

“Visualizing Gender Bias in the Democratic Society”

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Gender bias is an inclusive part and partial of everyday life. The utmost point is required to understand the term Gender and Sex which are two distinct social and biological phenomenon respectively, first define the role and responsibility of men and women, girl and boy in society whereas second define the biological characteristic and differences in female and male. Although, gender is sometimes misleadingly or interchangeably used as sexism which imparts superiority of male from female or some time it leads as vice versa condition. Beinghood, is everywhere in every aspect i.e. Economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, Political empowerment, as World Economic Forum produced the Global Gender Gap Index (Refer Map 1: Global Gender Gap Index 2020) on it.

Empirically, most of the societies predominantly influence men's genealogy within the environment of the household by controlling the women's power in their own hands under which she survives lives under surveillance of compulsions as well as strictness of what to do and what not to do to prevailing circumstances. More specifically, its mere fact that the concepts of gender bias are not new but have been prevailing since the time immemorial. It is the believable observation that boy is generally bold, strong, smart, daring, heroes, athletic, sporty, determined, unique, resilient, active, curious, free, fun, and so on where girls behave like quiet, accepting, shy, timid, gentle and more short of passive. Moreover, visualizing the social structure of Indian history, it reveals about the pitiable position of women/girl that were persistent throughout the country. There was widespread existent of the cast system, Polygamy, polyandry in the northeast of the hilly region, untouchability, purdah system, sati pratha, and no equal right to all people so far in the society. Exceptionally, it continues even in the present scenario, however indifferent form and concepts even after enforcement of so much related act/rule (briefly discussed) to eradicate such condition and state of the human mindset. Under the prevalence of such a system, women were stigmatically and orthodoxically forced to perform prevailing rites. It was nothing but seems to be known as the Dark Age within which the extreme level of biasness conceived.

There is sufficient word to define the gender bias but in a pragmatic sense, *it is the discrimination, inclination, partiality, favoritism, or prejudice considered to be unfair between men to women or women to men.*

While discussing some act/rule enacted after independent India, the constitutional right, Article 14 of the Constitution of India provides for equality before the law or equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.

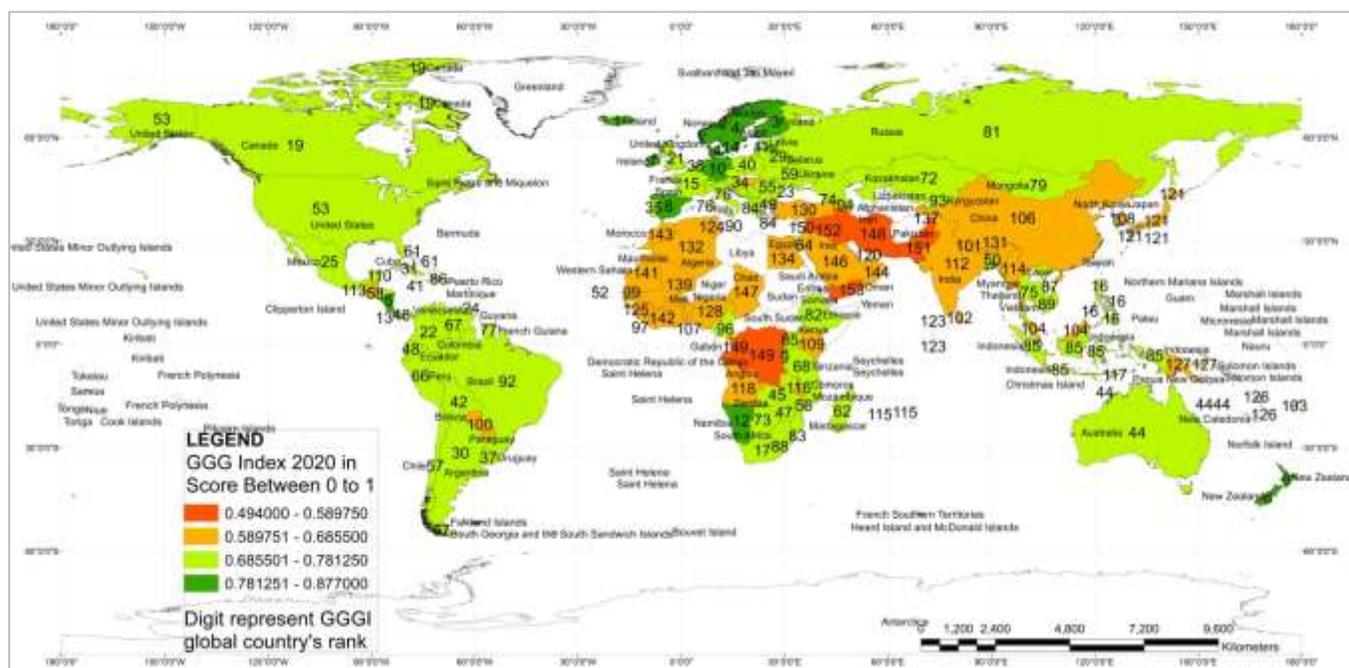
Article 15 defines the prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth, and article 16 provides equal opportunity in matters of public employment. Pre-

Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, 1994 ban on Prenatal Diagnostic Testing female foeticides and stop the declining sex ratio in India. The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013 seeks to protect women from sexual harassment at their place of work. Hindu Succession Act, 1956 amended in 2005, females are granted ownership of all property acquired either before or after the signing of the Act, abolishing their “limited owner” status. Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 pays equal remuneration to men and women workers for the same work or work of a similar nature. Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013 added new offenses like acid attack, sexual harassment, voyeurism, stalking have been incorporated into the Indian Penal Code. Women’s Reservation Bill under the 108th constitutional amendment, reserve 33 percent of all seats in the house of parliament state legislative assemblies for women. The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019 declared triple talaq, which enables Muslim men to instantly divorce their wives, to be unconstitutional.

