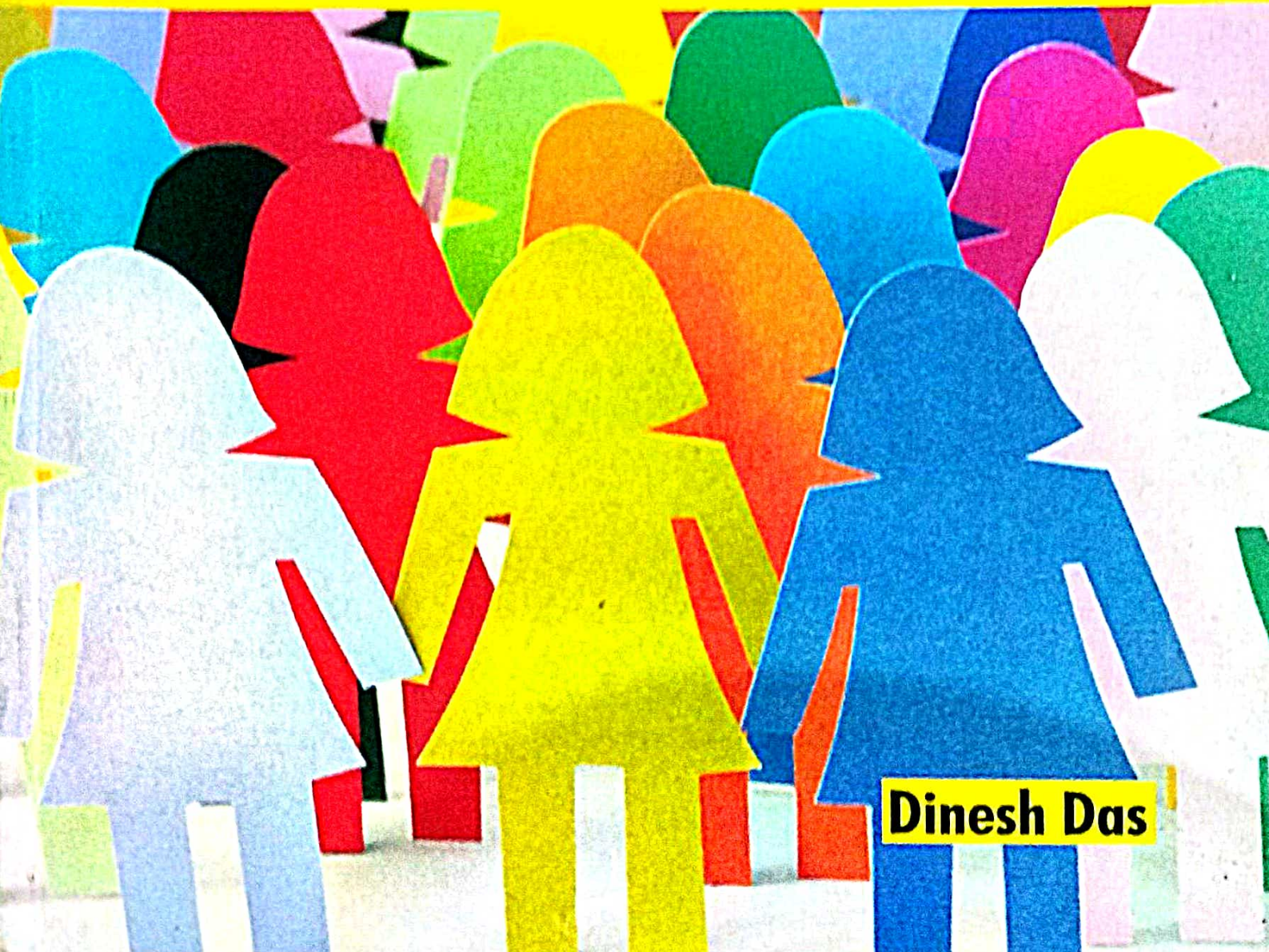


A MITTAL PUBLICATION

GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT



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Gender and Development

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Contents

Foreword	v
Preface and Acknowledgement	vii
List of Contributors	xv
1. An Appraisal of Women's Participation in the Silk Weaving Industry of Murshidabad – ABHIRUPA CHATTERJEE	1
2. Estimating the Out-of-Pocket Expenditure for the Health enhancement in North-East Region: A Special Focus on Gender – MOUSUMI DAS & ARUMUGAM SANKARAN	9
3. Entrepreneurship and Women in India with special reference to Mysore District – DR. R. H. PAVITHRA	15
4. Being Woman: A Philosophical Point of View – DR. JAHNABI DEKA	21
5. Impact of MGNREGA on Gender Equality and Perception towards development in South West Khasi Hills District Meghalaya – KYNTIEWKUPAR NONGSIE	25
6. Gender Division of Labor and Employment being followed in Star Category Hotels of the City of Guwahati, Assam – PROF. (DR.) SOUMITRA SEN	31
7. A Comparative Study of Gender Inequality across North-Eastern States of India – PARSWA JYOTI NEOG	39
8. Women are Victimized in Insurgency: A Study in Context of Assam and Northeast – NITUL GOGOI & DR. T. R. GOGOI	49
9. The Arduous Life of Santal Women in Distress: An Overview – WILSON HASDA	53
10. A Sociological Study of Women's Role in Self-Help Groups (SHG's) in Kamrup Rural District of Assam – FARINA WAHID & DR. PUTUL BORAH	57
11. Human Rights Violation of Rohingya Women in Myanmar: A Study – NIPAN HALOI	61
12. The Shifting Dynamic from Migration to Human Trafficking in Assam: A Critical Analysis – SABRIN ARIFA	67
13. Gender equality and Inclusive growth: An Economic prospect ✓ – HOMANG CHETRI & RAJU SHARMA	73
14. Understanding Women's Paid Domestic Work: A Study in Guwahati – SHRUTI TALUKDAR	79
15. Women's Participation in Agriculture and Allied Activities in Assam: A Key for Women Empowerment – SANCHITA BRAHMA & RANJIT SARMA	85
16. Does Microfinance through SHGs contribute enough in Socio-Economic Development of Poor Women? – DR. RATUL SAHA	89

Gender equality and Inclusive growth: An Economic prospect

HOMANG CHETRI & RAJU SHARMA

Introduction:

