



DE GRUYTER
OPEN

DOI: 10.1515/genst-2017-0009

THE STATE OF GENDER INEQUALITY IN INDIA

SINGH SUMANJEET

Ramjas College, University of Delhi

University Enclave, New Delhi, Delhi 110007, India

sumanjeetsingh@gmail.com

***Abstract:** Despite a high growth rate and plentiful Government measures to encourage gender equality, the gender gap still exists in India. Lack of gender equality not only limits women's access to resources and opportunities, but also imperils the life prospects of the future generation. In the present article an attempt has been made to examine the problem of gender inequality in India. In this process, the article not only discusses the extent, causes and consequences of the problem, but also suggests policy measures to reduce gender inequality in India.*

***Keywords:** Education, Gender, India, Inequality, Policy.*

Gender inequality or the gender gap continues to be an immense issue of concern in India despite its achieving high rates of economic growth in recent years. Traditional patriarchal customs and norms have relegated women to a secondary status within the household and workplace. Gender inequality is reflected in India's low ranking on the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index (GGI), 2014, with scores below average on

parameters such as educational attainment, economic participation and health and survival. On educational attainment, India ranked 126 with a female to male ratio in the literacy rate of 0.68. On the criterion of economic participation and opportunities, India was ranked 134. Its female to male ratio in labour force participation was 0.36. India was the second-lowest performing country on health and survival, ranking 141, just ahead of Armenia. As a whole the country ranked 127th out of 146 countries with a score of 0.563 on the gender inequality index and came 114th in the world in terms of gender gap. According to the new (2015) report of the McKinsey Global Institute, 'The Power of Parity', India's global Gender Parity Score (GPS) is 0.48, which represents an "extremely high" level of gender inequality (Misra 2015). Furthermore, UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI) 2015 highlighted that with respect to gender inequality, among South Asian countries, only Afghanistan fares worse than India. On every parameter of the gender inequality index (GII), India lags behind even both of its neighbouring countries, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Only 12.2 per cent of parliamentary seats are held by women in India as against 19.7 per cent in Pakistan and 20 per cent in Bangladesh. Some of the world's poorest nations, such as Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Uganda and Mozambique, have over a third to half of their parliamentary seats occupied by women. India also has a high maternal mortality rate (MMR) of 190 deaths per 100,000 live births as compared to 170 pregnancy-related deaths per 100,000 births in both Bangladesh and Pakistan. India and Nigeria together accounted for one third of global maternal deaths in 2013. 50,000 maternal deaths occurred in India alone in 2013. In terms of the percentage of women receiving secondary education, Bangladesh at 34 per cent far outperforms India at 27 per cent (Lal 2016).

On labour force participation, a majority of countries worldwide show a positive trend in female workforce participation; the exceptions include India. On the labour force participation rate for women, Bangladesh stands at 57 per cent, China at 63.9 per cent and India at only 27 per cent (Nair 2015). The 68th set of National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) data shows that between 2004-5 and 2011-12 there was a negative trend in the women's labour force participation rate (LFPR or proportion of labour force to total population) in rural India. Rural female participation fell from nearly 25 per cent in 2004-05 to 21 per cent in 2009-10 and then even lower, to around 17 per cent, in 2011-12 (Shaw 2013). Such a fall also restricts women's ability to protect their health.

The Global Financial Inclusion Index (Global Findex, 2014) database underlines that only 26 per cent of adult females in India have an account with a formal financial institution, compared to 44 per cent of male adults (World Bank 2014). A Reserve Bank of India (RBI) report (2013) indicates that women's credit outstanding from commercial banks accounts for only 5 per cent of all credit outstanding (RBI 2013). Moreover, a recent report of the MasterCard Connector's Project (2015) points out that 58 per cent of females in India report difficulty in accessing job opportunities because of their gender (Gandhi 2015). Indeed, many important Global Indices and reports show the sorry state of affairs in India as far as gender equality is concerned.

