste, and linguistics. Developing teachers' professional repertoires could bring out the truthful scenario of whether a social transformation is really at the centre of the education curriculum. Moreover, dominant international and national education discourses, contained within the human capital approach, have continued to view curriculum from the perspective of employability and economic growth.

To begin engaging with the current situation, we must start by recognizing the challenges faced by particular social categories in the school environment. A significant number of women, LGBTQ, and indigenous students are subjected to bullying, harassment, and exclusion in educational institutions, all forms of discrimination which are fuelled by stigma and prejudice rooted in deeply held cultural beliefs about gender roles, embedded in the inherent social structure of Indian and other societies that discriminate against groups, such as scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Students from these groups face teasing, name-calling, public ridicule, rumors, intimidation, pushing and hitting, stealing or damaging belongings, obscene notes and graffiti, social isolation, cyber bullying, physical and sexual assault, and even death threats. This occurs in classes, playgrounds, and toilets as well as online. In many places, the plight of LGBTQ students is even worse. Implicit violence occurs through discriminatory gender-specific uniforms, official documents, and records that do not reflect trans students' gender identity and single-sex facilities like restrooms and changing rooms in educational establishments present additional challenges for trans students. The physical and psychological health of these discriminated students is negatively impacted by the bullying discrimination in schools based on sexual orientation, gender and ethnic identity, and expression of native language and culture. Under Sustainable Development Goal No, 4, States commit to "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". All students have the right to an education that promotes respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and is free of violence and discrimination, as per international human rights law. UN human rights mechanisms have expressed concern about violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in education and have urged states to take measures to prohibit, prevent, and punish the harassment, bullying, and expulsion of children from schools. (OHCHR, 2022) Many state education systems are raising public awareness and putting safety and support measures into place. These are positive first steps.

Recommendations:

- States should conduct studies and collect statistical data on education, disaggregated by sexual orientation, gender and indigenous identities to inform policy development.
- States provide students with comprehensive, accurate, and age-appropriate information regarding sexuality, positioning and diverse gender identities through State-wide sex education programs.
- They should develop curricula and pedagogies that include comprehensive reference to cultural, linguistic and economic diversity.
- These materials should be attentive about the language used regarding these vulnerable sections of our community in general and educational spaces.

Space, Access and Skill in the Digital Realm: Gendered Perspectives from India

The 17 SDGs under the Sustainable Development Agenda, Gender equality, and the empowerment of all women and girls professed to be central to most governments' developmental agendas, especially those in developing and low-income countries. The intersecting and ongoing crises launched by the global pandemic, increased awareness of

climate threats, the ongoing war in Ukraine, coupled with staggering economic and political insecurities only accentuate the already disproportionately high and long-lasting impacts of these events on women, young girls and sexual minorities. Social, financial and health-related setbacks of these global and geo-political crises are experienced more sharply by women in the developing world who are already battling patriarchal, caste and/or race driven discriminatory social norms. According to the Gender Snapshot 2022, it will take another "286 years to reform legal frameworks to promote, enforce and monitor gender equality in public life" (Friesen & Wisskirchen, 2022). The Report asserts that including women and other marginalized groups in the digital space and economy results in greater social and economic equality, more creative solutions, and greater potential for innovations.

India's presidency of the G20 can make significant advances by mainstreaming an actionable policy on "bridging the gender digital divide" as a priority area and exploring what the female experience is in the virtual space and the space the female body occupies in the digital ecosystem. The re-imagination of the digital realm in gender-sensitive and non-biased ways is only possible through articulating the complexity of the issues surrounding digital violence, access and skill that limit women's meaningful participation in the ongoing digital revolution.

The realities of our professional, social and economic systems have been transformed by the COVID-19 pandemic, making way for digital tools and technology-led work environments. These developments undoubtedly hold the promise of employment, financial independence and commensurate skill development for women. Various factors such as caste, class and gender affect time, access and opportunity and further contribute to the divide. Since the early development of the Internet, there has been a relative absence of women online. Scholars have pointed to how the World Wide Web (WWW) was constituted predominantly as a "white male playground" (Green and Adam, 2001).

The complex ways in which women articulate their claims as political subjects in social and cultural fields, and their intellectual contributions, especially within academia, stand in stark contrast to their presence in the digital realm. The default disembodied submissive female voice of Siri and other AI applications constructs the woman as a subservient, quiet, polite and always here to serve and "assist" subject, reaffirming outdated and unchallenged perceptions of the female voice and stereotypical gender roles. The repeated consumption of the idealized female voice and body on the internet has also led to a fetishization of unrealistic beauty standards, leaving little space for discussions on how women's real bodies are marked socially and culturally to produce hegemonic and patriarchal notions of the world.

Women's participation as equal stakeholders in the digital economy is marred by increasing instances of online violence against them. Sexual harassment, cyber bullying, intimidation and threats of rape and death via email and other social media platforms, non-consensual image or video-sharing, morphing, pornography, etc. are not only forms of violence

and invasion of privacy, but most crucially, instances of gendered gatekeeping that pose a significant deterrent to their digital skill development. Given these realities, the task of bridging the gender digital divide by improving access to women through infrastructure (and skill) remains a distant utopia.

