

"A rounded approach is necessary to ensure women's access to resources, opportunities."

Assessing women's access to equal opportunity and resources against the access that men have would be a scientific way of evaluating a nation's commitment to the advancement of its citizens. But going by the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index 2020, released last week, questions can easily be raised about whether this government is doing the right thing by the country's women.

India has dropped four points from 2018, to take the 112th rank on the Index. The Index measures the extent of gender-based gaps on four key parameters — economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment. Notably, it measures gender-based gaps in access to resources and opportunities in countries, rather than the actual levels of the available resources and opportunities.

Despite a small score improvement, India has lost four positions as some countries ranked lower than India have shown better improvement. The country has reportedly closed two thirds of its overall gender gap, with a score of 66.8%, but the report notes with concern that the condition of women in large fringes of Indian society is 'precarious'.

Of significant concern is the economic gender gap, with a score of 35.4%, at the 149th place, among 153 countries, and down seven places since the previous edition, indicating only a third of the gap has been bridged.

The participation of women in the labour force is also among the lowest in the world, and the female estimated earned income is only one-fifth of male income. An alarming statistic is India's position (150th rank) on the very bottom of the Health and Survival subindex, determined largely by the

GLOBAL GENDER GAP INDEX RANKINGS 2020

Rank	Country	Score
1	Iceland	0.877
2	Norway	0.842
3	Finland	0.832
4	Sweden	0.820
5	Nicaragua	0.804
6	New Zealand	0.799
7	Ireland	0.798
8	Spain	0.795
9	Rwanda	0.791
10	Germany	0.787
21	United Kingdom	0.767
50	Bangladesh	0.726
53	United States	0.724
81	Russian Federation	0.706
92	Brazil	0.691
101	Nepal	0.680
102	Sri Lanka	0.680
106	China	0.676
112	India	0.668
121	Japan	0.652
151	Pakistan	0.564
153	Yemen	0.494

skewed sex ratio at birth, violence, forced marriage and discrimination in access to health. It is on the educational attainment (112th rank) and political empowerment (18th rank) fronts that the relative good news is buried.

There is no question that the Gender Gap Index presents India with an opportunity to make the necessary amends forthwith. Doing what the government is currently doing is clearly not going to be sufficient; it needs to engage intimately with all aspects indicated by the Index to improve the score, and set targets to reduce the gender gap in the foreseeable future.

It will have to drastically scale up efforts it has introduced to encourage women's participation, and increase opportunities for them. To do so it also needs to make sure there is actual implementation at the ground level. While a good score on any global index is a target worth pursuing, what is being questioned here is basic — is the state renegeing on its commitment to half its population? A commitment to ameliorate the conditions for women is a non-negotiable duty of any state.

Expected Questions (Prelims Exams)

1. **Consider the following statements in the context the Global Gender Gap Report 2020:**

1. This report is released by the World Economic Forum (WEF).
2. India is ranked 110th in this report.
3. India has gained 4 slot in this report over 2018

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

- (a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3
(c) 1 and 3 (d) None of these

Note: Answer of Prelims Expected Question given on 25 Dec., is 1 (d)

Expected Questions (Mains Exams)

- Q. **The rise of gender inequality in all sectors in India shows the limitation of government efforts being made in socio-economic sectors. Do you agree with this statement? Persent your argument in favor of your opinion.** (250 words)

Note: - The question of the main examination given for practice is designed keeping in mind the upcoming UPSC main examination. Therefore, to get an answer to this question, you can take the help of this source as well as other sources related to this topic.