The Government of India, along with various states, initiated a number of policies, programmes and schemes intended to reduce the gender gap and to boost women's empowerment over the 1989-2015 period. Some of these notable initiatives are the National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW), Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas

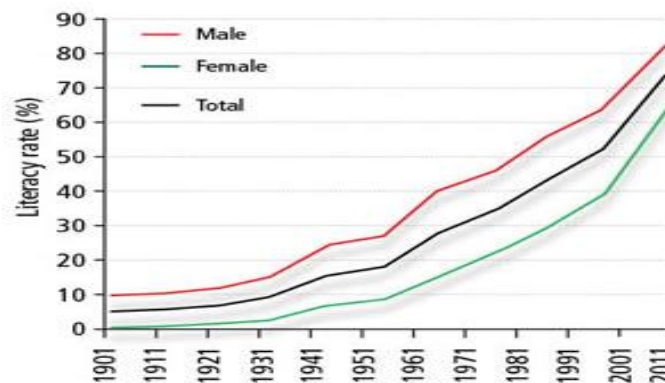
(DWCRA), Gender Sub Plan (under the 8th Five Year Plan), Women Component Plan (under the 9th Five Year Plan), Swadhar, Priyadrashani, Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK), Sampurna Gramin Rozgar Yojana (SGRY), Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), Awareness Generation Projects for Rural and Poor Women, Kishori Shakti Yojana (KSY), Swayamsidha Mahila Mandal Programme, Condensed Course of Education for Adult Women, Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls-Sable (RGSEAG), Swa-Shakthi, Swawlambn programme, Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana Conditional Maternity Benefit plan (IGMSY-CMB), Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women, Swawalamban Programme, Swashakti Project, Integrated Child Development Services, Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY), Maliha Samridhi Yojana (MSY), Balika Samridhhi Yojana (BSY), National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education, National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level, Sukyana, Ladli Laxmi Yojana, Apni Beti-Apna Dhan (ABAD) and many more.

But, in spite of these attempts, a considerable gender gap still exists. In fact, according to the Global Gender Gap Report (2015) the economic gender gap has actually widened by 1 per cent since 2006 (Malhotra 2015). Lack of gender equality not only limits women's access to resources and opportunities but also imperils the life prospects of the future generation. To give one example, the division of labour according to "sex-roles" usually limits women to domestic work and restricts their access to material and social resources and participation in political, economic and social decision-making. A large amount of literature on the gender gap also indicates that it is a major stumbling block in access to education. For instance, many adolescent females, due to the social structure, usually have to help with the

household work and take care of their siblings instead of going to school or playing. Gender-based inequality results in the female literacy rate being much lower, at 65.46 per cent, than that of their male counterparts, at 82.14 per cent (Table and Figure 1).

Table and Figure 1: Gender Disparity in Basic Education

Year	Male	Female	Total
1901	9.83	0.60	5.35
1911	10.56	1.05	5.92
1921	12.21	1.81	7.16
1931	15.59	2.93	9.50
1941	24.90	7.30	16.10
1951	24.95	7.93	16.67
1961	34.44	12.95	24.02
1971	39.45	18.69	29.95
1981	56.50	29.85	43.67
1991	64.13	39.29	52.21
2001	75.85	54.16	65.38
2011	82.14	65.46	74.04



Note: Effective literacy rate (age 7 and above)

Source: Census of India, various years

The low female literacy rate has had a dramatically negative impact on family planning and population stabilisation efforts in India. An NSSO report states that about 15 percent of girls (around 90 million) never attend school as compared to 11 percent of boys. As the young people grow older, the gap in their educational status widens and widens with huge implications over time.