Inclusive growth means Growth of a country with equal opportunities. It focuses on creation of opportunities and making the opportunities accessible to all. Basically, Inclusive growth gives emphasis on reduction of both inequality and poverty. To attain effective poverty reduction, it emphasises on broad-based, pro-poor growth based on private sector incentive to create employment opportunities, more public investment in basic education, health, and infrastructure, social safety nets to protect the very poor and vulnerable. India adopted the "Inclusive Growth" strategy because high gender inequality continued to be a problem in India. Compared with males, females have low literacy rate, high morbidity, low workforce participation rate, high incidence of income poverty and so on.

Gender equality is not merely a social issue, but an economic necessity. Women still face numerous difficulties in accessing the same economic opportunities as men. From labour practices that give women lower pay to legal and cultural barriers restricting their access to jobs, finance and property ownership, there are many ways in which economic systems continue to favour men over women. Despite a high growth rate and plentiful Government measures to encourage gender equality, the gender gap still exists in India. Lack of gender equality not only limits women's access to resources and opportunities, but also imperils the life prospects of the future generation. In the present article an attempt has been made to examine the problem of gender inequality in India. The economic impact of achieving gender equality in India is estimated to be US\$700 billion of added GDP by 2025. The IMF estimates that equal participation of women in the workforce will increase India's GDP by 27 percent. India ranks 136th among 144 countries in women's labour force participation rate and the situation is worsening over time. The percentage of women who work has declined from 36% in 2005-06 to 24% in 2015-16 according to National Family Health Survey (NFHS). According to National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) Employment rounds, paid female labour force participation rate (FLFPR) among women in the 25-59 age group has steadily declined since 1987-88.

Objectives:

- To know the gender status in North East India.
- To know the Government initiatives to bridge the gender gap.
- To know the role of equal gender workforce participation in inclusive growth.