It seems that adequate legislation in India does not only remove the discrimination against women but also empowers women. But despite having so many rights for the women, India does not stand with success stories with due regards and henceforth women are playing with their accepting destiny.

To check the fact, the Global Gender Gap Index 2020, the World Economic Forum who provides region-wise viz. Western Europe, North America, Latin America, and the Caribbean, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, East Asia and the Pacific, Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, Middle East and North Africa of the world, and global country ranking in four sub-index representing gaps between women and men on health, education, economy, and politics has been analyzed in a choropleth map (Refer to Map 1: Global Gender Gap Index 2020), representing worldwide 153 participating countries score in colored and their rank in the digit. The red-colored are those countries that achieved the lowest score as 0.494 and dark green as the highest score of 0.877.

Map 1: Global Gender Gap Index 2020



Source: Author generated map based on World Economic Forum data produced in *Global Gender Gap Report 2020*

As per the GGG report 2020, rankings of 153 countries, no country achieved full gender parity. Top five countries have closed at least 80 percent of their gaps, and the best performer country Iceland is closed 82 percent of its gap so far. Globally in top ten, four of the Nordic countries such as Iceland, Norway, Finland, and Sweden placed 1st 2nd 3rd and 4th respectively where Latin American country Nicaragua placed 5th, East Asia and the Pacific country New Zealand placed 6th, three countries of Western Europe such as Ireland, Spain and Germany placed 7th, 8th and 10th respectively, and Sub-Saharan African country Rwanda placed 9th rank in the global gap index 2020.

In South Asia, Bangladesh, the best performer country has closed 72.6 percent of its overall gender gap and ranks 50th, ahead from Nepal and Sri Lanka who placed 101st and 102nd rank respectively and India placed 112th, 62 ranks below than Bangladesh. Bangladesh is the only country in the world where women have had a longer tenure than men at the helm of the state over the past 50 years (GGG Report 2020). This contributes to the strong performance of the Political Empowerment sub-index.

India has closed two-thirds of its overall gender gap score of 66.8 percent. However, the condition of women in large fringes of India’s society is precarious (GGG Report 2020). The economic gender gap runs particularly deep in India and among the 153 countries studied; India

is the only country where the economic gender gap is larger than the political gender gap. Only one-quarter of women, compared with 82 percent of men, engage actively in the labour market, one of the lowest participation rates in the world. Furthermore, female estimated earned income is a mere one-fifth of male income, which is also among the world's lowest (GGG Report 2020). Women only account for 14 percent of leadership roles and 30 percent of professional and technical workers. In India, there are 91 girls born per 100 boys that show a ratio well below the natural one. Violence, forced marriage, and discrimination in access to health remain pervasive. The situation and the trend are more positive in terms of gender gaps in education (GGG Report 2020). From primary to tertiary education, the share of women attending school is systematically larger than the share of men. But a large difference persists for literacy rate; only two-thirds of women are literate compared with 82 percent of men (Forum, 2020). Yet the gap has been narrowing in the past decade because the literacy rate has significantly increased among women as 66 percent and slightly decreased among men to 79 percent. Finally, India ranks 18th on the Political Empowerment sub index because of past 50 years, the country was headed by a woman for 20 years placed the rank 4th which largely explains strong performance in the politics. But today, female political representation is low: women make up only 14.4 percent of the parliament and 23 percent of the cabinet.

It may infer that the South Asia region has closed two-thirds of its gender gap. The region is home to 860 million women, three-fourths of whom live in India globally. Among the eight regions, South Asia's gender gap is the second-largest after the Middle East and North Africa region, where only 61 percent of the gender gap has been closed. The main issue is gender differences in literacy rate. In India, 66 percent of women are literate compared with 82 percent of men. Pakistan's literacy rates are 46 percent and 71 percent respectively who ranks as below as 151st in the overall score.

Eliminating the gender bias: concluding remarks

The very first goal of Sustainable development focuses on end poverty in all its forms everywhere and the prime minister of India had rightly pointed it in the Stockholm conference as well as in her political agenda, however, it is yet to be eradicated for bias-free and unanimous India. The removal of poverty from all its kinds eradicates people's tyranny. The prevalence of poverty leads to illiteracy in marginalized societies. Therefore, it is high time to educate peoples to educate India. It encourages and enables those to enter in the top-class job position that allows power to understand their role and responsibility for society. In this respect, the government takes the initiative and leads the campaign from time to time but needs to sensitize those people more by providing the basic needs and favorable environment with no more division.

There will never be gender equality and bias-free without a massive shift of economic power in the hand of poor/pity people. In this respect SDG 5 and 10 focus to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, and reduce inequality within and among countries respectively.

However, insufficient progress onto its directions leads to legal discrimination, unfair social norms, and attitudes, decision making on the sexual and reproductive issue, and low level of political participation. In this regard every government's scheme, policy acts/rule must be framed with the due motto and clear action plan adhere in implementable form.

Just for instance, in a point where there is no gender bias between people and legislation then who are the ones giving rise to it? This is ultimately the people. Then who will eradicate gender-bias from the place where it seemed? Ultimately, who involved in it. The point is quite clear in this parlance that the attitude of the people should be transparent and fair enough that one should be capable to achieve their equal rights. For example, if I am aware of my right, no people or legislation made by the people could deprive me to get anything based on gender. But the mindset of the people should be changed to judge the people on a humanitarian basis rather on gender. Henceforth, Gender bias could be eliminated from all its aspects when one could understand that each person is very much part of the society and they have equal right for everything everywhere.

With this evaluation and self-realization of own life make the people easy to understand the essence of others. When everybody is ok with it no one will be biased.

References

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