Lack of education generally engenders a series of problems for them. Uneducated mothers are not aware of the best nutritional choices for their children. A study by Lawrence *et al.* (2009) identified the fact that compared to women of higher educational attainment, women of lower educational attainment had less control over their families' food choices, showed less support for attempts to eat healthily, fewer opportunities to observe and learn good food-related practices, more perceived environmental constraints, and more ambiguous beliefs about the consequences of eating a nutritious diet. This leads to problems such as malnutrition and anaemia among children. A Nandi Foundation report (2011) on 'Hunger and Malnutrition (HUNGaMA)' found that in India as many as 42 per cent of under-fives are severely or moderately underweight and that 59 per cent of them suffer from moderate to severe stunting, meaning their height is much lower than the median height. Further, the report found that awareness of nutrition among mothers is low: "92 per cent of mothers had never heard the word malnutrition." Highlighting the negligence shown towards girl children even in their early childhood, the report says that the nutritional

advantage girls have over boys in the first months of life seems to be reversed over time as they grow older (Dhar 2012).

Uneducated mothers are less likely to send their own children to school and often do not participate in the labour force or the political process. They rarely have any say in household affairs. The HIV/AIDS epidemic is closely linked to education. The National Family Health Survey (1998-99) showed that only 4 out of 10 women of reproductive age had heard of AIDS. Awareness is much lower among rural and less educated women. Only 18 percent of illiterate women had heard of AIDS, compared with 92 percent of women who had at least completed high school.

Without education, women lack confidence or knowledge to make their own choice and are encouraged or forced to marry early. India holds the miserable record of having the highest absolute number of child brides : about 24 million. This represents 40% of the world's 60 million child marriages. Early marriage forces girls into adulthood and, frequently, motherhood before they are emotionally or physically mature. It profoundly affects a girl's life, not only by substantially lowering her educational prospects, but also by causing health complications and harming psychological well-being (Wodon 2014). In this way gender-based discrimination in education is both a cause and a consequence of broader forms of gender inequality in society (Pulugurtha 2008).

Added to this, unequal power relations and the low status of women, as expressed by limited access to human, financial, and economic assets, weaken the ability of women to protect themselves and negotiate safer sex both within and outside of marriage, thereby increasing their vulnerability (World Bank 2012). The Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (2014) stated that the lack of power of

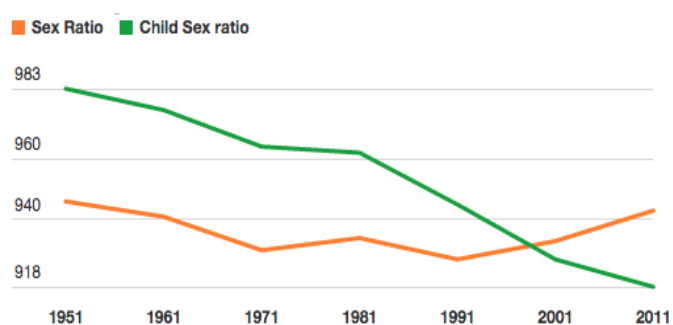
women in most cultural settings also impacts the nutritional intake and health status of women and girls. This in turn leads to health issues such as anaemia and intrauterine growth restriction during pregnancy. If a woman gives birth to a female child while malnourished, then the child's survival and nutritional issues increase.

Apart from education, there are a number of intricate and often interconnected factors that explain the prevailing gender gap in India. The root cause of gender inequality in Indian society lies in its patriarchal system. Most of India, with some exceptions, has strong patriarchal and patrilineal customs, where men hold authority over female family members and inherit family property and title. Examples of patriarchy in India include prevailing customs in which inheritance passes from father to son, women move in with the husband and his family upon marriage, and marriages include a bride price or dowry. This 'inter-generational contract' provides strong social and economic incentives for raising sons and disincentives for raising daughters. The preference for sons is so strong that it is manifested in terms of limiting the birth and survival of girl children. As a result, the sex ratio in India has become imbalanced. From 983 girls for every 1000 boys in 1951, it went down to 945 in 1991, then to 927 in 2001, and declined to 918 in 2011 - the worst since independence (Table and Figure 2).