Methodology:

This paper is primarily based on secondary data. Data has been collected from census of India, NSSO and Statistical Handbook of Assam. Various statistical tools such percentage, ratio, figure and diagrams, tabulation has been used to analysed the data.

Objectives	Source of data	Line of analysis
Gender status in North East India.	Secondary Data	Tabulation, percentage and figures
Government initiatives to bridge the gender gap	Secondary Data	Tabulation
role of equal gender workforce participation in inclusive growth	Secondary Data	Tabulation, percentage and figures

Results and Discussion:

Present study tries to explain the present status of gender equality in North Eastern states and it also gives a comparative analysis between India and North East. Gender equality is the state of equal ease of access to resources and opportunities regardless of gender, including economic participation and decision-making; and the state of valuing

different behaviours, aspirations and needs equally, regardless of gender. UNICEF says gender equality "means that women and men, and girls and boys, enjoy the same rights, resources, opportunities and protections.

Present status of gender equality in North East India:

Table 1: State wise percentage share of female population in total population and sex ratio-2011

State	% Share of Women			Sex Ratio		
	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total
Arunachal Pradesh	49.89	49.68	49.82	996	987	993
Assam	48.97	48.61	48.92	960	946	958
Manipur	49.21	50.64	49.63	969	1026	985
Meghalaya	49.64	50.03	49.72	986	1001	989
Mizoram	48.78	49.94	49.39	952	998	976
Nagaland	48.46	47.60	48.21	940	908	931
Tripura	48.86	49.33	48.98	955	973	960
India	48.69	48.16	48.53	949	929	943
North East	49.10	49.41	49.23	965	977	970

Source: Office of the Registrar General, India

Table 2: Sex ratio in various age-group in the context of development planning

State	Early Childhood 0-6 years	Childhood 0-19 years	Economically Active 15-59 years	Old Age 60+ years
Arunachal Pradesh	972	978	918	917
Assam	962	951	956	971
Manipur	930	952	1006	1004
Meghalaya	970	975	994	1075
Mizoram	970	969	978	998
Nagaland	943	937	935	875
Tripura	957	962	952	1040
India	918	908	944	1033
North East	958	961	963	983

As per Census 2011, Gender ratio of India is 943 females per 1000 males. In rural area, there are 949 females to 1000 men, while in urban area there are 929 females to 1000 males. While Gender ratio of North East is 970 females per 1000 males which is better than whole India gender ratio. In rural area, there are 965 females to 1000 men, while in urban area there are 977 females to 1000 males. Among North East States, Arunachal Pradesh has highest record of gender ratio i.e. 993 females per 1000 males and Nagaland has lowest gender ratio i.e. 931 females per 1000 males.

