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**DYNAMICS & DIMENSIONS OF GENDER  
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# Dynamics & Dimensions of Gender Inequality in India

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**Abstract – Gender inequality occurs at various dimensions and is the combined result of various socioeconomic, policy and cultural factors. The present study attempts to evaluate the trends of gender gap of India in the key dimensions such as education attainment, economic participation, health and political empowerment using data on Global Gender Gap Index of World Economic Forum for the sample period of 2006-2015. The global gender gap rank of India is 108 for the year 2015 among 145 countries. The global gender gap score and the score of all indicators has increased during the sample period. The gender inequality is very high in economic participation and political dimension in India. The gender inequality is very close to the global average in case of health and education. The positive and significant correlation was found between gender equality, economic growth and Human development Index of India.**

**Keywords: Gender Equality, Global Gender Gap Index, Women, Gender Education Inequality JEL Classification: O10, J16, J71, D63**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Gender inequality is deep rooted in India. Gender-based inequality is a phenomenon that transcends the majority of the world's cultures, religions, nations and income groups. Equality between women and men (gender equality) refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. The gender equality cannot be based only on the principle of sameness but it means the absence of bias. Gender indices can give us a summary measure of different indicators affecting the wellbeing and development of women and girls. There are very important psycho-socio-economic-political reasons feeding the gender inequality across the world. The Gender inequality has to be evaluated with diverse dimensions. This study investigates whether women and men are converging or diverging with respect to key dimensions of such as educational attainment, economic activity, length of life, and representation in national legislatures in India. The rest of the paper is organized as follows: Section two reviews the relevant literature, while the research methodology is briefly described in section three. Section four presents empirical results and findings; the fifth section concludes the paper with policy implications and suggests avenues for future research.

## 2. DATA AND METHODS

The study used the data of Global Gender Gap Index, World Economic forum (WEF) for the sample period of 2006-2015. The Global Gender Gap Index, WEF examines the gap between men and women in four fundamental categories (sub-indexes): Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival and Political Empowerment. Table 1 detail the structure of the global gender gap index with the dimensions. Economic participation and opportunity dimension consists of three dimensions: the ratio of female labour force participation over male value; wage equality between women and men for similar work; ratio of female estimated earned income over male value ratio of female legislators, senior officials and managers over male value; ratio of female professional and technical workers over male value.

Education attainment is captured through women to men ration in primary secondary and tertiary level education and ratio of female literacy rate to male literacy rate. Health and Survival ratio is female to male ratio and ratio of female life expectancy to male life expectancy. The political Empowerment consists of three concepts: ratio of female to male in minister-level position, ratio of female to male in parliamentary positions and ratio of number of years with female head of state over male value (in last 50 years of country). The correlation coefficient is estimated

between Global Gap index and Human development Index. The HDI estimates are obtained from HDI reports.

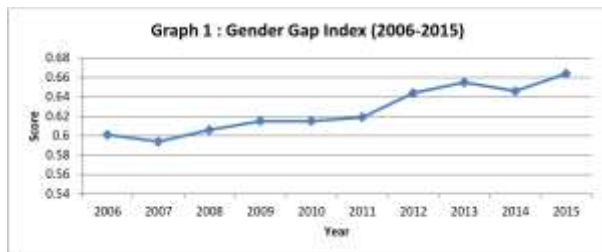
### 3. EMPIRICAL RESULTS

The global gender gap rank of India is 108 for the year 2015 among 145 countries. Graph 1 shows the global gender score during the sample period 2006-2015 for India. The global gender gap score of India has improved from 0.601 in the year 2006 to 0.664 in the year 2015 with an increase of gender equality by 6.3%. A decade of data revealed that India is witnessing the closure of Gender Gap slowly. By the year 2015 India has been able to close 67% of the gender gap.

**Table 1: Structure of the Global Gender Gap Index**

Economic Participation and Opportunity	Ratio: female labour force participation over male value
	Wage equality between women and men for similar work (converted to female-over-male ratio)
	Ratio: female estimated earned income over male value
	Ratio: female legislators, senior officials and managers over male value
Educational Attainment	Ratio: female literacy rate over male value
	Ratio: female net primary enrolment rate over male value
	Ratio: female net secondary enrolment rate over male value
Health and Survival	Ratio: female gross tertiary enrolment ratio over male value
	Sex ratio at birth (converted to female-over-male ratio)
Political Empowerment	Ratio: female healthy life expectancy over male value
	Ratio: females with seats in parliament over male value
	Ratio: females at ministerial level over male value
	Ratio: number of years of a female head of state (last 50 years) over male value

Source: World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Index, 2015



**Source: World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Index 2006-2015**

The gender gap index score reflects the distribution of resources more equitably between women and men regardless of the overall level of available resources.