Table and Figure 2: Increasing Imbalance in Child Sex Ratio in India

Year	Sex Ratio	Child Sex Ratio
1901	971	*
1911	964	*
1921	955	*

1931	950	*
1941	945	*
1951	946	983
1961	941	976
1971	930	964
1981	934	962
1991	927	945
2001	933	927
2011	940	914



Note: Girls per 1000 boys (under the age of 6);

* Data not available

Source: Census of India, various years

Sex-selective abortion of the female fetus following a prenatal diagnostic test is widely believed to be the major contributor to this phenomenon (Sen and Kumar 2001). According to a study by the United Nations Population Fund (UNPF), the widening gap in the child sex ratio will lead to a deficit of 23 million females in the 20-49 age group by 2040. This scarcity will not

improve their position in society. In fact, it will lead to increasing pressure to marry, a higher risk of gender-based violence, a rising demand for sex work and the development of trafficking networks (Salve 2015). Official statistics show that there has been a considerable increase in the number of reported crimes against women. According to a 2013 report, 'Crime Against Women', by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), a crime against women is recorded every 1.7 minutes in India. Every 16 minutes a rape is recorded in this country and every 4.4 minutes a girl is subjected to domestic violence. From 2011 to 2012 there was a 5.3% increase in violations of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act of 1956. A total of 24,771 dowry deaths have been reported in the past three years with the highest individual number of them occurring in Uttar Pradesh, with 7,048 deaths. In short, the increasing imbalance in the sex ratio is a sign of continuing discrimination between the sexes.

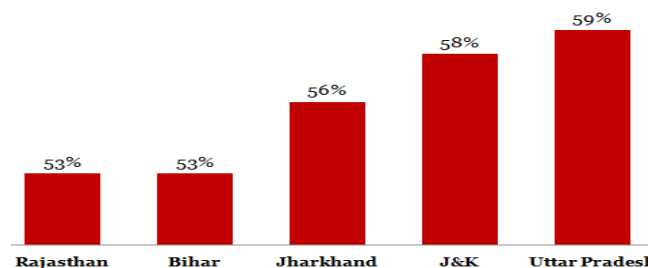
A fundamental factor responsible for gender inequality in India, and arguably one of the most powerful, is poverty. Out of the total of 30 per cent poor people, 70 per cent are female. This factor is closely associated with gender disparities in employment opportunities. While the share of employed men remained roughly constant between 2009 and 2012, women's employment dropped from 18 per cent to 16 per cent. Only 13.4 per cent of working-age women (aged 15-59 years) have a regular salaried job compared to 21.2 per cent of working-age men (ILO 2014). Women earn 56 per cent of what their male colleagues earn for performing the same work (World Economic Forum 2014). As estimated by the World Bank, 90 per cent of Indian working women are employed in the informal sector and do tasks involving heavy physical work of different types, with long working hours with limited payment, lack of guarantee of minimum wages, job

insecurity and lack of minimum facilities at the work place. In turn, the disparity in employment opportunities and the nature of the work in which they are engaged contribute to women's economic disempowerment. Poverty has various manifestations, including lack of income and availability of resources sufficient to ensure a sustainable livelihood, hunger and malnutrition, ill health, limited or a complete lack of access to education and other basic services, increasing morbidity and mortality from illness, homelessness and inadequate housing, unsafe environments and social discrimination and exclusion. It is also characterised by an absence of participation in decision-making and in civil, social and cultural life (UN 1995).