Recommendations:

- Ensure cheaply available mobile phone devices, broadband and connectivity plans and improved network coverage, capacity and quality for women across age groups, especially in the rural and settler communities in countries of the global south to enhance their presence and participation in the world of digital technology.
- Teach digital literacy and financial technologies to young girls and women, including how to manage finances, accounting and banking, leveraging the credit-based economy for small to medium-scale businesses, and optimizing personal savings.
- Ensure that the cashless economy does not prevent women from negotiating the traditional methods of managing money that are essential to strengthening their control over money and spending.
- Include as part of primary and secondary schooling, the skills of communication, managing and presenting data, basics and advanced numerical skills, and software development necessary for the fast-changing job markets, especially since COVID-19.
- Dispel myths and assumptions about women's suitability and ability to perform and excel in areas traditionally considered masculine.
- Bridge the gender digital divide and ensure that careers in STEM and information and communication technology are as open and rewarding for women as they are for men.
- Change the representation of the female form and gendered lens in the media and eliminate unrealistic beauty standards in terms of the female body through the Internet, print media and Computer Generated Imagery by promoting positive attitudes towards promoting physical and mental health and a diversity of different body types, color, race, and ethnicity.
- Strengthen legislative frameworks that protect women's online lives by making young men and women understand what constitutes consent, the differences between freedom of expression and bullying and the dangers of unlawful dissemination of sexually explicit content and indecent representation of women.

Gender and Safety

The concept of safety includes multiple facets. There is physical safety, psychological safety and there is safety that is based on physical and environmental factors. Awareness, prevention and preparedness are all important elements that mitigate the extent of harm experienced by the individual. Gender, class and ethnicity also can determine the extent of an individual's vulnerability. In a society where some are considered less equal than others, exceptional attention must be afforded to assuring that the question of equality is deeply understood and applied as an element of safety.

Gender and police

Reducing the gender gap in labor force participation has been identified above as crucial for gender parity and inclusive economic development in global socio-economic discourses. Reducing the gender gap by 25% by the year 2025 is the core focus of the Women20 (W20) Engagement group under G20, which was launched in 2015 during the Turkish Presidency and,

as mentioned above, will meet several times in 2023. The focus of W20 lies in promoting "gender-inclusive economic growth" (G20 Secretariat, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India 2023).

Among the challenges are those state institutions, like the police, where the work culture is significantly conditioned by practices of masculinities. Globally, while women hold only 42% of judicial positions, they make up a mere 16% of police forces (UN Women 2022). Besides offering women stable employment with benefits and status, the presence of women in the police force offers a greater sense of justice to women and can contribute to their autonomy.

Police work and gender

The everyday cultures of workplaces like the police, military, and security forces, are significantly conditioned by ideas of masculinity wherein security work and police work are seen to be synonymous with masculine work (Pateman 2003, Martin 1999, Bevan and MacKenzie 2012). This overarching analogy conditions work cultures and infrastructures in manners which make employment in these workplaces difficult for other genders to sustain.

For instance, women officers are routinely portrayed as "less capable" of holding their own in conflict situations, "physically weak" and "less assertive". Emerging literature has shown how everyday cultures of policing looks at aggression, physical strength, assertiveness etc. as "masculine" traits, which are seen to be essential for police work, thus significantly limiting the deployment of non-male officers in routine police work and limiting their participation (Martin 1999, Suboch, Harrington and House 2017, Kern and Lundman 2012, 'Police Culture' at Work: Making Sense of Police Oversight 2015). New literature has shown how these traits may not be the most effective for police work, and how women officers are often more capable of effectively de-escalating conflict situations (Rosenberger and Mertus 2005, Herbert 2001).

The key to reducing gender gap in police work is a paradigmatic attitudinal shift that equates police work with masculine work. This attitudinal factor has infrastructural ramifications as well. Police spaces, such as police stations, especially in India with its system of accommodation for personnel in barracks, are inherently imagined as habitation spaces for male personnel. The recent recruitment of non-male personnel has not translated into reform of police infrastructure to gendered needs (Common Cause & CSDS 2019).

Police spaces, especially in India, are overwhelmingly male spaces. Most non-male personnel chose to live on their own, away from barracks, owing to this gendered configuration. Police stations are often not equipped with gendered restrooms and toilets (Common Cause & CSDS 2019), which make it more difficult for non-male personnel to perform the excruciatingly demanding work that police personnel are required to perform. The second necessity thus to improve women's participation in police work is to make the infrastructure of police spaces more capable of addressing and fulfilling gendered needs. This requires not only monetary and infrastructural allocation to police stations and police spaces, but also a reimagination of these spaces as gender-neutral spaces.

Only through such reimaginations and increased participation can the goal of gender-inclusive economic development be achieved. If public institutions become more representative, more secure and stable economic opportunities would become available for all genders.

Women's participation in public institutions, especially in the police would have a further cascading effect, as women in positions of authority then become further role models

in reordering work cultures that make workspaces more inclusive, representative and accommodative.