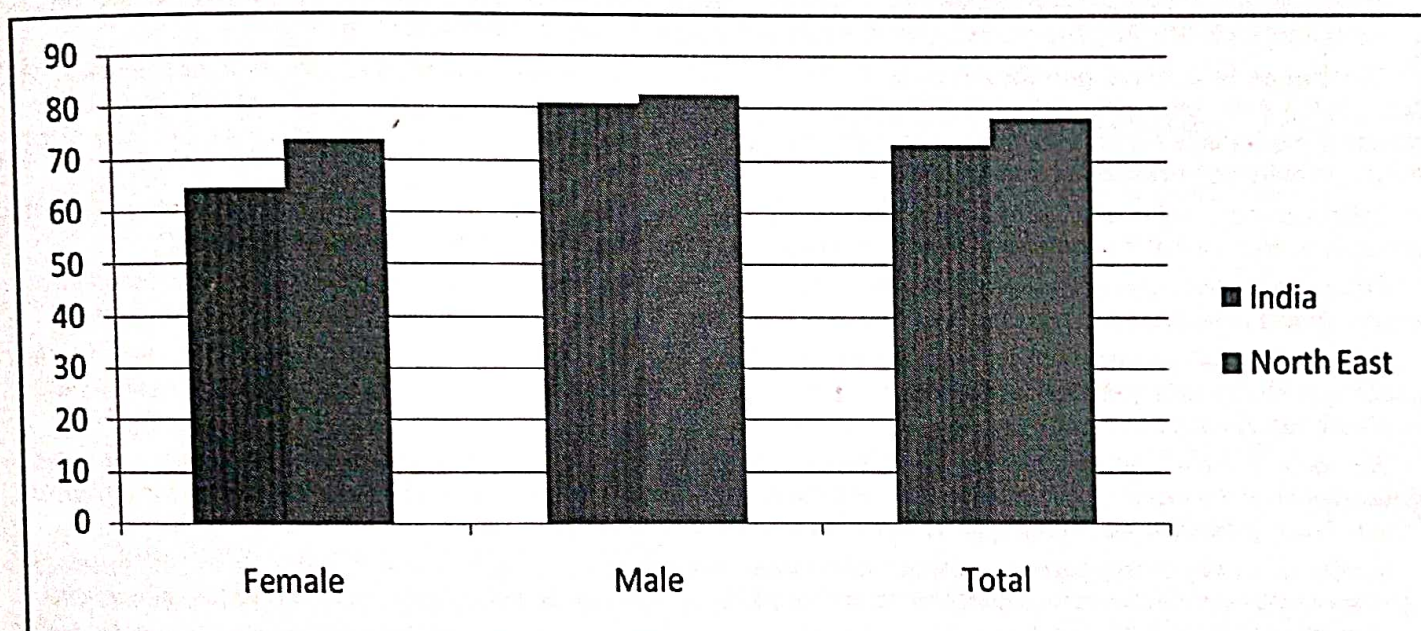
Comparison of Literacy Rates: The low female literacy rate has had a dramatically negative impact on family planning and population stabilisation efforts in India. An NSSO report states that about 15 percent of girls (around 90 million) never attend school as compared to 11 percent of boys. As the young people grow older, the gap in their educational status widens and widens with huge implications over time. Lack of education generally engenders a series of problems for them. Uneducated mothers are not aware of the best nutritional choices for their children. A study by Lawrence et al. (2009) identified the fact that compared to women of higher educational attainment, women of lower educational attainment had less control over their families' food choices, showed less support for attempts to eat healthily, fewer opportunities to observe and learn good food-related practices, more perceived environmental constraints, and more ambiguous beliefs about the consequences of eating a nutritious diet. This leads to problems such as malnutrition and anaemia among children. Uneducated mothers are less likely to send their own children to school and often do not participate in the labour force or the political process. They rarely have any say in household affairs.

Without education, women lack confidence or knowledge to make their own choice and are encouraged or forced to marry early. India holds the miserable record of having the highest absolute number of child brides about 24 million.

Table 3 shows that literacy rates of North Eastern states and compares it with the literacy rates of the country. Literacy of North east is higher than that of India. The gap of literacy rate in North East is just 7.4% lower than the whole India.

Table 3: Comparison of Literacy Rates

State	2001			2011		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Arunachal Pradesh	43.5	63.8	54.3	57.7	72.6	65.4
Assam	54.6	71.3	63.3	66.3	77.8	72.2
Manipur	60.5	80.3	70.5	70.3	83.6	76.9
Meghalaya	59.6	65.4	62.6	72.9	76.0	74.4
Mizoram	86.8	90.7	88.8	89.3	93.3	91.3
Nagaland	61.5	71.2	66.6	76.1	82.8	79.6
Tripura	64.9	81.0	73.2	82.7	91.5	87.2
India	53.7	75.3	64.8	64.6	80.9	73.0
North East	61.63	74.81	68.47	73.61	82.51	78.14

Fig.1: Literacy rates comparison between India and North East

The highest median number of years of schooling completed is observed for females for Manipur (6.8 years) and Mizoram (6.5 years). For males, the median number of years of schooling completed for males was highest at 8.2 years for Manipur. (Table 4).