The educational backwardness of girls has been a consequential cause of gender inequality in India. Educating a girl child is still seen as a bad investment because she is bound to get married and leave her paternal home one day. There are various barriers to girls' education that appear especially in developing countries like India, ranging from supply-side constraints to negative social norms. Some of these include school fees; strong cultural norms favouring boys' education when a family has limited resources; inadequate sanitation facilities in schools such as lack of private and separate latrines; and negative classroom environments, where girls may face violence, exploitation or corporal punishment. Additionally, schools often lack sufficient numbers of female teachers. Due to these reasons among many others, in some states, such as Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir and Rajasthan, the female literacy rate is below 60 per cent (Figure 3). Thus, lacking a good education, women are ill-equipped for the present day with its demanding job skills – and this despite the fact that each year's High School and Higher Secondary standard results show that

the girls who take the exams are doing better than the boys. This shows that parents do not spend much on a girl child after Higher Secondary standard; hence they lag behind in the job market.

Figure 3: States with the Worst Female Literacy Rate in India



Source: Census of India

Lack of awareness, which is very closely connected with the level of literacy, is another major factor responsible for the widening gender gap in India. Most Indian women are not aware about their opportunities, their rights and their capabilities. This lack of awareness hinders their entrepreneurial development and stops them accessing credit from formal financial institutions. Moreover, these women are unable to discover about the schemes, policies and initiatives taken by the government to empower them. In short, the information gap greatly affects women's development. Thus the causes of gender inequality are interdependent and interconnected.

Reports and studies stress that bridging gender gaps is imperative not only from an equity perspective, but also from an economic one. Gender equality is also important for national competitiveness, as human talent, skills, education and labour productivity are essential determinants of competitiveness. Since women account for slightly less than half of India's

population (48.14 per cent in 2014, according to the World Bank), empowering women would mean making the most of all of the country's talent. Added to this, numerous studies during the last decade have confirmed that reducing the gender gap enhances productivity and economic growth. According to a recent (2015) IMF report, 'Catalyst for Change: Empowering Women and Tackling Income Inequality', eliminating the gender gap could boost GDP by 5 per cent in the US, 9 per cent in Japan and 27 per cent in India. Closing the gender gap promotes economic development, largely through the impact of female education on fertility, child mortality and the creation of human capital in the next generation. Falling fertility rates will lead to what Bloom and Williamson (1998) have termed the "demographic gift". Evidence from Asia, Africa and Latin America consistently shows that closing the gender gap brings benefits by strengthening women's direct access to, and control over, resources and income. A large number of studies have linked women's income and greater bargaining power within the family to improved child nutritional status, which in turn influences health outcomes and educational attainment (FAO 2010-11). Appreciating the need to close the gender gap, former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said that improving gender equality creates immediate benefits: "Families are healthier, they are better fed, their income, savings and reinvestment go up. And what is true of families is true of communities and, eventually, the world."

According to 'The Power of Parity', a report by the McKinsey Global Institute, India could increase its 2025 GDP, estimated at US\$4.83 trillion, by between 16% and 60% simply by enabling women to participate in the economy on a par with men (McKinsey 2015). To reap the benefits of bridging the gender divide, the Government of India, especially in the last

decade, has come up with many remarkable policies and programmes and introduced new laws or amended existing ones to reduce this gap. The provisions include quotas for women on local elected bodies (panchayats); laws protecting women from domestic violence (The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005) and girl children from abuse (Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act 2000); laws providing equal rights to school education (Commission of Protection of Child Rights Act 2005), prohibition of child marriage (Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006), guaranteeing equal benefits in employment schemes (Equal Remuneration Act 1976); maternity benefit schemes (Maternity Benefits Act, 1961 (amended 1995)) and most recently laws for preventing sexual harassment of women at the workplace (The Sexual Harassment of Women at the Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redress) Act 2013). In 2001, a National Policy for Women's Empowerment was adopted to remove discrimination against women and give them an equal share in social, economic and political areas. As a result of these initiatives, women and girls have been benefited to some extent. For example, in primary education, the current enrolment ratio of 940 girls per 1000 boys seems perfectly in line with India's overall gender ratio of 940 females per 1000 males. The maternal mortality rate, or the rate of deaths among women during or after pregnancy, had declined by 16% by 2011-12 compared with 2007-09. But these achievements are not enough to offset the effects of the gender inequity that is still so pervasive in India. Many women still lack the autonomy to make their own choices about such important life decisions as marriage and healthcare. Thus, far more needs to be done to bridge the gender divide gap in India and thereby 'transform India' in a real sense.