Recommendations

Thus, three primary recommendations for achieving this goal of reducing gender gap in police forces would be:

- Social programs, and training for personnel to reimagine police work as gender neutral work, focusing on building cultures of policing based on effectiveness rather than gendered attitudes.
- Infrastructural reform making police spaces accommodative, inclusive and representative of gendered needs.
- Special recruitment drives aimed at increasing the participation of women in police institutions, across ranks, especially in upper administration.

Women and Girls as Victims of Natural Disasters

The impact of natural disasters cannot be analyzed without understanding how coping mechanisms and community resilience impact these events. At the individual level, these events result in a psychological scar that not only affects the physical health of the victim but also the mental persona. In a world of changing climate where, there is an exponential increase in natural disasters that result in mass migrations of the environmental refugees. According to the report of Environmental Justice Foundation, flood, draught, heatwave and storms are displacing 41 people per minute. (Environmental Justice Foundation, 2023)

According to *The Least Developed Countries Report 2022,* "Although LDCs bear the least historical responsibility for climate change, they are on the front lines of the climate crisis. Over the last 50 years, 69 per cent of worldwide deaths caused by climate-related disasters occurred in LDCs." (UNCTAD, 2022) Thus the socio-economic marginality and disaster vulnerability is acute in the countries with limited resources or access to resources. Men and women are impacted differently by natural disaster, analysed in a study by Enarson and Morrow 1998, ideation of "gendered terrain of natural disaster". (Enarson, 1998)

There is no gender discrimination in natural disasters. Yet, the socio-cultural roles, gender disparities resulting from cultural beliefs, traditional practices, and the unequal allocation of power between determined by gender, have different effects on women and men, most often placing women at a disadvantage. (Robles, 2020). Natural catastrophe victims are more likely to be women from middle- and lower-class backgrounds. (Center for Disaster Philanthropy, 2023) According to research, there are several reasons why disasters have a greater effect on women and girls. Factors include exposure to high-risk environments, gender disparities, unequal social norms, societal pressure, and law enforcement failure. (Thurston, 2021) Taking these factors in account, sheds light on the growing gender inequalities in the countries with low resources.

Women and children are 14 times more likely than adult males to die, according to UNDP research. According to available data, 250,000 individuals died in the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, 70% were women. (Okai, 2022) Over 140,000 people died in Bangladesh in 1991 as a result of the Gorky Cyclone, and 90% of those deaths were of women. (Ayeb-Karlsson, 2020) In developed socioeconomic societies, the perception of gender inequality and natural disasters is different. According to a study of gender-disaggregated data from disasters between 1981 and 2002 in 141 countries, fatality rates for men and women were less dissimilar in areas with more evenly distributed economic and social rights. (Howe 2009) Several studies

have indicated that the timing of disaster occurrences also be considered while calculating their effects on men and women. These studies claim that the impacts of disaster in a community not just depend on socioeconomic, cultural, or political factors but also on the season and the time of year. For example, the Tsunami that hit Sri Lanka in 2004 occurred when women on the eastern coast typically took sea baths based on a traditional belief. (Watts, 2010)

During and after disaster occurrences, gender inequality in the distribution of food, freshwater, and mental/psychological sickness can be seen in most of the socioeconomically underdeveloped and climate-stressed regions. For instance, in many developing nations like India, Bangladesh, and countries in the African continent, there is more malnutrition among women and girls. Compared to the male population, post-disaster migration is also more difficult for women and girls, which makes it difficult to get proper nutritional food and fresh water to maintain hygiene.

Cyclone Yaas hit the Sundarbans, west Bengal, India during the pandemic (26th May 2021), which forced the women of the region to walk kilometres in search of drinking water, undermining the lockdown restrictions and eventually made them more vulnerable to social problems existing in the region such as human trafficking and falling prey to flesh trade. (Chatterjee, 2021) The violence against the younger girls is also regularly recorded is attributed to their displacement from their immediate families A study conducted in Haiti, tracked physical, sexual and psychological abuse among adolescent girls both before and after the 2010 earthquake events. Records showed an increase in post-traumatic stress disorder, and suicidal trait following the earthquake. (Sloand, 2017)

