IDENTIFYING GAPS IN GENDER STATISTICS IN INDIA

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June 2019
About IWWAGE

IWWAGE looks at examining national statistics in India under various government schemes and some private data sources to identify existing gaps in measuring Women’s Economic Empowerment (WEE) and designing and enabling effective implementation of policies towards achievement of equitable and sustainable development.

About this working paper

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Published in May 2019.

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This publication was developed with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The findings and conclusions in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

IWWAGE is an initiative of LEAD, an action-oriented research centre of IFMR Society (a not-for-profit society registered under the Societies Act). LEAD has strategic oversight and brand support from Krea University (sponsored by IFMR Society) to enable synergies between academia and the research centre.

IWWAGE would like to acknowledge the support provided by Divya Hariharan, Ila Reddy and Madhuri Mukherjee.

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Impressions Communication
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Women are key agents of change, and a move towards gender equality translates into increased economic empowerment for women; it also brings greater benefits for the society at large. As pointed out by McKinsey Global Institute, the economic impact of achieving gender equality in India is estimated to be US$700 billion of added Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 2025. But achieving gender equality necessitates measures to correct for existing disadvantages that prevent women from accessing productive opportunities. Gender data play an important role in this regard. And this study is an attempt by the Initiative for What Works to Advance Women and Girls in the Economy (IWWAGE) to outline the existing gaps in available official data sources in India. The study has identified data gaps in key domains of women’s empowerment, namely, employment and wages, ownership of assets, access to basic amenities, financial inclusion, health, education, access to digital platforms, participation in decision making, and crime and violence, etc. The study highlights the need for more regular surveys on employment and wages, and time use surveys to better capture women’s paid and unpaid work, and also time spent on different unpaid activities. A multi-causal approach to data collection on migration, on earnings of the self-employed as well as on ownership and management of assets and businesses, at the individual level, is also recommended. Besides, a cohort study of young women, behavioural aspects, norms and opinions around women’s work, as well as data on mental health, learning outcomes, violence and individual access to digital resources, would provide a range of measures to investigate the issue of women’s empowerment.
1. Introduction

Gender inequality is a critical economic challenge as the global economy will continue to lose if women (who account for half of the world's population) do not achieve their full economic potential. McKinsey Global Institute (MGI) reported in 2015 that US$12 trillion could be added to the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 2025, by advancing gender equality, i.e., by enabling women to participate equally in the economy with men. Similarly, as per their 2018 estimates, India has the potential of increasing its GDP by 18 per cent (US$770 billion) by 2025. Also, gender equality and women's economic empowerment are central to the United Nation's (UN) vision of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2030: ‘Inclusive and sustainable growth for all’, and is enshrined as Goal 5. In line with this, the issue of women's empowerment is regarded very pertinent in India, as manifested in the plan objectives, and was also recently reflected in the Economic Survey of 2017-18, which included a dedicated chapter on gender and emphasised ‘gender equality’ as a policy priority. However, when we measure progress on this front over the years, it is disheartening to note that India lags behind in ensuring gender equity as per the Global Gender Gap Index. Also, the Gender Inequality Index (GII) for India was reported at 0.524 in 2017, and it was ranked 127th out of 160 countries for which the index is calculated. The long term trend suggests that women's labour force participation rates have fallen especially low, creating two additional cause for concern. Furthermore, more than 90 per cent of Indian women are informally employed, where they have fewer rights or legal safeguards.

Therefore, it is important to identify and measure the gender gaps in various dimensions of development for designing and enabling effective implementation of policies towards achievement of equitable and sustainable development. Gaps in gender statistics and the lack of trend data render it difficult to measure and monitor progress for women and girls in the economy. It is also critical to note that there is a need for improved gender statistics, and gender mainstreaming into national statistical schemes. In addition, there is a growing consensus that unless gender is prioritised in data collection, gender data scarcity and gaps will persist.

While the Ministry of Women and Child Development is the nodal agency for promoting social and economic empowerment of women, and engages in policy formulation for the overall development of women, gender statistics in India are produced by several ministries and organisations such as the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE), National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), Registrar General of India, Central Statistics Office (CSO) and Labour Bureau, etc. There are certain identified areas, which are exclusively related to women, such as crime against women, domestic violence, maternal health, etc., but otherwise gender statistics are not collected exclusively, and are often arrived at by male-female decomposition given by different data sources such as large-scale sample surveys, population census and other available administrative statistics. Besides, more often than not, like most of the socio-economic statistics in the country, gender data also suffer from the problems of coverage, time-lag and reliability, etc.

