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1.0 Introduction

- Gender encompasses economic, social, and cultural aspects related to being male or female.
- It examines discrimination against women and differences in life experiences between genders.
- Gender analysis highlights disparities in resource access and opportunities between men and women.

2.0 Indicators for Evaluating Women's Development

HEALTH INDICATORS

2.1 Sex Ratio

- Sex ratio indicates the number of females per 1000 males.
- The **global sex ratio** is determined by the **number of males per thousand females** in a population.
- Conversely, in countries such as **India**, the sex ratio is calculated as the **number of females per thousand males**.

As per the NFHS-5 (2019-21), the sex ratio of the total population (females per 1,000 males) is 1020.

- This sex ratio suggests a slight surplus of females in the population compared to males. This could indicate various factors such as longer life expectancy for females, lower male birth rates, or migration patterns.



Missing Women

- The issue of "Missing Women" refers to a deficiency in the number of women compared to the expected count in a specific region or country.
- It's typically assessed using the female-male ratio (FMR). This discrepancy is more prevalent in low and middle-income nations compared to high-income ones.

2.2 Sex Ratio at Birth

- The ratio is often expressed as the number of girls per 1,000 boys.

As per the NFHS-5 (2019-21), Sex ratio at birth for children born in the last five years (females per 1,000 males) is 929.

- This ratio has shown improvement compared to the previous NFHS-4, which was 919.

2.3 Infant Mortality Rate (IMR)

- Infant mortality rate is the number of infants dying before turning one year old, per 1,000 live births in a year.
- IMR is calculated by the number of infant deaths during the first year of life and dividing it by the number of live births throughout the same year, then multiplying by 1000.
- Female infant mortality rate is the number of female infants dying before turning one year old, per 1,000 live births in a year.

As per the World Bank's data, the Female IMR has improved from 156 in 1960 to 25 per 1000 live births in 2021.

2.4 Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR)

- Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) measures the **number of women aged 15-49 years** who **die** due to **maternal causes per 100,000 live births**.
- According to the World Health Organization (WHO), MMR includes the death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of the termination of pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy.

Target 3.1 of the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** set by the United Nations aims to reduce the **global maternal mortality ratio** to less than **70 per 100,000 live births by 2030**.

As per the latest

Sample Registration System's Bulletin for 2018-20, India's MMR is **97** per 1,00,000 live births.

Note: Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner releases the data Sample Registration System's Bulletin on Maternal Mortality on a regular basis.

2.5 Maternal Morbidity

- Maternal morbidity encompasses **any physical or mental illness or disability** directly linked to **pregnancy** and/or **childbirth**.
- The Government of India has prioritized initiatives to enhance maternal health indicators, resulting in significant progress in reducing preventable maternal deaths over the past two decades.
- Despite progress, the adoption of life-saving health interventions and practices remains limited due to knowledge gaps, policy shortcomings, and resource constraints.
- Disparities exist between socioeconomic classes and urban-rural areas, with access to healthcare often contingent on a family's or mother's economic status and residential location.

2.6 Female Life Expectancy at Birth

- Life expectancy at birth is determined by the average number of years a newborn is projected to live, assuming mortality patterns at the time of birth persist into the future.

As per the Sample Registration System's Bulletin, at the national level, the life expectancy at birth for males has been estimated at 68.6 years and that for females, at 71.4 years.

EDUCATION INDICATORS

2.7 Literacy Rate

- As of 2011, around 50% of females in rural areas are educated compared to 74.1% of men.
- In urban areas, 88.3% of men are literate in comparison to 76.9% of females.

2.8 Dropout Rate

- As per the UDISE+ Report 2021-22, the dropout rates stand at:
 - UDISE stands for Unified District Information System for Education
 - It operates under Ministry of Education.

Table 6.13: Dropout Rate by level of education and gender, 2021-22

India/ State/UT	Dropout Rate								
	Primary (1 to 5)			Upper Primary (6-8)			Secondary (9-10)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
India	1.6	1.4	1.5	2.7	3.3	3	13	12.3	12.6

2.9 Female Gross Enrolment Ratio

- As per the UDISE+ Report 2021-22, the ratio stands at:

Table 6.1: Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) by Gender and Level of School Education, 2021-22

India/ State/ UT	Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) – All Social Groups														
	Primary (1 to 5)			Upper Primary (6 to 8)			Elementary (1 to 8)			Secondary (9-10)			Higher Secondary (11-12)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)
India	102.1	104.8	103.4	94.5	94.9	94.7	99.3	101.1	100.1	79.7	79.4	79.6	57.0	58.2	57.6

EMPLOYMENT INDICATORS

2.10 Female Labor Force Participation Rate

- As per the Periodic Labor Force Survey 2022-23, the **female labor force participation rate** stands at 37.0 for all ages in Usual Status.
- The rate has shown improvement since 2017-18 (1st edition of PLFS). However, the rate needs to be improved.