Recommendations

Achieving gender equality in nations impacted by frequent natural disasters (Zhao, 2022) will be extremely difficult. This is particularly true in underdeveloped countries where women and girls are most often the victims of natural disasters. Therefore, it is recommended:
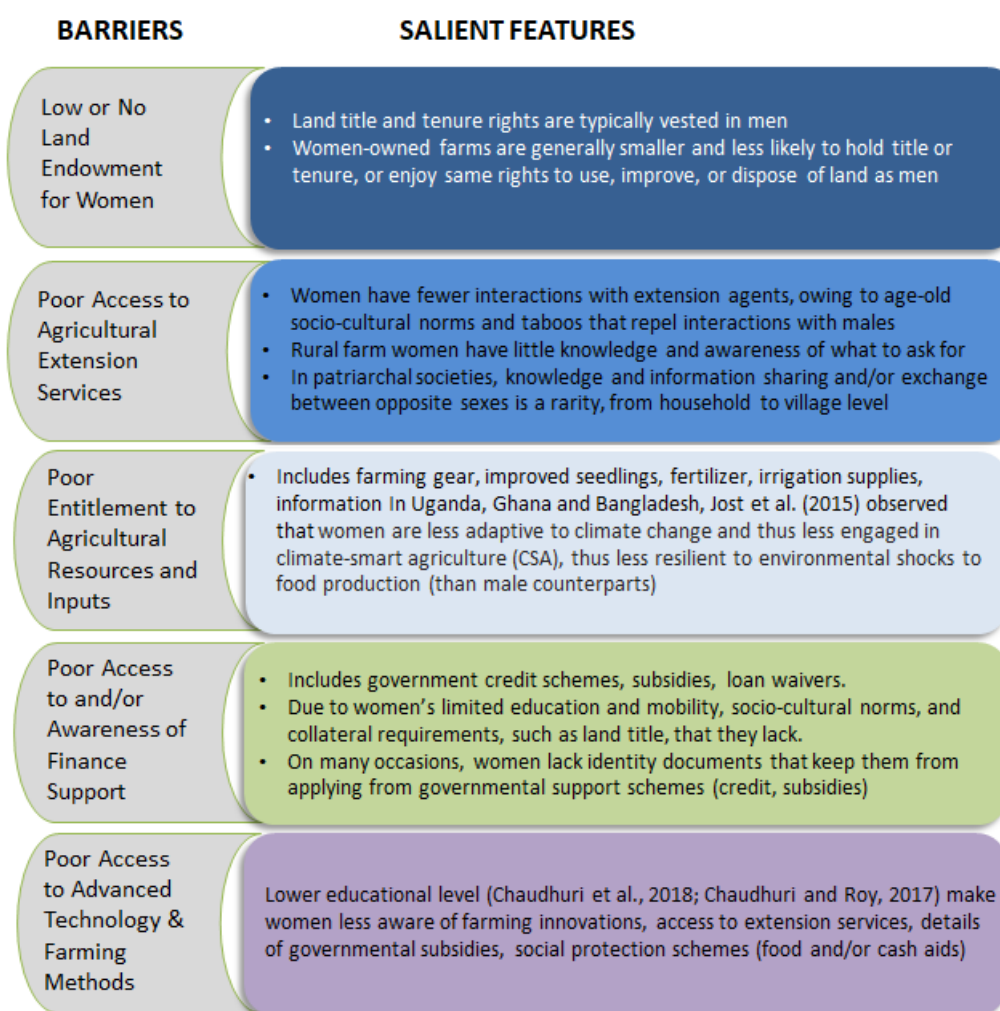
- To enact preventive policies to minimize the gender inequalities in the communities that frequently experience natural disasters and are of lower socio-economic conditions.
- To seek changes in the social norms, traditional practice and cultural beliefs as a means of reducing the instances of injustice against women and girls during and post-disaster events.

The Gendered Face of Global Food Security: Time Poverty and Beyond

Worldwide, women are an estimated 37.1 percent of the work force in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors; while in Asia and Africa, this proportion is higher, often above 50 percent (FAO, The Statistical Yearbook 2022, figure 12, p. 7). Despite being the major actors in global food security drives, women's mode of participation and level of productivity in the food, agriculture and allied sectors is yet shrouded by a web of interlocking socio-cultural, financial, technological, and institutional barriers (see FIGURE 1). However, a rapidly growing body of literature demonstrates how strategic empowerment of women *(SDG-5: Gender Equality)*, to contribute meaningfully, and to their fullest potential, to the food and environment sectors can lead to significant advancements, especially when surging cases of climate uncertainties are negatively impacting land-water systems (Gupta et al., 2019, Sharaunga and

Maxwell, 2016; Sharaunga et al., 2015). Recent global assessments reveal that ensuring women the same level of access to resources (finance, technology, knowledge) as men, and increasing women's involvement in the agricultural food value chain could raise global food production by about 20-30%. This leads to a drop in the hungry population *(SDG-1: No Hunger)* by about 12-15% (FAO, 2011). An inter-continental tabulation between Asia and Africa, Jost et al. (2015) found that women's involvement enhances food security initiatives with their participation in climate-smart agriculture (CSA) *(SDG-13: Combat Climate Change)*.

FIGURE 1

BARRIERS | **SALIENT FEATURES**

Low or No Land Endowment for Women
- Land title and tenure rights are typically vested in men
- Women-owned farms are generally smaller and less likely to hold title or tenure, or enjoy same rights to use, improve, or dispose of land as men

Poor Access to Agricultural Extension Services
- Women have fewer interactions with extension agents, owing to age-old socio-cultural norms and taboos that repel interactions with males
- Rural farm women have little knowledge and awareness of what to ask for
- In patriarchal societies, knowledge and information sharing and/or exchange between opposite sexes is a rarity, from household to village level

Poor Entitlement to Agricultural Resources and Inputs
- Includes farming gear, improved seedlings, fertilizer, irrigation supplies, information In Uganda, Ghana and Bangladesh, Jost et al. (2015) observed that women are less adaptive to climate change and thus less engaged in climate-smart agriculture (CSA), thus less resilient to environmental shocks to food production (than male counterparts)

Poor Access to and/or Awareness of Finance Support
- Includes government credit schemes, subsidies, loan waivers.
- Due to women's limited education and mobility, socio-cultural norms, and collateral requirements, such as land title, that they lack.
- On many occasions, women lack identity documents that keep them from applying from governmental support schemes (credit, subsidies)

