



Analysing Economic Disparity In India's Development: A Gender Perspective

Dr. Kalpana Satija¹
Manish Chhatlani²

¹ Professor, KSKV Kachchh University

² PhD scholar, KSKV Kachchh University

Date of Submission: 18-03-2024

Date of Acceptance: 02-04-2024

ABSTRACT

The Indian government has presented a vision known as "Aatmanirbhar Bharat", which aims to turn India into a self-sustaining and resilient nation. This initiative focuses on enhancing production of the nation, nurturing entrepreneurship, and minimizing reliance on imports in critical sectors. It highlights the importance of cultivating a strong and competitive economy capable of withstanding global uncertainties and adversities. Such an advancement also requires equal participation of men and women in this 'Amrit kaal' to achieve the goals outlined for India @ 2047. Gender equality and its significance in economic development encompass a multitude of aspects. A society that values both men and women equally tend to be safer, healthier, and more likely to achieve economic prosperity. United Nations' **Sustainable Development Goal 5** emphasizes the attainment of Gender Equality as a target to be accomplished by 2030. This research paper endeavours to comprehend the impact of these aspects on the objective of gender equality in India. It further conducts a **comparative analysis of the progress made by states of India** in various target indicators outlined in the SDG, **Gender development Index** (GDI) and other allied parameters on which development depends. By identifying regions that lag behind, this analysis will provide a clear roadmap for focused development initiatives that India should focus on and the challenges that lay ahead of us.

Key words: Gender Equality, Gender Economics, Indian Economy, Sustainable Development, Women & Development

JEL Classification: Q01, J16, O10

I. INTRODUCTION

Socio-economic development is a way of life that constantly improves over time. It involves providing people with ample resources to

continuously enhance their quality of life. The effects of such development policies go beyond mere monetary measures like per capita income or Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Other factors such as health, education, access to services, and cost of living also play a significant role in determining the living standards of society. Recognizing the limitations of focusing solely on economic growth, the concept of economic development emerged to encompass a more holistic approach. In its Independence Day speech, Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, highlighted on 'Panch Pran' (five promises), that India needs to fulfil by 2047, i.e., its 100th year of independence. The focus is on inclusive human development. Human development is defined as the objective of expanding one's choices. But of all such choices, the most critical and essential choice is to have a long and healthy life, be educated and have access to resources for a better standard of living. (Gopalkrishnan & Rao, 2012)

The Sustainable Development Goal – 5, as listed by UN, (United Nations, n.d.) as one of the goals for economies to achieve by 2030 envisages the importance of participation of women in workforce, allowing them to be decision makers, and live a life devoid of discrimination, sexual or otherwise. Promoting women's empowerment and ensuring their equal participation in the workforce can foster economic growth and alleviate poverty. Conversely, gender disparities in education and employment opportunities can hinder a country's developmental potential and hamper productivity for businesses and the overall economy. Moreover, gender inequality can lead to a decrease in social welfare. Consequently, it is crucial to monitor and assess the effectiveness of policies and programs aimed at advancing gender equality and encouraging women's active engagement in the economy.

In this paper, analysis of gender disparities is carried out considering aspects of Education,



Health, Economic Participation & Empowerment. All major/large states have been selected for this study. An attempt is made to evaluate these developmental parameters for selected Indian states for men & women.

An insight can be drawn with respect to growth of the state economies as to if there is inclusive growth.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A study on growth and development of Indian states (Ghosh, July 2006) justifies the need for state-wise study since 'there are concerns regarding regional inequalities and in standard of living in general and such has been expressed even in governments' planning and policy decisions.'

In a convergence investigation study (Roy & Bhattacharjee, 2009), the paper reports 'that absence of convergence of human development across Indian States which is a serious area of concern' and also puts forward further investigation that can be worked out to find 'about the causes of this non-convergence of HDI among the different states in India' and also about 'what important factors which influence Human Development in a significant manner'

In his (Deshpande, June 2020) research on India and gender bias, it was noted that India has one of the most unequal gender divisions of household work worldwide. The research highlights that women faced a disproportionate number of job losses during the lockdown and were predominantly confined to risky, hazardous, and stigmatized jobs. Additionally, the gaps in labour force participation have expanded over the duration of the study.

Another research paper (Chauhan, October 2020) analysing pandemic impact, shows that women were already shouldering a significant burden of unpaid work prior to COVID-19.

However, the pandemic and subsequent lockdown further exacerbated existing gender inequalities, leading to a greater increase in their unpaid workload. The study highlights that among women, their marital status and employment status are critical factors determining the extent of their unpaid work burden. Married women and unemployed women experienced the highest increase in the time spent on unpaid work during this period.