Primarily, gender inequality is a predicament of unequal opportunities. Thus the solution also lies in providing equal opportunities to women in access to services, resources and infrastructure such as healthcare, education, banking, water, electricity, sanitation and communication tools, etc. Without access to such resources women cannot use their potential, skills, expertise, knowledge and passion, keeping them at a disadvantage. Access to information and communication technology (ICT) tools is particularly important as studies show that it has potential to broaden women's and girls' opportunities in education and employment and can bring greater access to health services. Examples would be the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) initiatives, the "Digital literacy" campaign, training more than one million women in basic ICT skills, and the "Mobiles for midwives" programme, which enables midwives practising in remote areas to provide accurate records of births. Thus it is of great importance to include an agenda for gender equality in ICT Policies, programmes and projects at all levels. Added to this, women should be given more opportunities to be visible in public life and institutions. It is disturbing to see that women make up only 5 per cent of the total work force, and that just 2 out of 24 Supreme Court judges, 11 per cent of members of the last parliament and only 3 per cent of Vice-Chancellors are women.

On the policy front, as suggested by Tavares and Mishra (2016), concerted efforts are needed to ensure that planning, budgeting and auditing processes contribute to gender equality. Taking tiny steps towards integrating women in India's growth story, in its budget for 2016-17 the government proposed increasing spending on women-specific schemes across ministries by 56 per cent (from 11,388 crore to 17, 412.01 crore) in

2016-17. However, there are still no programmes for adolescent girls, or for the skill enhancement of women (Masoodi 2016). There is an urgent need to create institutional mechanisms to ensure representation of the women and child development department in approval of committee members for new programmes and to set up gender budget cells in all departments.

Added to this, the government needs to design more result-oriented ‘conditional cash transfer’ schemes on the lines of Apni Beti-Apna Dhan, which provides a cash payment into a saving bond account on the condition that the girl’s family keeps her in school rather than marrying her off young. Similar schemes could be introduced to ensure children’s attendance at school and health clinics. A conditional cash transfer scheme has had some remarkable success in countries such as Brazil and Mexico. In these countries a scheme was founded to help women invest in their own education and in small livestock and poultry rearing, alongside doing more for their children’s education (Kabir 2014). Highlighting the importance of these schemes, Jamie *et al.* (2012) state that while savings-linked cash transfers are not a panacea to end gender-based oppression, they offer a high-impact model for early and targeted interventions that can influence health, education, and economic opportunities. More importantly, they provide a much-needed asset that a girl can hold proudly, use wisely, and own completely.

In the light of the above discussion it can be concluded that a country like India has a long way to go before it can call itself a ‘gender neutral’ country. However, no simple and direct solutions are available to minimise gender inequality as gaps are rooted in norms and in cultural and social practices and are further consolidated by poor infrastructure and service delivery. Possibly, the change will come only with awareness,

cultural/fundamental restructuring, mindset shifting and through widening access to public service delivery without discrimination on a gender basis. No government, be it state or central, can by itself bring long-lasting change. Government authorities, the donor community, the private sector and civil society need to come together to act to close the gender gap, and a system of accountability should be put in place to record the aid they provide.