Poor Access to Advanced Technology & Farming Methods
- Lower educational level (Chaudhuri et al., 2018; Chaudhuri and Roy, 2017) make women less aware of farming innovations, access to extension services, details of governmental subsidies, social protection schemes (food and/or cash aids)

Time poverty

A prime challenge that women face in the farm sector, as well as daily existence related to the environment, is "time poverty". This indicates the unequal time burden that rural farm women, in many southeast Asian and African nations, face in trying to efficiently apportion their time (Garikipati 2012; Rao, 2015). Bound by norms of largely patriarchal society, women in rural societies are expected divide their time between outdoor (farm labor, water harvesting, firewood gathering) and indoor activities (cooking, cleaning, childcare), which leaves little personal time. To that end, time poverty, shapes rural farm women's life opportunities in two fundamental ways: creating (1) unfavorable time apportionment, and (2) time stress (Adithyalakshmanan et al., 2022). While the former constrains women's participation in

productive work, leaving less time for capacity building; the latter reduces women's opportunities for personal development and wellbeing (for example, nutrition, healthcare, education, participation in social activities, attending village administration meetings).

Time poverty has emerged as a critical policy agenda in many international development dialogues in recent times. It is more so as everyday lives and livelihoods of women have become increasingly dependent on the sustainability of the environment and land-based natural capital in the wake of climate extremities (drought, flood, heatwave) (Okpara et al. 2019). For example, in rural households, women are responsible for water and firewood collection.

However, the recurrence of drought events in recent years (reduced precipitation, increased temperature and evapotranspiration, due to climate change), have made it imperative for rural women to make multiple trips to increasingly distant water sources to meet the household water demand (cooking, cleaning, ablution) (Chaudhuri and Roy, 2017). This takes substantial daylight hours out of their schedule (Chaudhuri et al., 2018). Moreover, it is also uncommon that adult women are trailed by a young girl(s), carrying containers to harvest some 'additional' water. This affects the girls' physical and psychological wellbeing, besides interfering with education. The later impacts cognitive and skill development routines. Similarly, as climate-induced drought, desertification and land degradation reduce land fertility and productivity, it requires women to spend more time and energy to meet their daily farming targets. As they are hired mostly as contractual labor in farms, and at minimum wages, they are compelled to do as the "landowner" demands to maintain income.

Towards an enabling environment

The guiding principle should be to create an enabling environment based on contextual traits, comprising of fair, just, and equitable norms, to ensure maximum productivity of women engaged in all spheres of farm affairs. Although there is no one-size-fits-all prescription to alleviate farm women's time burden, emphasis should also be on devising more gender-responsive work protocols, coupled with technology innovations specifically meant for women. However, contemplating these interventions requires a confluence of forward-thinking policy decisions, beginning with a robust institutional governance system (to impart knowledge and technology-adoption skills at the grassroots).

Recommendations

Given the current situation, improving gender equality in farm labor and environmental work calls for a paradigmatic shift in outlook in the male-dominated farm sector, and that will require careful social-economic engineering efforts by the state/local authorities. The authorities should realize the need of the integration of research with policy instruments, to envision a context-relevant service delivery model to enable, empower and engage women more strategically and productively. First and foremost, this will require more case studies to generate gender-disaggregated farm labor and wage data. On the policy front, the following could be certain areas of major thrust (Adithyalakshmanan et al., 2022; Opakara et al., 2019; Global Mechanisms 2019):

- Generating more off-farm livelihood opportunities
- Fostering stronger market linkages: Educating women farmers with more knowledge and understanding of farm-inputs prices (seeds, fertilizers, pesticides) and energy market

- Safeguarding women's land rights (creating legal provisions to enhance their ability to exercise land rights freely)
- Devising targeted financial schemes to adequately and appropriately compensate women for their contributions.
- Ensuring greater access to productive assets and information about weather, market conditions (food, energy, labor, etc.)
- Conducting regular capacity-building programs (hands-on demonstration) to train women with new cropping practices, efficient water harvesting techniques, and improved land protection practices.
- Providing access to more extension services (authorities might want to consider developing a team of women professionals and practitioners to engage with farm women.
- Devising community-level, social engineering efforts.

An example of the latter would be facilitating the formation of farm women's self-help groups (SHGs) and helping them build functional social networks. This could establish a platform of co-learning, and dissemination of knowledge and information (Chaudhuri et al., 2020). This could be critical gamechanger as research has shown that farmers (men or women) tend to "learn" more from, and trust, co-farmers that anyone else. Some studies have also argued for increasing the number of women personnel in the farm extension services, consistent with the observation that rural women tend be more comfortable in company of women, and with the age-old rural societal norms, according to which women are required to keep away of male company outdoors.

Gender, Health and Well-Being

Gender is a major determinant of health in India. Social factors such as gender norms, roles and relations interact with biological factors that in turn influence exposure to disease and health risks. It is thereby essential that health policymakers take into consideration different gender needs. Customizing health policies and programmes to address these differences can improve their impact, reduce health inequities, and advance the right to health for all. The following subsections will analyse the intersection of gender with various socio-biological factors and provide recommendations to enhance health and well-being outcomes.