Research by (Lal, April 2015) discusses problems associated with child marriages. Avoiding expenses on female education, minimising marriage expenditure, family poverty, Social insecurity, avoiding share in ancestral properties, single parent families are listed as some of the factors that lead to child marriages.

III. OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

The objectives of the study include:

1. To carry out **inter-state comparison of selected Indian** states in terms of performance on sub-indicators of Human development for men & women.
2. To **construct Gender Gap Score (GGS)** for states analyzed above.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The study involves collection of **Secondary data** with respect to leading 20 states of India for measuring development indicators as per the recent data available. All data tables have been obtained from the MOSPI (Ministry of Statistical & Programme Implementation) website which collates data under its publication 'Men & Women' for states (MOSPI, 2022). The following indicators have been analyzed for the study as per the recent data available.

Index Category 1: Health

| Indicator | Original Source | Data Year | Key |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|------|
| Under 5 Mortality Rate | Office of Registrar General | 2020 | U5MR |
| Life Expectancy | Office of Registrar General | 2015-19 | LE |

Index Category 2: Education

| Indicator | Original Source | Data Year | Key |
|----------------------|----------------------------|-----------|-------|
| Literacy Rate | NSS 75 th Round | 2017-18 | LR |
| Secondary Education* | MOSPI | 2020-21 | S.Edu |

*Population (age >25) with at least Secondary Education as the highest level of education



Index Category 3 : Economic Participation

| Indicator | Original Source | Data Year | Key |
|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------|-----|
| Workforce Participation | Labour Force Survey | 2021-22 | LFP |
| Unemployment Rate | Labour Force Survey | 2021-22 | UR |

Index Category 4: Empowerment**

| Indicator | Original Source | Data Year | Key |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Legislative Assembly | Election Commission of India | 2022 | LA |
| Gram Panchayats/Local | Ministry of Panchayati Raj | 2021-22 | Loc Gov |

**Participation is measured in percentage of (male or female) members on total seats.

The data was normalized as follows:

For variables with positive influence on human development: Actual Value - Min Value Max Value - Min Value

For variables with negative influence on human development: Max Value - Actual Value Max Value - Min value

The maximum & minimum values were selected with respect to states under study. (Relative marking)

After tabular analysis of the above parameters, an index construction was carried out by giving equal weights to each indicator (1/8th component), where two components made up a specific index (such as Education Index, Health Index etc.)

The variables are then weighted as per the following formula:

Composite Index Score = $\sum w_i X_i$ where w_i is the weight of i^{th} indicator, and X_i is the normalized value of i^{th} indicator

V. ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

The tabular representations of the collected data have been compiled and presented (Table 1 & 2). Table 1 shows performance of states with respect to data collected on Females, whereas Table 2 shows performance of states with respect to data sampled on Males.

India has under five mortality rate of 33 per 1000 children in case of females as compared to 31 deaths per 1000 for males. The average life expectancy is higher for females at 71.1 years as

against 68.4 years for males. The literacy rate is significantly higher among males at 84.7 vis-à-vis females at 70.3%. The gap is 14.3% which is significant.

40.7% of population above 25 years of age have completed secondary education as compared to 60% of the male population reflecting a gap of 19.3% in absolute terms. The labour force participation rate is more than double for males at 77.2% as against 32.8% for females.

The unemployment rate was marginally lower for females at 3.3% as compared to 4.4% for males. One can notice very wide gaps in member participations/elected seats for women as compared to men out of the total seats, where men still occupy overwhelmingly dominant position in political decision making, among all states. Participation is as low as 9% for women in India at legislative levels.

In terms of participation at local institutional levels such as Gram Panchayats, scene is different with significant involvement from women. Males have participation ratio of 54.4% as against 46.6% for females.

The local participations, are almost equitable (1:1) for most states, indicative that women may have a higher say at regional/village levels. Reader is cautioned against direct inferencing/causation as the same might be due to proxy females elected at positions of decision making.

