



## Gender Parity and Women's Empowerment Gap

**For Prelims:** [United Nations](#), Women's Empowerment Index (WEI), Global Gender Parity Index (GGPI)

**For Mains:** Challenges and gaps in achieving women's empowerment and gender parity, Issues Related to Women

**Source:** [DTE](#)

### Why in News?

A recent report by the [United Nations](#) sheds light on the **status of women's empowerment and gender parity** around the world.

- The comprehensive analysis, **jointly created by UN Women and UN Development Programme**, evaluated 114 countries based on the **Women's Empowerment Index (WEI)** and the **Global Gender Parity Index (GGPI)**.
- The findings emphasize the urgent need for comprehensive policy action to address the existing gaps and propel progress toward a more equitable and inclusive world.

### What are the Key Findings of the Report?

- **Only 1% of women globally live in countries with high women's empowerment and gender parity.**
- Leadership roles and decision-making remain predominantly **male-dominated, restricting opportunities for women.**
- On average, **women achieve only 60% of their full potential**, according to the WEI.
- **Women lag behind men by 28%** across key dimensions of human development, as measured by the GGPI.
- **None of the 114 countries** analyzed achieved **complete women's empowerment or gender parity.**
- Over **90% of women worldwide reside** in countries with **low or middle women's empowerment and low or middle performance in achieving gender parity.**
- **Gender equality challenges persist even in highly developed countries.** Among the 114 countries analyzed, over 85, including **more than half in the high or very high human development categories**, show low or moderate women's empowerment and gender parity. Economic progress alone does not ensure gender equality.
  - **India has low women's empowerment and gender parity despite moderate human development**, highlighting the need for concerted efforts to bridge the gender gap and uplift women's status.
- Gender equality alone **does not guarantee women's empowerment.** The report shows that **no country with a gender gap has achieved high women's empowerment.**
  - Additionally, about **8% of women live in countries with low empowerment but high gender parity.**

## UN Women:

- UN Women was **established in 2010 by the UN General Assembly** to accelerate progress on meeting the needs and rights of women and girls worldwide.
- **UN Women supports UN Member States** as they set global standards for achieving **gender equality and works with governments and civil society** to design and implement laws, policies, programs and services that **benefit women and girls**.
- UN Women focuses on four strategic priorities: **women's leadership and political participation, women's economic empowerment, ending violence against women, and peace, security and humanitarian action**.

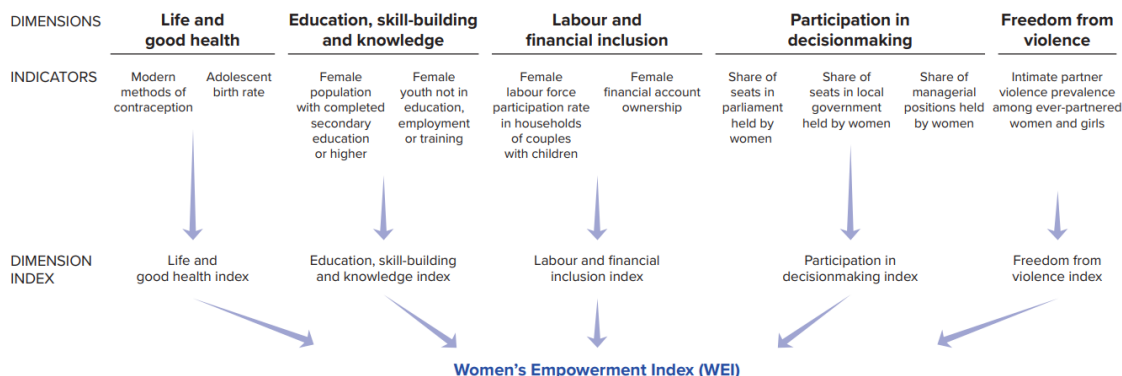
## What are the Recommendations for Comprehensive Policy Action?