Gender and access to healthcare

Access to healthcare is closely intertwined with four essential A's which include awareness, affordability, acceptability, and availability. Awareness refers to health education and information regarding healthcare options. Affordability refers to the economic independence and purchasing power of the individual relative to the cost of healthcare services. Acceptability refers to cultural acceptance of healthcare interventions as well as inclusion of diversity in health care policies. Availability refers to the number of existing healthcare centres, flexibility in terms of service provision and proximity to healthcare consumers. These four factors vary across gender categories and are associated with differential access to healthcare. Keeping in mind the 4 A's the following policy recommendations are made to promote equity in access to healthcare across different genders.

Given that India is the second highest consumers of mobile phones, incorporating digital technology in health promotion campaigns will have a broader reach. Mobile game-based learning applications maybe an affordable and accessible means to promote agency and awareness of sexual and reproductive health among adolescent girls (Raj et al., 2023). India

has made significant efforts at improving sexual and reproductive healthcare for women over the years. This has resulted in a shift in the leading cause of morbidity and mortality from sexual/reproductive health (SRH) issues to Non-Communicable Disease (NCD). However this shift has not been appropriately acknowledged in the health care delivery system. Building a life course approach that provides healthcare at all stages of women's life will be able to address the fact that women's healthcare needs vary according to different life stages. This approach is a potential win-win solution as it may reduce deaths and disabilities due to NCD's as well as SRH issues (Norton, 2016). Building in mental health care services for women within the mainstream health care system would ensure that mental health needs which are often overlooked and unaddressed due to the prevailing stigma attached to it, will receive timely care and attention.

To have a health care system that is truly inclusive, there needs to be gender and sexual orientation sensitization of health care providers such that non-binary individuals may feel safe, included and their health needs validated. It is recommended that all non-gender binary health care issues be understood and analysed as separate individual categories since their unique experiences with the health care system maybe be considerably different, for example, intersex individuals often receive far more, and often unnecessary medical attention (in the form of non-consensual early genital surgery) as opposed to transexual individuals whose needs are not met with the same urgency. Lastly, while India has witnessed economic growth over the last decades, most of the Indian population lives in rural areas where local medicinal healers and religious practitioners of medicine are often the first choice for physical and mental health related problems. To promote greater cultural acceptability and encourage rural populations to seek medical services, allopathic practitioners could liaison with the local healers and alternative medical practitioners such as what has been previously implemented via the Dawa Aur Dua approach. It may make allopathic practitioners, local hospitals and medical emergency services more culturally acceptable to the rural Indian communities and encourage them to utilise the services provided (Saha et al., 2021).

Gender identity, equality and happiness

A 2021 survey by the Ipsos Group suggests that around 17% of India's population currently does not identify as heterosexual. This means the LGBT community in this country numbers almost 240 million people. To put it in perspective, if these people were to form a country, it would be the fifth most populous nation in the world. Yet the LGBT community within India suffers from systemic discrimination on a daily basis. People from this community have reported experiences of abuse, exclusion, discrimination, and prejudice, including in jobs, education, healthcare, and social services (Mohan & Murthy, 2013).

According to Spirit Level theory by Wilkinson and Pickett (2010), societal inequality leads to feelings of inferiority, which in turn are connected to various social problems such as poor mental health (Layte, 2012). Those who suffer from inferiority feelings are often experiences reduced subjective (Delhey & Steckermeier, 2016), and social wellbeing (Huppert et al. 2009). On a societal level, rampant feelings of inferiority will undermine a democracy's foundation of a community of equals (Miller, 1999).

Evidence shows that egalitarian culture buffers the effects of hierarchy and exclusion, leading to lower inferiority feelings among its people (Steckermeier & Delhey, 2018). Studies have yielded evidence that societies with high levels of equality have an increased quality of life not just for beneficiary, but for the society in general (Audette, Lam, Connor, & Radcliff, 2018). Furthermore, such societies also enjoying greater economic prosperity (Güleryüz,

2021). This increase in wellbeing in turn contribute to a more prosperous and stable democracy (Loubser & Steenekamp, 2016).

Given the sizable LGBT population within India, the promotion and institutionalization of egalitarian values in the country will likely yield moral and practical dividends for all citizens through increase happiness, economic growth and democratic stability.

Gender and health inequality

Health is an interdisciplinary concept that encompasses various dimensions of well-being. Many different research disciplines and industries are now involved in the field of health. Gender equality is necessary to ensure all citizens lead physically, socially, and mentally healthy lives.

Gender determines people's health in three ways. First, studies report sex and gender differences in some diseases at different life stages. On the other hand, from basic to population studies, poorly constructed or post hoc sex-difference analyses can produce false results (Rich-Edwards, Kaiser, Chen, Manson, & Goldstein, 2018). Second, it has been noted that health systems reinforce patients' restrictive gender norms, resulting in gender inequalities in health (Hay, McDougal, Percival, et al., 2019). Lastly, the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored persistent gender imbalances in health, as evidenced by the increased domestic responsibilities of married women and instances of gender-based violence (Chauhan, 2021; Mittal & Singh, 2020). Therefore, it is essential to have health-related policies that ensure that people are not disadvantaged by their gender.