Table 1 – Fact Sheet (Data) – Females (Selected States of India)

| Indicators/ States | U5MR | LE | Lit. | S.Edu | LFP | UR | LA | Loc Gov |
|-----------------------|------|------|------|-------|------|-----|----|---------|
| Andhra Pradesh | 27 | 71.8 | 59.5 | 30.4 | 43.3 | 3.5 | 8 | 50.0 |
| Assam | 43 | 68.3 | 81.2 | 51.9 | 28.2 | 5.0 | 5 | 54.6 |
| Bihar | 33 | 68.8 | 60.5 | 27.8 | 10.2 | 2.8 | 11 | 52.0 |
| Chhattisgarh | 45 | 66.9 | 68.7 | 34.2 | 51.6 | 1.8 | 14 | 54.8 |
| Gujarat | 23 | 72.8 | 74.8 | 39.3 | 34.4 | 1.3 | 8 | 50.0 |
| Haryana | 33 | 72.6 | 71.3 | 45.8 | 19.1 | 9.1 | 10 | 42.1 |



| | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|----------|-------------|
| Himachal Pradesh | 19 | 77.1 | 80.5 | 53.9 | 66.1 | 3.4 | 1 | 50.1 |
| Jharkhand | 28 | 68.8 | 64.7 | 29.2 | 45.2 | 0.8 | 12 | 51.6 |
| Karnataka | 22 | 71.3 | 70.5 | 46.7 | 31.8 | 2.5 | 3 | 50.1 |
| Kerala | 4 | 78.0 | 95.2 | 71.3 | 37.0 | 13.5 | 8 | 52.4 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 50 | 69.1 | 65.5 | 68.5 | 16.8 | 0.9 | 9 | 50.0 |
| Maharashtra | 19 | 74.0 | 78.4 | 51.3 | 38.4 | 2.9 | 8 | 53.5 |
| Odisha | 40 | 71.1 | 70.3 | 36.9 | 32.9 | 4.4 | 9 | 52.7 |
| Punjab | 24 | 74.7 | 78.5 | 52.9 | 24.0 | 8.7 | 11 | 41.8 |
| Rajasthan | 43 | 71.3 | 57.6 | 27.6 | 40.0 | 2.5 | 12 | 51.3 |
| Tamil Nadu | 13 | 74.9 | 77.9 | 47.9 | 40.7 | 4.0 | 5 | 53.0 |
| Telangana | 24 | 71.1 | 65.1 | 38.8 | 44.7 | 4.8 | 5 | 50.3 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 44 | 66.2 | 80.7 | 34.2 | 26.3 | 1.8 | 12 | 33.3 |
| Uttarakhand | 26 | 73.9 | 63.4 | 47.2 | 33.1 | 4.7 | 11 | 56.0 |
| West Bengal | 22 | 73.2 | 76.1 | 40.5 | 27.9 | 1.8 | 14 | 51.4 |
| India | 33 | 71.1 | 70.3 | 40.7 | 32.8 | 3.3 | 9 | 45.6 |

Table 2 – Fact Sheet (Data) - Males (Selected States of India)

| Indicators/ States | U5MR | LE | Lit. | S.Edu | LFP | UR | LA | Loc Gov |
|-----------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| Andhra Pradesh | 26 | 68.9 | 73.4 | 46.4 | 78.2 | 4.6 | 92 | 50.0 |
| Assam | 38 | 66.8 | 90.1 | 63.6 | 79.5 | 3.5 | 95 | 45.4 |
| Bihar | 28 | 69.6 | 79.7 | 52.1 | 72.2 | 6.4 | 89 | 48.0 |
| Chhattisgarh | 37 | 63.7 | 85.4 | 55.2 | 81.9 | 2.8 | 86 | 45.2 |
| Gujarat | 25 | 67.9 | 89.5 | 62.6 | 79.9 | 2.3 | 92 | 50.0 |
| Haryana | 33 | 67.7 | 88.0 | 66.6 | 71.4 | 8.9 | 90 | 57.9 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 28 | 69.9 | 92.9 | 73.3 | 82.7 | 4.6 | 99 | 49.9 |
| Jharkhand | 26 | 70.2 | 83.0 | 53.9 | 79.3 | 2.7 | 88 | 48.4 |
| Karnataka | 21 | 67.9 | 83.4 | 63.8 | 77.2 | 3.4 | 97 | 49.9 |
| Kerala | 12 | 72.3 | 97.4 | 75.7 | 73.4 | 7.4 | 92 | 47.6 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 51 | 65.2 | 81.2 | 75.8 | 73.2 | 2.6 | 91 | 50.0 |
| Maharashtra | 18 | 71.6 | 90.7 | 69.7 | 76.4 | 3.7 | 92 | 46.5 |
| Odisha | 38 | 68.5 | 84.0 | 52 | 78.9 | 6.7 | 91 | 47.3 |
| Punjab | 20 | 71.1 | 88.5 | 63 | 77.2 | 5.7 | 89 | 58.2 |
| Rajasthan | 37 | 66.8 | 80.8 | 56.3 | 74.6 | 5.8 | 88 | 48.7 |
| Tamil Nadu | 13 | 70.6 | 87.9 | 62.6 | 77.5 | 5.2 | 95 | 47.0 |
| Telangana | 23 | 68.6 | 80.5 | 58.9 | 76.6 | 3.9 | 95 | 49.7 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 43 | 65.0 | 94.3 | 61.1 | 77.0 | 3.3 | 88 | 66.7 |
| Uttarakhand | 25 | 67.6 | 81.8 | 71.3 | 71.7 | 9.2 | 89 | 44.0 |
| West Bengal | 22 | 71.0 | 84.8 | 51.4 | 80.7 | 4.0 | 86 | 48.6 |
| India | 31 | 68.4 | 84.7 | 60 | 77.2 | 4.4 | 91 | 54.4 |