Against this backdrop, IWWAGE makes an attempt to examine the available national statistics in India and identify existing gaps in measuring women’s economic empowerment. This report identifies various domains of empowerment of women (employment and wages, ownership of assets, access to basic amenities, women’s digital inclusion, financial inclusion, gig economy, health, education, and others) and discusses the gaps in available official data sources in India. It also explores the gaps in information collected/ provided under various government schemes and some private data sources.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows: Sections 2 to 9 discuss data gaps in the domains of empowerment identified above. Section 10 covers the other critical aspects of empowerment such as violence and crime against women, and participation in decision making. Sections 11, 12 and 13 discuss a few important scheme-based, private databases, and UN data systems, respectively. Section 14 presents the key recommendations.

2. Employment and Wages

Labour statistics in India are collected and compiled by several agencies. The MoLE is the most important among them in providing statistics on different dimensions of labour markets such as rates and types of employment, unemployment, wages, and so on. The Ministry collects data on labour statistics through regular, periodic and ad hoc surveys conducted by its specialised statistical agencies, the Labour Bureau and the Directorate General of Employment and Training (DGE&T). The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) also produces data on employment through surveys carried out by its two important offices: CSO and NSSO. Further, state governments collect labour statistics via their respective labour departments, which are compiled at the state level. Some labour statistics are collected through the Census and sample surveys and others are collected via administrative processes. Among these, some are household surveys while others are enterprise surveys. They also differ in their coverage, interval, definitions, methodology, and information provided.

Within these labour statistics, the Census collects data on a decennial basis; and NSSO’s Employment and Unemployment Surveys (EUS) collected them
Identifying Gaps in Gender Statistics in India

Quinquennially on a large sample of households covering a wide range of variables. The erstwhile EUS is now replaced by Periodic Labour Force Surveys (PLFS), which will be conducted annually (and quarterly for urban areas). The first PLFS survey was carried out for 2017-18, and its findings were released in May 2018. However, the invisibility of women’s work and inadequacy in capturing data under-report women’s work in all these surveys. To capture women’s work, CSO undertook a pilot Time Use Survey (TUS) during 1998-99 in six states and besides economic activities (System of National Accounts (SNA) activities), data were collected on time spent on non-market productive activities, particularly extended SNA activities, and purely non-economic activities (or non-SNA activities). The TUS highlighted data inadequacy issues in the conventional EUS and the Population Census in measuring women’s unpaid work. However, because of the survey’s limitation, the 1998-99 TUS did not provide separate estimates on informal and subsistence employment. It was also designed within a very limited and simplistic understanding of care work and caregivers and little attention was given to measuring unpaid work. Nevertheless, the TUS better captures women’s work; and we are awaiting the results from the new TUS, which began in early 2019, to acquire accurate estimates and an improved understanding of the woman’s workforce in India. Since its rather expensive to conduct TUS at such a large scale, a TUS model could be added to the PLFS, conducted by the NSSO.

As debated in various studies, the declining women’s labour force participation in India could be the result of social and economic structures influencing demand and supply-side factors (Mehrotra and Sinha, 2017; Klasen and Pieters, 2015; Chaudhary and Verick, 2014; Kapsos et al., 2014; Lahoti and Swaminathan, 2013; Mazumdar and Neetha, 2011; Bhalla and Kaur, 2011). However, the available data do not allow for analysis of demand-side factors leading to occupational segregation and wage discrimination on the basis of gender. Information on hiring practices would facilitate the understanding of such disparities and enable formulation of policies to ensure the presence of women in non-traditional occupations. Modules including questions on perceptions about discrimination and segregation can be added to the existing surveys, such as the Economic Census, NSSO surveys and Enterprise surveys, to capture such information. Alternatively, audit studies could be conducted; however, it might be a challenge to conduct them at a large scale.