However, Weber, Cislaghi, Meausoone, et al. (2019) showed that quantitative studies on the effects of gender on health inequality are insufficient. Moreover, the relationship between gender and other social determinants of health has been little. We, therefore, would focus on two areas of research: (1) quantitative assessment methods, which have not yet been established, for gender and gender norms, including transgender and non-binary identities; and (2) roles of social structures, which vary both regionally and temporally.

Recommendations

We recommend the following approach:
- Enhance the humanistic and social studies on gender inequality in health by region, tailored to India's diverse society.
- Encourage collaboration among different disciplines, including humanities and social studies, to understand the differences in gender and other social determinants of health at the conceptual level of qualitative and quantitative research.
- Develop quantitative assessment methods for gender and other social structures that reflect qualitative findings, to examine the interactions of gender and other social structures on health.

Gender, Hunger and Nutrition

Studies and reports (Measham & Chatterji, 1999) (The World Bank, 2013) (Aurino, 2016) hinting at "the silent emergency" of India—malnutrition—have revealed how women are the most impacted ones when it comes to nutritional deficiencies, hunger and access to food. According to an IndiaSpend analysis (2016) of the last two Global Burden of Disease (GBD) surveys, iron-deficiency anemia has been the top cause of disability in India for last 10 years.

(Yadavar, 2016). As per NFHS 4 (2015-16) Anemia was rampant in India (53 percent for women between 15 to 49 years) and the condition worsened in the following years. NFHS 5 (2019-21) A total of 57 percent of women between 15 to 49 years were found anaemic. Iron deficiency anemia is the top cause of maternal deaths in India (50 percent) and the associate cause in 20 percent of maternal deaths, according to a study by Anand et, al (2014). If we delve deeper into the factors operating behind these numbers, the issue is more than the availability and access of food. A closer observation unveils the role played by the gender bias deeply entrenched in the patriarchal social structure of the country. One least explored aspect is how gendered households turn the women into the scarcity managers of the house. The image of a "sacrificial" and "ideal" woman who is societally conditioned into putting the health and benefit of the men and children of the house at the center and her own health at the periphery is glorified. The numbers become grimmer for single mothers and at the intersections of class, caste and gender. As per a 2021 report by Aljazeera, women from the marginalized communities are the worst victims of malnutrition. The UN report, *Turning promises into action: gender equality in the 2030 Agenda*, emphasized these inequalities. International news journals, The Wire and International Dalit Solidarity Network (2018), reported that a woman's caste makes her more vulnerable due to the lack of sanitary conditions and access to health care. On an average, a Dalit woman dies approximately 14 years younger than a woman from dominant caste. It is noticeable that studies mapping the detrimental effects of malnutrition and its impact on the diverse population of India still operates in the paradigm of gender binary and there is dearth of the surveys and studies how other gender identities get impacted by malnutrition.

Recommendations

- Conduct studies and investigations mapping the impact of malnutrition on marginalized gender identities to address the issue targeting all its complexities.
- Conduct yearly follow up studies accounting for the limitations and failures of public welfare schemes to combat this silent emergency timely.

Gender Budgeting in India

This section will explore the inception and motivation of gender budgeting, focusing on progress and major achievements in India. It will then turn to what has not happened and lessons from other countries. Finally, it will address policy prescriptions for the Indian economy.

Gender inequalities across different aspects of social interaction is a well-established phenomenon that has been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Gender budgeting uses fiscal policies and public financial management tools to promote gender equality (Stotsky 2016). The United Nation's 1995 Beijing Platform for Action called for integrating a gender perspective into government budget processes.

Gender-responsive budgeting was first introduced in 2001 in India. In 2004, an expert group was set to classify government transactions and "to examine the feasibility of and suggest the general approach to gender budgeting". In 2005, the Ministry of Finance issued its first note on gender budgeting under the annual budget circular. The gender budget statement in India comprises two parts:

- Part A of the budget comprises women-specific schemes, which provide 100 percent allocation for women (schemes such as Poshan 2.0).
- Part B of the budget comprises pro-women schemes which provide at least 30 percent to 99 percent of the allocation for women (such as Samagra Shiksha).

The budget provided financial assistance of more than INR 2.25 lakh crore (almost US$35 billion) to small farmers under the Pradhan Mantri Kisam Samman Nidhi, benefiting about three crore (30,000) women farmers, who will now have access to INR 54,000 crore as a part of the scheme. As per the current statistics, the Union government has allocated INR 2,23,219.75 crore to the gender budget for schemes focused on mitigating the prevailing gender gap, which is more than 2 percent of the revised estimate of INR 2.18 crore in 2022-2023 and 30 percent more than the budget estimate of INR 1,71,006.47 crore in the last fiscal year. The Mahila Samman Savings Certificate will offer a deposit facility of two lakhs—made either in the name of a woman or girl—for a tenure of two years at a fixed rate of interest of 7.5 percent with a partial withdrawal option.

Within Part A of the gender budget which went up by a whopping 70 percent (increasing from INR 26,772.89 crore during the last year to INR 88,044.21 crore this year), the lion's share of INR 54,487 crore targeted towards enhancing women's access to land and resources went to the rural housing scheme as specified under the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana. Allocations made towards the Safe City Project—which includes surveillance initiatives like installation of cameras and strengthening other public resources to prevent gender-based violence—rose eight times of the 2022-23 revised budget, increasing from INR 165 crore to INR 1300 crore.