Separate indices were calculated for each state, on the basis of performance on specific two indicators under that category. Even among the best performing states, there is a clear disparity that exists among males and females. Comparing the best scores achieved under each index, we find, among Health Indicator, 96 for Females as compared to 100 for males.

In Education segment, the gap between maximum performances achieved was also

marginal. Both these segments, Kerala topped the indices.

In terms of Economic Participation and Empowerment, higher inequalities are observed among states, reflective of poor control over decision making and ample opportunities of work. Certain states have performed extremely well in a particular indicator such as Kerala & Uttar Pradesh, but equally worse in another indicator under study.



Table 3 - Indexed Score (on 100) for Females

| Index | Health | Education | Participation | Empowerment | Development |
|-------------------------|--------|-----------|------------------|--------------|------------------|
| Max Score | 96.0 | 83.3 | 72.8 | 34.6 | 60.7 |
| State (Best Performing) | Kerala | Kerala | Himachal Pradesh | Chhattisgarh | Himachal Pradesh |

Table 4 - Indexed Score (on 100) for Males

| Index | Health | Education | Participation | Empowerment | Development |
|-------------------------|--------|-----------|---------------|---------------|-------------|
| Max Score | 100.0 | 86.6 | 90.0 | 77.5 | 78.9 |
| State (Best Performing) | Kerala | Kerala | Gujarat | Uttar Pradesh | Maharashtra |

Scores are indexed from 0 to 100, with 100 being the maximum score allotted to the best performing state in that respective category.

Himachal Pradesh scored (72.8) on moderate-high scale score, as best for participation (economic) by women of the state, whereas Gujarat (90) scored maximum in economic participation by males. Less than 50% of workforce participation by women can only give India its 'half-growth', only driven by select sections of society. The need for improvement lies in examining reasons and encouraging women to increase their participations.

The empowerment score produced by the best state in consideration was also poor at 34.6, primarily due to low female elected members in the legislative state/national assemblies. Women need

better representation in decision making power-roles, to be able to steer and address gender specific issues of development.

