



## India's Progress in Gender Equality

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

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

**Source:** TOI

### Why in News?

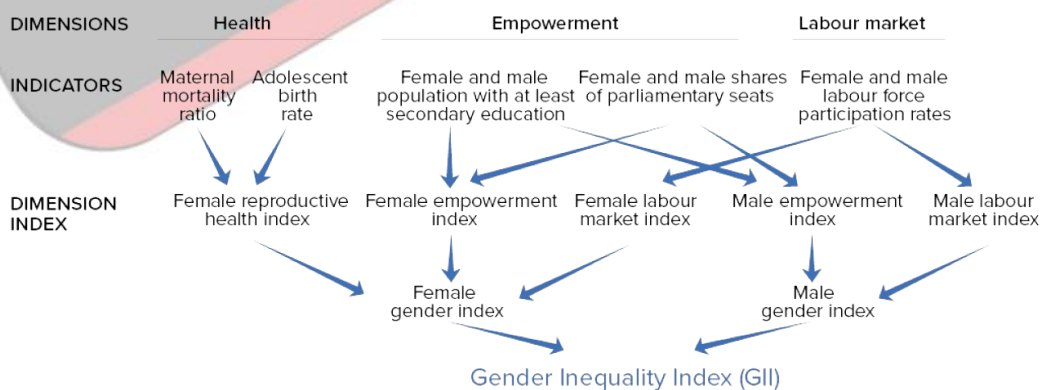
Recently, the **Gender Inequality Index (GII), 2022** has been released by **UNDP** in their [Human Development Report 2023-24](#).

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

### What is the Gender Inequality Index?

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

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

Inequality Index 2021.

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

## Note

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

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

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

## What are the Indian Government Initiatives to Promote Gender Equality?

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

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

### Global Gender Gap Report (World Economic Forum):

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

### Way Forward

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

## UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

### Prelims

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

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

- (c) UN Women  
(d) World Health Organization

**Ans: (a)**

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**Mains**

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

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

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

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

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