Since 2010, the Labour Bureau has been collecting annual data on employment and the labour force. Also, the data on wage rates for manual work in rural areas, published by it, cover only 11 agricultural and seven non-agricultural occupations. The survey should be more sensitive to gender attributes in capturing women’s work and include greater details on occupations. Similarly, the DGE&T data cover only the organised sector and provides data on registration and placement, and vocational training. However, it depends on the state governments to provide these data, as there is no direct field force or central statistical cadre in the states. The Department of Agriculture and Cooperation of the Ministry of Agriculture conducts the quinquennial Agriculture Census
which can be used to develop gender-specific agricultural technologies for specific crops and a specific holding size/mix.

Given the significant size of the informal sector and trend towards informalisation, it is important to collect data on the conditions of work. NSSO's EUS collects information on organised and unorganised sector workers. Moreover, it conducts special surveys of unorganised manufacturing and service sectors separately, while the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) and, more recently, the Statistical Profile on Women Labour collect data for the organised manufacturing sector. Though NSSO's EUS collects data on the proportion of women workers not eligible for any social security benefit, any written job contract and paid leave, data should also be collected on the proportion of women workers who need social security benefits and who are getting it. MoLE provides data regarding the minimum wage, but there is no information on the number of cases registered against employers paying lower than minimum wages to women workers. There are no data on the number of women workers who received training and were promoted to higher positions in regular employment, and the number of women cultivators and agricultural labourers who received agricultural machinery and agricultural extension training. Information is also not available on the percentage of women workers with “decent” work conditions or the shortfall in access to working women’s hostels, crèche facilities available at the workplace for mothers with children below six years of age, and whether lactating mothers get daily short breaks to feed their children during office hours.

ASI provides data under three heads: workers directly employed; workers employed through contractors; and employees other than workers in the organised manufacturing sector. Only directly employed workers’ data are disaggregated by sex but there is no gender-wise disaggregated data on contract workers. Given the large increase in the number of contractual workers as a proportion of total workers, and a sizeable proportion of women among contract workers, gender-disaggregated data on India’s factory sector are required to understand the composition and characteristics of the workforce. Also, ASI does not provide any gender-disaggregated data on wages. On the other hand, in India, among the working-age population, around half of those employed are engaged in some self-employed activity in the farm and non-farm sector. A considerable proportion of self-employed women workers are involved in informal manufacturing activities and services. With the increase in home-based work as a part of subcontracting for export and domestic manufacturing, women’s own account employment increased which typically consisted of only themselves without any hired help. However, they are termed as managers which indicates a misclassification in occupational codes that needs rectification. Additionally, there is no recent data on earnings of the self-employed. The India Human Development Survey (IHDS) collect information on household business earnings but it is only nationally representative due to

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6 In the 61st, 66th, and 68th rounds of the NSSO's EUS, data were collected on workers’ perceptions about whether earnings are remunerative.
the limited sample size. Though earnings from self-employment in business are a combined effort of more than one household member, information on net earnings for the household and primary decision maker would facilitate an understanding of the ownership and characteristics of entrepreneurship by gender. Similarly, no gender-wise disaggregated data are available for agricultural tenants.

As mentioned in the report of the UN High-level Panel (UNHLP) on Women’s Economic Empowerment (2016) and the National Policy for the Empowerment of Women (2001), social structures and cultural norms are an important underlying cause of gender inequality. Though this factor has been addressed in many studies\(^7\), collecting information on gender norms and perceptions affecting labour market participation is new to quantitative surveys and not included in official data sources. Existing legislations have repeatedly been found to be ineffective in providing adequate security measures to workers. Awareness of existing legislations, entitlement to benefits and other supportive services may put pressure on employers to provide them. However, often, workers are unaware of such legislations; including related questions specific to women in the schedule will enable researchers to provide an estimate of the gaps. Migration for employment is another important aspect of economic empowerment. The inability of the official macro data to delineate the scope, scale and patterns of female labour migration has been central to the “invisibilisation of gender and women’s work” in development-oriented approaches to internal migration. The Census and NSSO\(^8\) are the two official data sources on migration, which provide figures on long-term migration\(^9\). However, even if a woman migrates for economic reasons, it is not captured in the survey as only one reason can be chosen on behalf of the respondent. Usually, women give the social reason, i.e., marriage, with parents, as the reason for migration. It also does not allow a differentiation between circular and seasonal migration and commuting for work, which is more common among women rather than long-distance, long-term migration.