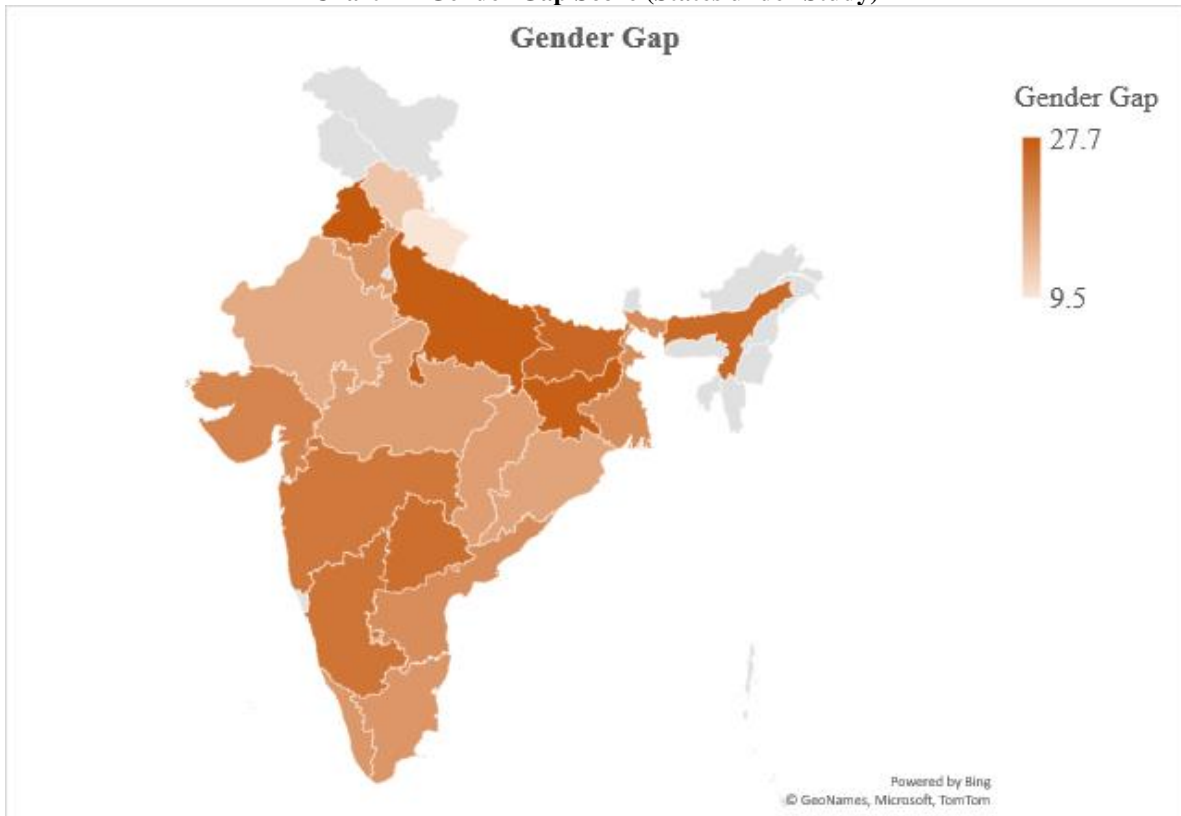
In terms of overall development index, which is aggregate of all 8 component indicators, Himachal Pradesh can be seen as best performer working in direction of development for women, whereas for males, it is Maharashtra.

Absolute Gender Gap was calculated for states from the Gender Scores obtained in the overall development category. Least Gap was observed in Uttarakhand State (9.5) whereas maximum gap was observed in Punjab state (27.7)

The gap scores have been represented in chart (Chart 1) reflective of intensity of gaps among states of India.



Chart 1 – Gender Gap Score (States under Study)



Apart from Uttarakhand, all other states reflected gap scores of more than 10 points, with 11 such states above the India level. The gap in case of India was 23.5 points which is significant to point towards disparity in development trends. States in the central & southern belt of India have performed comparatively better than northern and western counterparts.

The idea of Inclusive Economic Growth cannot run without development of women. Social progress and construct is going through a more modernized and revolutionary approach, but the speed of this momentum needs to be increased. These large states boast of higher revenues and per-capita incomes, and so the growth of India has to accrue through these big states only.

The primary focus at the moment should be to increase participation of women in the economy by making ample opportunities available without discrimination, providing safe and secure environment to grow, and so will states will collectively be able to fulfil the dream of 'Bharat' – that is truly independent and inclusive.

VI. CONCLUSION

India's rapid economic growth is linked to its abundant human resources, and the focus on upskilling the youth aims to enlarge the pool of well-qualified individuals, thereby contributing to economic growth. Enhancing living standards is of utmost importance, particularly in economically advanced states (growth). Some states, high in economic growth, do not rank high in terms of Gender Gap Score, warranting further investment into creating equity in terms of education, health & work opportunities. The Gender Development Score serves as a useful tool for comparing achievements of states of India in their collective goal of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'. When sections of society contribute equitably, resource allocation occurs optimally and economies flourish. Gender sensitization, budgeting, and better collaboration among stakeholders are imperative for achieving progress.



REFERENCES

- [1]. Chauhan, P. (October 2020). Impact of the Pandemic on Women's Burden of Unpaid Work in India. *Gender Issues*, 395-419.
- [2]. Deshpande, A. (June 2020). Effects on Gender Gaps in Employment & Domestic Work in India (lockdown study). Ashoka University Discussion Paper.
- [3]. Ghosh, M. (July 2006). Economic Growth and Human Development in Indian States. *EPW*, 3321.
- [4]. Gopalkrishnan, & Rao. (2012). Economic Growth & Human Development: Experience of Indian States. *EPW*.
- [5]. Lal, S. (April 2015). Child Marriage in India: Factors & Problems. *International Journal of Science & Research*.
- [6]. MOSPI. (2022). Men & Women in India. Govt of India.
- [7]. Roy, & Bhattacharjee. (2009). Convergence of Human Development across Indian States.
- [8]. United Nations. (n.d.). Sustainable Development Goals. Retrieved from UN SDG Website: https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5#targets_and_indicators