2.11 Remuneration

- The **Equal Remuneration Act of 1973** mandates equal pay for men and women performing the same or similar work, and prohibits discrimination based on

gender during recruitment and thereafter. However, this Act does not apply to the unorganized sector, where a large portion of women work.

- Despite the professionalism maintained by educated Indian women in the workforce, men outnumber them in many fields and sometimes receive higher income for the same positions.

3.0 Marriage and Inheritance

3.1 Age of Marriage

- The Sarda Act or Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929 set the minimum age for girls to marry at 15 years.
- In 1954, this was amended to set the minimum age of marriage at 21 years for males and 18 years for females.
- The Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill raised the minimum age of marriage for girls to 21 years.
- In June 2020, the central government set up a **task force (Chairperson: Ms Jaya Jaitly)** to examine the correlation of age of marriage and motherhood.
- The panel has recommended that **minimum age of marriage for girls** could be raised to **21** and can be implemented in a phased manner.

3.2 Inheritance

- Two significant laws concerning property share are the Hindu Succession Act of 2005 and the Indian Succession Act of 1925.
- Legally, according to the **Hindu Succession Act of 2005, Hindu women** have **equal rights to parental property** after their parents' death.
- However, in practice, women from all religious backgrounds often do not receive equal rights in ancestral property.
- Women are often placed in a secondary position regarding property and inheritance rights.

4.0 Political Participation

Women's Representation in Elected Assemblies:

- Women represent only 10.5% of the total members of Parliament as of October 2021.
- The national average for women MLAs across state assemblies in India is a mere 9%.
- Despite 75 years of independence, women's representation in the Lok Sabha has not increased by even 10%.

Reservation for Women in Panchayati Raj Institutions:

- Article 243 D of the Constitution mandates at least one-third reservation for women in seats filled by direct election and chairperson positions in Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Women's Reservation Act 2023:

- 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 NCT Delhi, including those reserved for SCs and STs.

Challenges and Way Ahead:

- Political parties' reluctance to field a fair number of women candidates is a significant obstacle to women's representation.
- Passing the Women's Reservation Bill could address this issue, but it has lapsed multiple times without being enacted into law.
- Overcoming prejudices and stereotypes in India will be challenging, but bold legislation is needed to make progress in the short term.

5.0 Social Conditions

Challenges in Gender Equality:

- Preference for sons persists over daughters.
- Gender-based role stereotypes remain prevalent.

- Unpaid domestic work is often overlooked in national statistics.
- Power and decision-making are unequally shared, favoring men.
- Domestic violence often goes unchallenged and unreported.
- Men at home may resist accepting dual responsibilities.
- Women lack access to and control over family and community assets despite contributing equally.
- Social attitudes and practices reflect a low image of women in society

Difference between Gender Equity and Gender Equality:

- Gender equality ensures that each individual or group receives the same resources or opportunities.
- Gender equity acknowledges that individuals have different circumstances and allocates the resources and opportunities necessary to achieve an equal outcome for everyone

6.0 The Economic and Social Impact of Empowering Women

- Investing in addressing gender inequality and empowering women can boost productivity and social development.
- The UN estimates that the Asian region loses around \$47 billion annually due to limited female participation in the labor force.
- Removing barriers preventing women from entering certain occupations can narrow the productivity gap and increase worker output by 3-25%.
- Nations with educated and empowered women tend to experience higher economic growth, and enhancing women's opportunities and agency benefits future generations.
- Increasing women's control over household resources positively impacts children's well-being, with evidence from China showing that a 10% increase in female income leads to improved schooling for both girls and boys.

- Educating girls leads to delayed marriage and motherhood, reduced HIV/AIDS risk, higher household income, lower fertility rates, improved health and education outcomes for the next generation, increased decision-making power within households and communities, and lower rates of gender-based violence.

