



Gender gap

Description

Theme:

- In the latest 'Global gender gap' report 2022 published by the World Economic Forum (WEF), India ranked 135th out of 146 countries.

Reasons for the gender gap in India:

- The report is made on four key dimensions – economic participation and opportunity (India's rank -143), educational attainment (India's rank -107), health and survival (India's rank – 146), and political empowerment (India's rank – 48).
- Even though traditional gender roles are being defied by many people and Indian women are excelling in many careers, gender norms are believed and strongly endorsed by many in India. In general, women are expected to take care of the kids, elderly and household chores, and hence they are left with little time to do a paid job. Even if they have enough time to do a paid job, balancing family responsibilities and career is very difficult and hence they have very little chance of excelling in the career they choose. Moreover, the Covid pandemic forced many women to leave jobs. Due to these reasons, India ranked 143rd in 'economic participation and opportunity'.
- Some families do not take care of girl and boy children alike and send the boys to schools but keep the girl children at home. Some families think that basic education is enough for girls and hence they do not encourage girls to pursue higher education. Crimes against women are also one of the reasons why some families are not sending their girl children to schools and colleges. The covid pandemic caused the shutdown of schools temporarily. During that phase, many people lost jobs too. So, some families married off their girl children and thereby the number of child marriages increased a lot during the pandemic. Due to these reasons, India ranked 107th in 'education attainment'.
- Even though the number of women politicians is increasing, they are very small in number when compared to male politicians. The 'women's reservation bill' that seeks to reserve one-third of all seats for women in the Lok Sabha and the state legislative assemblies has been

pending since 2008. Even though there is a reservation for women in panchayats, some of them are dominated by their male family members. So, they are not able to make decisions on their own. Moreover, common middle-class Indian families do not encourage their girl children to become a politician. And hence India ranked 48th in 'political empowerment'.

How to close the gender gap:

- Steps should be taken to educate all the girl children. Moreover, special incentives should be provided to encourage girls to pursue higher education. Education is a tool for empowerment.
- Women should be encouraged to get into politics. Women in power can take decisions to improve the lives of common women.
- Societal attitudes towards gender roles should be changed. This will reduce the stress for women of handling domestic duties. At the same time, it will also reduce the stress for men of being the main breadwinner. It will help everyone to pursue careers of their choice and excel in them.
- Most of the working women in India are in the informal sector. Hence they are not protected by labour laws. Steps should be taken to help women in getting jobs in the formal sector, so that they can work for better wages and are covered by labour laws.
- Paternity leaves should be made compulsory for companies to encourage equality of men and women in taking care of the newborns. It not only encourages strong bond between fathers and newborns, but also reduces burden on women and can help women's career advancement.
- In general, people tend to be drawn to those who are like them. So, people who hire other employees should be given bias training to prevent their own biases in hiring. That can help more women in getting jobs.
- Iceland ranked 1st in the gender gap index, 2022. From the past 13 years, it is in the first place. The country could close 90.8% of the gender gap. So, all the other countries should study how Iceland achieved it and should implement the things that are suitable to their society.

Conclusion:

India ranked 135th out of 146 countries in the latest 'Global gender gap' report 2022. There are several reasons for India's ranking in the report. Proactive steps are needed to bridge the gender gap.

Your Turn...

What are your thoughts on the gender gap? Express your point of view through the comment section below. And subscribe to our blog to read answers to the trending GD topics.

Photo by [Rosemary Ketchum](#)

References:

- [Gender gap: These are the world's most gender-equal countries](#)
 - [Bridging the gap: On India's gender inequality](#)
 - [The gender gap in employment: What's holding women back?](#)
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