Table 4: Median Number of years of Schooling completed

States	Female	Male
Arunachal Pradesh	3.5	5.7
Assam	4.6	5.8
Manipur	6.8	8.2
Meghalaya	4.5	4.5
Mizoram	6.5	7.0
Nagaland	5.4	6.5
Tripura	5.4	7.0
India	4.4	6.9
North East	5.24	6.39

Table 5: A comparative analysis of wages of male and female in North East

States	Rural		Urban	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Arunachal Pradesh	474.94	672.73	629.15	705.38
Assam	179.71	343.97	561.63	615.23
Manipur	522.57	591.97	646.92	666.55
Meghalaya	358.51	446.29	444.08	527.21
Mizoram	602.98	662.86	610.51	850.29
Nagaland	490.26	544.70	417.63	596.60
Tripura	218.73	319.64	301.52	409.66
India	201.56	322.28	366.15	469.87
North East	406.81	511.74	515.92	624.42

Table 5 shows a comparative analysis of wages of male and female in North East. It is observed that the salary earned in North eastern states is much higher than India. Female wages is much lower than male.

Challenges to achieve gender equality: Eliminating gender differences in access to education and educational attainment are key elements on the path to attaining gender equality and reducing the disempowerment of women. Education, particularly higher education of women, is a key enabler of demographic change, family welfare, and better health and nutrition of women and their families.

Child marriage, which is still prevalent in our society, must be stopped. This is because an early age at marriage of women is an indicator of the low status of women in society and also curtails women's access to education.

Employment, particularly for cash and in the formal sector, can empower women by providing financial independence. Women should be provided with proper wages and work at par with men so as to elevate their status in the society.

Violence against women must be eradicated from the society. Apart from strict laws and legislations, the violence against women can only be tackled through a change in attitude that needs to take place in the family, in the society and the female members of the society as well.

Women's political participation has been considered a major measure of women's empowerment. Women's representation in the legislature is very poor in India. Hence, necessary measures should be taken to increase women's representation in Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, State Assemblies and State Councils.

Moreover, women's empowerment cannot take place unless women come together and decide to self-empower themselves. Women should come together as a unifying force and initiate self empowering actions at the ground level.

Initiatives to bridge the gap in gender equality:

Rapid economic growth in India has sharply reduced the number of people living in extreme poverty. Despite this, gender disparities still exist in girls' school enrollment and completion rates, access to health and nutrition services, employment and income opportunities, and participation in decision making and political institutions.

Gender equality needs to be pursued both for social and equity considerations and because it makes good economic sense. Underinvestments in women are missed opportunities to correct gender disparities and to capture and harness the economic and human capital potential of women—that is, 50% of the country's population. Investments in women and gender equality will deliver higher growth rates, faster poverty reduction, and better education and health outcomes for household members, especially children. More than 100 million people could be lifted out of poverty if women had the same access to productive resources as men. In countries, such as India, Indonesia, and Malaysia, the gross domestic product would increase by up to 2%–4% annually, if women's employment rates were raised to 70%, from 30% at present (UNESCAP, 2007).

According to the National Sample Survey Report (2011-12), the workforce participation rates of male is 54.4% and female is 21.9%. As per the India Country Report, 2015 by Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation on the Millennium Development Goals, the percentage share of females in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector during 2011-12 increased to 19.3% which is higher than 18.6% reported during 2009-10 by National Sample Survey Organisation. The skill Mission in India are training women and also making sure that training systems are becoming more sensitive to their needs (Annette dixon, Vice President of World Bank South Asia, 2018).

Strategy 2020 by ADB:

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is committed to gender equality. Strategy 2020, ADB's long-term strategic framework, recognizes that gender equality and women's empowerment are critical for achieving economic growth, reducing poverty, and supporting socially inclusive development. Thus, promoting gender equity is one of the five drivers of change. ADB's Policy on Gender and Development adopts gender mainstreaming as the key strategy for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. It requires gender equality considerations to be addressed across the full range of ADB operations—from country strategies to the design and implementation of gender-inclusive projects and programs.

Schemes by Ministry of Women and Child Development

The Ministry of Women and Child Development is administering following schemes for gender equality/socio-economic development/empowerment of women:

Serial Number	Schemes	Purpose
1	Swadhar and Short Stay Homes	To provide relief and rehabilitation to destitute women and women in distress.
2	Support to Training and Employment Program for Women (STEP)	To ensure sustainable employment and income generation for marginalised and asset-less rural and urban poor women across the country.
3	Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK)	To provide micro-finance services to bring about the socio-economic upliftment of poor women.
4	National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW)	To strengthen the overall processes that promote all-round Development of Women
5	Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme for Children of Working Mothers	To provide day care facilities for running a crèche of 25 children in the age group 0-6 years from families having monthly income of less than Rs 12,000.
6	Scheme for Universalisation of Women Helpline	To provide 24 hours immediate and emergency response to women affected by violence.
7	Sabla Scheme	For holistic development of adolescent girls in the age group of 11-18 years.