References

- Dasgupta, Jashodhara. 2015. *Gender Gap: Men Get Away with Too Many Privileges*. Available: <http://www.dailyo.in/politics/gender-equality-men-get-too-many-privileges-no-country-for-women-india-gender-gap-index/story/1/1478.html> [Accessed 2015, September 14]
- Dhar, Aarti (2012). “42 per cent of Indian Children are Underweight”. *The Hindu*. October 10.
- FAO (2010-11). *The State of Food and Agriculture 2010-11: Women in Agriculture*. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome
- Gandhi, Rajat. 2015. “Women in Business: Can P2P Lending Bridge Gender Gap in Access to Capital”. *The Times of India*. June 19.
- International Labour Organization. 2014. *Global Employment Trends 2014: Risk of Jobless Recovery*
- Zimmerman, Jamie; Tosh, Nicole and Nick McClellan. 2012. *Map: What Countries Have the Worst Gender Gaps?* Slate. March 6.
- Kabir, Naila. 2014. *What Works in Reducing Gender Inequality*. Available: <https://oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/what-works-in-reducing-gender-inequality-great-overview-from-naila-kabeer/> [Accessed 2015, January, 12]
- Lal, Neeta. 2016. *India Needs to “Save its Daughters” Through Education and Gender Equality*. Inter Press Services, March 4.
- Lawrence W., Skinner, C., Haslam, C. *et al.* 2009. “Why Women of Lower Educational Attainment Struggle to make Healthier Food Choices: The Importance of Psychological and Social Factors”. *Psychological Health*. 24 (9): 1003-20.

- Malhotra, Sarika. 2015. "India in the World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Report 2015". *Business Today*, November 23.
- Masoodi, Ashwaq. 2016. "Budget 2016/Mixed bag for women". *Livemint*, 6th March.
- McKinsey Global Institute. 2015. *The Power of Parity: How Advancing Women's Equality Can Add \$12 Trillion to Global Growth*. September.
- Misra, Udit. 2015. "How India Ranks on Gender Parity - and Why?" *Indian Express*. November 4.
- Nair, Shalini. 2015. "More Gender Inequality in India than Pakistan and Bangladesh: UN". *Indian Express*. December 15.
- Pulugurtha, Shamala. 2008. *How a Lack of Education Adversely Affects Girls*. Available: <http://empowermentinternational.org/2008/08/01/how-a-lack-of-education-adversely-affects-girls/> [Accessed 2015, January 12].
- Tavares, Rebecca R. and Yamini Mishra. 2016. "Budget 2016: To Really Transform India, Focus on Women First". *The Times of India*. March 1.
- Reserve Bank of India (2013). *Outstanding credit of scheduled commercial banks according to organizations*. Reserve Bank of India. July 22.
- Salve, Prachi. 2015. *#SelfieWithDaughter: Can India save 23 million girls?* Available: <http://scroll.in/article/738068/selfiewithdaughter-can-india-save-23-million-girls> [Accessed 2015, June 23].
- Sen, Kalyani and Shiva Kumar. 2001. *Women in India: How Free; How Equal*. Report Commissioned by the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator in India, UNDP.
- The World Bank (2014). *Financial Inclusion Data/Global Index*. Available: <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/financialinclusion/country/india> [Accessed 2014, November 21].
- United Nations. 1995. *Fourth World Conference on Women*. United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women, Beijing, China.
- Wodon, Quentin. 2014. *Eliminating Child Marriage to Boost Girls' Education*. The World Bank. Available: <http://blogs.worldbank.org/education/eliminating-child-marriage-boost-girls-education> [Accessed 2015, January 6].
- World Bank. 2012. *HIV/AIDS in India*. Available: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2012/07/10/hiv-aids-india> [Accessed 2014, December 28].

World Economic Forum. 2014. “India - The Global Gender Gap Report 2015”. *World Economic Forum*, 10th Anniversary Edition.

Acknowledgements: The author is very grateful to Dr. Bishnu Mohan Dash (Department of Social Work, B.R. Ambedkar College, University of Delhi) for constructive criticism and making a number of helpful comments in the preparation of the final draft. This paper is part of an ongoing research project (RC 305) designed to study the impact of ICT on the Gender Gap in India. The author gratefully acknowledges the infrastructural and financial support of the University of Delhi.