



UNDP's 2023 Gender Social Norms Index

For Prelims: [United Nations Development Programme](#), **UNDP's Gender Social Norms Index**, [Women Representation in Parliament](#), [Human Development Index](#), [Sukanya Samridhi Yojna](#), [Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme](#), [Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana](#), [Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendra Scheme](#)

For Mains: Major Challenges Related to Gender Equality in India.

Why in News?

Biased gender social norms continue to impede progress towards achieving gender equality and violate human rights, according to the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**.

- Despite global efforts and campaigns advocating for women's rights, a significant percentage of people still hold biased beliefs against women.
- The **UNDP's 2023 Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI)** provides insights into the persistence of these biases and their impact on various aspects of women's lives.

What are the Key Findings of the Index?

- **About:**
 - UNDP tracked people's attitudes towards women in four dimensions: **political, educational, economic and physical integrity**. UNDP reports that nearly **90% of people still hold at least one bias against women**.
- **Findings:**
 - **Political Participation and Representation:** Biases in gender social norms contribute to a **lack of equality in political participation**. Approximately **half of the world's population believes men make better political leaders**, while **two in five believe men make better business executives**.
 - **Countries with greater bias exhibit [lower representation of women in parliament](#)**.
 - On average, the **share of heads of state or government who are women has remained around 10% worldwide since 1995**, and women hold just over a quarter of parliament seats globally.
 - Women are **grossly underrepresented in leadership in conflict-affected countries**, mainly at the negotiation tables in the recent conflicts in [Ukraine \(0%\)](#), [Yemen \(4%\)](#), and [Afghanistan \(10%\)](#).
 - **Indigenous women, migrant women, and women with disabilities** face even more significant challenges in attaining political representation.
 - **Economic Empowerment:** Despite progress in **education, gender gaps in economic empowerment persist**.
 - The increase in women's education has not translated into better economic outcomes.
 - In **59 countries where adult women are more educated than men, the average income gap is 39%**.
 - **Domestic Chores and Care Work:** Countries with **higher bias in gender social norms**

witness a significant disparity in domestic chores and care work.

- Women spend **nearly six times more time on these tasks than men**, limiting their opportunities for personal and professional growth.
- Also, Alarmingly, **25% of people believe it is justified for a man to beat his wife**, revealing deep-rooted biases.
- **Hopeful Signs and Breakthroughs:** While overall progress has been limited, an increase in the share of people with no bias in any indicator is observed in **27 out of 38 surveyed countries**.
 - The **largest improvements were seen in Germany, Uruguay, New Zealand, Singapore, and Japan**, with progress greater among men than women.
 - Breakthroughs in gender social norms have been achieved through policies, regulations, and scientific advancements.
- **The Urgent Need for Change:** Biased gender social norms not only impede women's rights but also hinder societal development and well-being.
 - The **lack of progress in gender social norms coincides with a decline in the [Human Development Index \(HDI\)](#)**.
 - Achieving freedom and agency for women benefits society as a whole.

What are the Major Challenges Related to Gender Equality in India?

- **Cultural and Societal Norms:** India has deep-rooted cultural and societal norms that perpetuate gender bias. **Traditional beliefs regarding gender roles** and expectations limit women's freedom and opportunities.
 - For instance, the **preference for male children, leading to a significant gender imbalance and instances of female infanticide**.
- **Violence against Women:** Incidents of violence against women, such as **domestic violence, sexual harassment, and rape, continue to be prevalent in India**.
 - Although laws have been enacted and awareness campaigns launched, these incidents persist, demonstrating the challenge of changing deep-seated attitudes and behaviours.
 - Recent cases, such as the **[Hathras gang rape case in 2020](#)**, highlighted the gaps in the system and sparked outrage regarding the handling of such cases.
- **Economic Disparities:** Economic disparities between **men and women contribute to gender bias**. Women in India often face **unequal pay, limited job opportunities, and lack of representation in decision-making roles**.
 - The **[gender wage gap](#)** remains a persistent issue, with women earning less than men for similar work.
- **Limited Access to Education and Healthcare:** Gender bias is perpetuated by limited access to education and healthcare for women in certain parts of India.
 - Despite progress in **increasing [female literacy rates](#)**, **particularly in urban areas, rural areas still face significant challenges**.
 - Moreover, inadequate access to healthcare, including reproductive health services, poses additional obstacles for women's well-being and development.
- **Differentiation in the Socialisation Process:** In many parts of India, especially in rural regions, there are **still different socialisation norms for men and women**.
 - Women are expected to be **soft-spoken, calm, and quiet**. They should walk, talk, sit and behave in a certain manner. **Whereas men ought to be confident, loud, and could display any behaviour as per their wish**.

The gender score | India ranked 135 in gender parity out of 146 countries, according to the Global Gender Gap Report 2022 released by the World Economic Forum. A look at India's ranking in the four sub-indexes based on which the overall ranking was determined

India	Rank 2022*
Global gender gap index	135
Economic participation and opportunity	143
Educational attainment	107
Health and survival	146
Political empowerment	48



*out of 146 countries

What are the Recent Government Schemes Related to Women Empowerment?

- [Sukanya Samridhi Yojna](#)
- [Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme](#)
- [Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana](#)
- [Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendra Scheme](#)
- [One Stop Centre](#)

Way Forward

- **Better Education Opportunities:** Giving education to women means giving education to the whole family. Education plays an important role in building self-confidence among women.
 - Also, [India's education policy](#) should target young men and boys to positively change their attitudes towards girls and women.
 - Also, there is a need to incorporate [gender equality](#) and sensitivity into the school curriculum from an early age, emphasising respect, empathy, and equal opportunities for all.
- **Economic Independence:** There is a need to encourage entrepreneurship and provide financial support, training, and mentorship to women to establish their businesses, and promote equal pay and flexible work arrangements.
 - There is also a need to implement skill development programs to enhance women's employability and promote their participation in traditionally male-dominated sectors.
- **Awareness About Safety Measures:** A multi-sectoral strategy to raise awareness among women about the current government initiatives and mechanisms should be devised to ensure the safety of women throughout the country.
 - **Panic Button, Nirbhaya Police Squad** are some good steps in the direction of women's safety.
- **From Women Development to Women Led Development:** Women should be reimagined as architects of India's progress and development, rather than being passive recipients of the fruits of development.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Two of the schemes launched by the Government of India for Women's development are Swadhar and Swayam Siddha. As regards the difference between them, consider the following statements: (2010)

1. Swayam Siddha is meant for those in difficult circumstances such as women survivors of natural disasters or terrorism, women prisoners released from jails, mentally challenged women etc., whereas Swadhar is meant for holistic empowerment of women through Self Help Groups.
2. Swayam Siddha is implemented through Local Self Government bodies or reputed Voluntary Organizations whereas Swadhar is implemented through the ICDS units set up in the states.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (d)

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)**

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