Sources: Press Information Bureau, Government of India

Equal Remuneration Act, 1973: In order to improve employability a separate Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has been created.

Equal Remuneration Act, 1973 provides for payment of equal remuneration to men and women workers for the same work of similar nature without any discrimination. In order to ensure social security to the workers including women in the unorganised sector, the Government has enacted the Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act 2008.

The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961: The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 regulates employment of women in certain establishments for a certain period (12 weeks) before and after childbirth and provides for maternity and other benefits.

Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY): Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY) Scheme is being implemented as Conditional Maternity Benefit for pregnant and lactating women to improve health and nutrition status to better enabling environment by providing cash incentives to pregnant and nursing mothers to partly compensate wage loss both prior to and after delivery.

The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013: The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 has been enacted, which covers all women, irrespective of their age or employment status and protect them against sexual harassment at all workplaces both in public and private sector, whether organised or unorganised.

Mahila E-Haat: Mahila E-Haat is an initiative for meeting needs of women entrepreneurs. Mahila E-Haat has been initiated to strengthen financial inclusion of Women Entrepreneurs in the economy by providing continues sustenance and support to their creativity.

Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendra Scheme: The main purpose of this scheme is to enhance women's quality of life. Starting from saving and surviving of girl child, their primary as well as secondary education and overall quality of life will be improved through the implementation of this scheme.

Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana: Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana has been initiated in January 2015 to encourage parents of a girl child order to create a fund for the future education and marriage expenses for their child.

Rastriya Mahila Kosh: Rastriya Mahila Kosh has been launched in March 1993 to provide micro-credit to poor women for various livelihood support and income generating activities at concessional terms in a client-friendly procedure to bring about their socio-economic development.

Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao: Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao is a campaign of the Government of India that aims to generate awareness and improve the efficiency of welfare services intended for girls in India. The scheme was launched with an initial funding of Rs100 crore. BBBP addresses the declining Child Sex Ratio (CSR) and related issues of women empowerment over a life-cycle continuum. It is a tri-ministerial effort of Ministries of Women and Child Development, Health & Family Welfare and Human Resource Development.

Role of Gender Equality In Inclusive growth:

Gender equality is considered as a key driver for inclusive growth and equality of economic opportunity for women and men is a key element of a modern, well-functioning market economy and essential for sustainable growth. Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. Inclusive economic growth is a focus of the 2030 Agenda's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG). Providing women and girls with equal access to education, health care, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision-making processes will fuel sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity at large. Raising women's participation in the labour force to the same level as men can boost India's GDP by 27 per cent (Christine Lagarde, IMF Chief and Norway's Prime Minister Erna Solberg, 2018).

Conclusion:

Gender equality will be achieved only when women and men enjoy the same opportunities, rights and obligations in all spheres of life. This means sharing equally, power and influence, and having equal opportunities in economic and social spheres. Equal claim on education and career prospects will enable women to realize their personal ambitions. Gender equality demands the empowerment of women, with a focus on identifying and redressing power imbalances and giving women more autonomy to manage their own lives. When women are empowered, the whole family benefit, thus benefiting the society as a whole and these benefits often have a ripple effect on future generations.

As women constitute almost one-half of India's population, without their engagement and empowerment, rapid economic progress is out of the question. For economic growth to be really inclusive, women empowerment is of utmost value. It is crucial for achieving sustainable economic development of our country and even beyond. Still a large part of women do not have sufficient autonomy regarding the value choices for their own life. The data also revealed that there is a necessity to look beyond economic resources or material prosperity and into cultural and social influences, which are playing a significant role in shaping the women's autonomy and empowerment. Along with government, civil society organisations and all other stake holders must come forward and involve in the women empowerment process is the need of the hour.

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