**Table 2: Summary Table on Gender Inequality in Various Dimensions**

Year	Overall Score	Economic	Education	Health	Political
2006	0.601	0.397	0.819	0.962	0.227
2007	0.594	0.398	0.819	0.931	0.227
2008	0.606	0.399	0.845	0.931	0.248
2009	0.615	0.412	0.843	0.931	0.273
2010	0.615	0.403	0.837	0.931	0.291
2011	0.619	0.396	0.837	0.931	0.312
2012	0.644	0.459	0.852	0.931	0.334
2013	0.655	0.446	0.857	0.931	0.385
2014	0.646	0.41	0.85	0.937	0.385
2015	0.664	0.383	0.896	0.942	0.433
% of Close of Gender Gap [2006 to 2015]	0.063	-0.014	0.077	-0.02	0.206

Source: World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Index 2006-2015

The index will show the gap between women’s and men’s in different indicators used in estimating the index. The Government policies in context to economic, political and cultural parameters have resulted in the reduction of the magnitude of gender gaps in India. The Table2 also shows that there is a consistent increase in gender equality except in the year 2007. The gender inequality has declined in education and political dimensions and increased for economic and health dimensions. The gender inequality is very high in case of political indicators and economic indicators for India during the sample period. In other words, the economic and political inequalities are the significant causes for overall gender inequality in India during the sample period. The widest gender gap exists in the political Empowerment Index. However, it is also true that the biggest improvement has been achieved in this index. It is clear that India has been able to close this gap by around 21% during the sample period. The gender equality in health and survival index though is quite high but the gap has slightly increased by 2% during the sample period. India has able to close 38.3%, 89.6%, 94.2% and 43.3% of economic, education, health and politics dimension of gender inequality.

#### 3.1 Comparison of Gender Gap Index of India with Global Average (2006-2015)

The overall average performance of India in comparison to global average in closing the gender gap in different indicators based on average value of each indicator during the sample is presented in Graph 2.



**Source: Compiled by Author based on data of World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Index**

The global results during the sample period shows that the globally nations on an average were able to close the gender gap in economic, education, health and political by 60%, 93%, 96% and 19% respectively. The India’s performance in closing the gender gap in three indicators viz. economic, education and health indicators is below the global average. So the gender inequality is quite high against the global standards in all indicators except the political empowerment. India has been able to close the gender gap in political empowerment far above the one that exists globally.



in the workforce. The cultural factors, such as norms restricting the mobility of women, and structural factors, such as a lack of appropriate job opportunities for educated women, largely explain this phenomenon. The government has made investments and policy formulation for the women’s education but the barriers to women’s participation in the workforce has not been removed. The policies allowing the women to combine work and family may play an important role for greater participation of women in economic activities. This also has an important implication for business practices to adopt the policy that can facilitate women’s integration into workforce. Government policy should encourage and make it easier for women to work. The measures such workplace equality, child care leave etc. have played an important role to improve women’s economic participation India.

**3.5 Gender Inequality Gap in Health and Survival**

The gender inequality in health and survival is high in India as compared to Global average. It means women have less access and control over healthcare resources (Graph 5). The sex ratio at birth reflects the gender bias against women. The cultural construct of Indian society with strong preference for male children has led the lower female to male ratio (Table3). India has witnessed an improvement in overall life expectancy of women and is higher than men.



**Source:** Source: Compiled by Author based on data of World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Index 2006-2015

**3.6 Gender Inequality Gap in Political Empowerment**

India ranks significantly higher in gender equality in political empowerment as compared to global average (Graph 6). However, there is a significant improvement in the representation of women in different political positions (Table 3 ).The gender inequality in politics is mainly combated by Government efforts has instituted reservations for seats in local Government.



**Source:** Compiled by Author based on data of World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Index 2006-2015

**3.7 Correlation between Gender Gap Index, Economic Growth (GDPPC) and Human Development Index (HDI):**

The correlation coefficient between gender gap index, Economic Growth as measured by GDP per Capita (GDPPC) and human well-being as measured by HDI is found to be high significantly positive at 1% level of significance. It shows that the country successful in closing the gender gap or improving gender inequality will achieve high level of human well-being (Table 4).

**Table 4: Correlation between Gender Gap Index and Human Development Index**

	GDPPC	Gender Gap	HDI
GDPPC	1	0.9478***(0.000)	0.99515***(0.000)
Gender Gap	0.9478***(0.000)	1	0.9524***(0.000)
HDI	0.99515***(0.000)	0.9524***(0.000)	1

**Source:** Author’s Calculation @ figure in parenthesis denotes p value. \*\*\* Significant at 1% level of Significance

**4. CONCLUSIONS:**

Gender inequality and discrimination is one of the most important problems of India. This discrimination continues in every aspect of woman life and is a social-political issue. The girls are treated unequally for education, health protection, economic participation or political positions. The study investigated the gender inequality with different dimensions using the data from Global Gender Gap Index of World Economic Forum for the sample period of 2006-2015. The global gender gap rank of India is 108 for the year 2015 among 145 countries, the rank of economic participation and opportunity is 139, the rank of educational attainment is 125, the rank of health and survival is 143, the rank of political empowerment is 9. The gender inequality is very high in economic participation. The country ranks lower in all dimensions except for politics dimension as the gender inequality index is lower than the global average. The gender inequality index for politics is higher than the global average value. Further India is witnessing the paradoxical situation of high female literacy levels with lower female economic participation. It is analyzed that

though India has closed around 90% of the education gap but show low levels of women's economic participation. India is unusual but not unique for having lower rates of labor force participation among adult women with secondary education. The public and private business practices need to be adopted to facilitate women's integration into workforce. Governments, business and civil society must adopt the policies and attitudinal transformation to foster growth that reduces the gender gap. The gender equality is found to have positive association with higher Human development and economic growth in the country.

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