Similarly, the Samarthya umbrella scheme—introduced by the MoWCD in 2021—that comprises women empowerment programs like the Pradhan Mantri Vandana Yojana and Swadhar Greh, was allocated 33 percent higher funds than the revised estimates of the 2022-23 budget. The Union government has also included the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme within the gender budget, which is worth INR 25,000 crore. Some of the other schemes under the gender budget are the Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan; the Flexible Pool for RCH and Health System Strengthening as well as the National Health Programmes and Nation Urban Health Missions; the Samagra Shiksha scheme; the Samarthya scheme for women empowerment; and the Swachh Bharat Mission—all of which together account for about INR 45,000 crore.

The 2023 Union Budget allocated INR 2.23 lakh crore ($26.9 billion) to India's Gender Budget, 2.12 per cent higher than the Revised Estimates (RE) of INR2.18 lakh crore for 2022-23. This is a considerable increase compared to 2022, when it declined marginally from 4.4 percent in 2021 to 4.3 percent of the total union budget. Though the budget has increased in absolute numbers, it has decreased as the total of the union budget. In 2021, the amount for the gender budget allocated was US$ 19.7 billion, this has seen an increase of 11 percent to US$ 22.05 billion. Furthermore, Part A of the scheme which focuses on women-specific schemes has been allotted US$ 3.45 billion, leading to an increase of 6 percent, as compared to the last year's US$ 3.25 billion. Part B of the scheme, which consists of pro-women schemes, which have a primary focus on women, has been allocated 84 percent of the total gender budget at US$ 18.6 billion, this section of the budget has seen an increase of 12 percent from US$ 16.6 billion. In 2020, the pre-pandemic gender budget was 4.72 percent of the union budget.

Lessons can be learned from other countries, Globally, India ranks 135th out of 146 countries (up from 140 in 2021 out of 156) in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Index 2022, compared to Rwanda, which ranked sixth, and Namibia, another Sub-Saharan country, which ranked eighth in the report, the only African countries to have made it to the list of top 10 countries. (WEF, 2022, p. 10) Although India ranks 132 out of 191 countries in the Human Development Index (HDI) 2021 and Sri Lanka ranks 73, (UNDP, 2022, pp. 273-274). the Gender Development Index shows an indicator of 0.849 for India and 0.949 for Sri Lanka. (UNDP, 2022, p. 286).

Post-Independence from South Africa in 1990, the Government of Namibia, in 1997, adopted the National Gender Policy (NGP) and National Plan of Action (NPAC), to address inequalities in men and women which were approved in 1998. In 2014-15, there was a significant increase in the number of women in Parliament—it increased from 25 percent to 47 percent. Additionally, politicians were trained in gender sensitivity; parliamentary debates from a gender perspective increased; and the Namibian government granted NAD$ 5.4 billion to Gender Responsive Budgeting (equivalent to 9.2 percent of the total budget) for its annual budget in 2022.

In 2015, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (MGECW) of Namibia came out with a set of Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) Guidelines. These guidelines highlight the current gender inequity challenges that Namibia faces, this includes teenage pregnancies, gender-based violence, high poverty levels, especially amongst young women, and insufficient funding for gender programs.

While measures have been taken to acknowledge gender-based budgeting, some key areas have not received the desired attention. The pandemic has brought out greater fault lines in society, clarifying that even though women account for 48 percent of the population in the country, they continue to bear the brunt of the pandemic. However, areas such as digital literacy, skill training, and domestic violence against women, only received two percent of the budget.

Recommendations

- Increase budget allocations in education and training specifically designed for women in order to promote a skilled labor sector that is sufficiently represented by both genders and thus increase efficiency and promote gender equality.
- Increase representation of women in parliament and policymaking so as to help provide the policymaking with a more nuanced women-oriented perspective which should presumably improve the implementation.

Conclusion

The G20 agenda addresses the major challenges facing the governments and peoples of the member countries, ranging from improving the prospects for human-centred economic development to the threat of planetary catastrophe. The numerous contributors to this monograph have applied their expertise and insights to clarifying how gender affects the full range of issues identified in SDG 5 and the awareness that gender equality is "a precondition for realizing all goals in the 2030 Development Agenda". (UNICEF data.unicef.org) The theme, *One Earth. One Family. One Future* is also better understood through the lens of gender equality. The authors go beyond the ethical consideration of policies and practices perpetuating inequalities as they affect women in India and across the globe; they also address the far-reaching societal, economic, and political consequences of these disparities. Humanity is poised to face a planetary catastrophe, the result of greed, self-interest, and the myopic refusal to break with custom and rethink the concept of growth and power.

World leaders have been operating under the oversimplified notion of "winners and losers" with developed countries taking all and the developing and least developed countries suffering the consequences. However, the contributing authors of this monograph provide an analytical framework and recommendations focusing on why and how change can occur. Gender equality, informed by human rights, necessitates a drastic change in the way leaders think and countries operate. There is no other option. The G20 leaders have the power to adopt goals based on what really matters.

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