- **Health Policies:** Governments should **support and promote universal access to sexual and reproductive health**, aiming for long and healthy lives for all.
- **Equality in Education:** Addressing **gaps in skills and the quality of education, particularly in fields like STEM**, will empower women and girls in the digital age.
- **Work-life Balance and Support for Families:** Policies and services addressing work-life balance, including affordable quality childcare, parental leave schemes, and flexible working arrangements, should be invested in.
- **Women's Equal Participation:** Targets and action plans should be established to achieve **gender parity in all spheres of public life**, while discriminatory laws and regulations holding women back must be eliminated.
- **Violence Against Women:** Implementing comprehensive measures focused on **prevention, changing social norms, and eliminating discriminatory laws and policies is crucial**.

## What is the Women's Empowerment Index (WEI)?

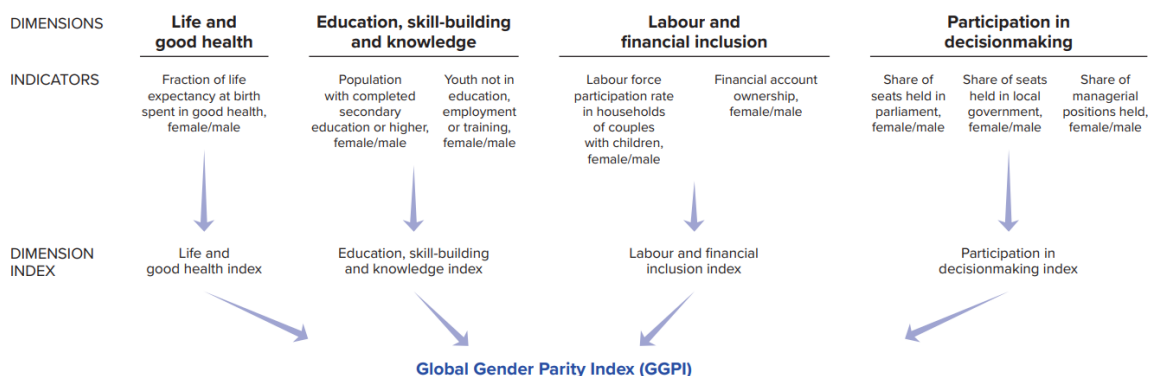
- The WEI is a composite index developed by **UN Women and UNDP**.
- It measures women's empowerment across **five dimensions**: life and good health, education, **skill-building and knowledge**, labor and financial inclusion, participation in decision-making, and **freedom from violence**.
- The WEI captures **women's power and freedom to make choices and seize life opportunities**.
- The development of the WEI marks a significant milestone in evidence-based policymaking and serves as a baseline for monitoring the government's progress towards [Sustainable Development Goal 5 \(SDG5\)](#) on **gender equality and empowerment of women and girls**.

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## What is the Global Gender Parity Index (GGPI)?

- The GGPI is a composite index that assesses gender disparities in key dimensions of **human development, including health, education, inclusion, and decision-making.**
- The GGPI is developed by UN Women and UNDP as part of a new global report titled '**The Path to Equality: Women's Empowerment and Gender Parity in Human Development**', which was launched in July 2023.
- The GGPI aims to capture the **status of women relative to men across different contexts and dimensions.** It also reflects the multidimensional and interrelated nature of gender equality.



## What are the Indian Initiatives to reduce Gender Gap in Social, Economic and Political Life?

- **Economic Participation and Health and Survival:**
  - **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao:** It ensures the protection, survival and education of the girl child.
  - **Mahila Shakti Kendra:** Aims to empower rural women with opportunities for skill development and employment.
  - **Rashtriya Mahila Kosh:** It is an apex micro-finance organization that provides micro-credit at concessional terms to poor women for various livelihood and income generating activities.
  - **Sukanya Samridhi Yojna:** Under this scheme girls have been economically empowered by opening their bank accounts.
  - **Female Entrepreneurship:** To promote female entrepreneurship, the Government has initiated Programmes like Stand-Up India and Mahila e-Haat (online marketing platform to support women entrepreneurs/ SHGs/NGOs), Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Programme (ESSDP).
  - **Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya:** They have been opened in Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs).
- **Political Reservation:** Government has reserved **33% of the seats in Panchayati Raj Institutions for women.**
  - **Capacity Building of Elected Women Representatives:** It is conducted with a view to empowering women to participate effectively in the governance processes.

## 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)**

PDF Refernece URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/gender-parity-and-women-s-empowerment-gap>