### 3. Ownership of Assets

Ownership of assets is an indicator of status and power position of an individual in a household. There is a positive correlation between asset ownership and voice/agency in the household. However, data on asset ownership are available only at the household level and there are no gender-wise disaggregated data. NSSO and the Census provide information on ownership of assets such as land, housing and livestock but it is considered as household ownership. To measure empowerment of women, information is needed on the share of land

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\(^7\) ODI, 2015; Razavi, S. 2011; Dessing, 2002.

\(^8\) Collection of migration data was integrated with the regular NSS employment and unemployment surveys from the 38th round (1983) onwards. Since then, NSSO has conducted migration surveys during the 43rd round (July 1987-June 1988), 49th round (January-June 1993), 55th round (July 1999-June 2000) and 64th round (July 2007-June 2008) surveys.

\(^9\) NSSO’s 64th round on migration conducted in 2007-08 provides information on short-term migration, determined on the basis of whether the individual migrated for one to six months within a year before the survey. Migration for more than six months is considered as long term.
owned by women or ownership of house. Further, women play a significant role in agriculture and allied activities such as livestock rearing, particularly in rural areas, and with the increasing feminisation of agricultural activities, it is more important to collect information on livestock ownership and time spent on such work by women. The NSSO’s land and livestock surveys collect and publish data on areas of land owned and operated by households as well as type and number of livestock owned by households. Similarly, the NSSO’s debt and investment surveys publish data on the value of livestock owned by households. Both these surveys consider a ‘household’ as the primary sampling unit. As a result, there is no information available on the area or value of land legally owned by women members of a household and ownership or control of livestock. The unit level data provide information on the land area owned and operated and the value of land owned by female-headed households but there is no information on women’s ownership of livestock and their share of or control over income from livestock activity. The Agricultural Census uses data consolidated from the land revenue surveys of most states and considers operational holdings as the primary unit. Therefore, there is no gender-wise disaggregated data for title holders, as all land held by any member of a household constitutes a single operational unit. There is a need to modify the land and livestock holding survey to capture gender disaggregated asset ownership. National Family Health Surveys (NFHS) collect data on ownership. However, again there is no information on ownership.

International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics’ (ICRISAT’s) Village Dynamics in South Asia (vDSA) study is conducted in 42 villages in India and Bangladesh, and it collect data on multiple dimensions (cropping patterns, livestock, cultivation, employment, and socio-economic dynamics). More importantly, to facilitate a gender analysis of assets, vDSA collects data on gender endowment (2009 onwards), in which the collected data provide extensive sex-disaggregated information on resource/asset ownership (such as land, livestock, credit, investment, etc.), and decision-making (regarding use of inputs in cultivation, such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, hired labour, etc., and others, namely, household maintenance, education of children, migration, marriage of children, whom to give vote, etc.). This dataset provides critical insights into gender differences in asset/resources access and control, as well as gender differences in decision making of the household, and reflects the status of social and economic empowerment of women vis-à-vis men, in the surveyed villages.

4. Basic Amenities

Access to basic amenities indicates the standard of living for any individual. The gender dimension to access to amenities is often ignored in official statistics. The Census provides information on access to amenities such as drinking water, availability of toilets and bathrooms in the household; type of fuel used for cooking; whether the household has a separate kitchen; lighting and electricity, kuchcha pucca houses, etc. For all data that are collected, the unit of analysis is
the household and often the only gender disaggregation is in terms of the sex of the head of the household. But, given the nature of the Census and other large-scale surveys, the head of household categorisation is constructed on the recognition criterion and not on an economic criterion such as main decision-maker or main earner. Also, while both the Census and NSSO provide data on water availability and distance needed to travel to fetch water, information is not available on the quality of water (safe for drinking or not), number of days for which water is not available or is not safe and who is responsible for storing water, etc. NFHS and IHDS collect information on who collects water and the time taken to collect water but data on who is primarily responsible for storing and managing water are not collected in any of these surveys.

The NSSO, NFHS and Census collect information on whether a household has access to a latrine (owned/shared) but there is no information in any of these surveys on whether women use the latrine facility and whether they have access to it throughout their lives. This is important in the present context where we need to focus not only on building toilets but also ensuring their use. There are no data on whether people are also defecating in the open despite having a latrine at home. Further, there is no information available on what amenities are available at the workplace. In short, individual access to water and actual toilet use are two basic amenities that are particularly relevant to women’s lives; data on these two variables need to be collected. Surveys should also focus on individual access to and usage of these facilities.

5. Access to and use of ICTs by Women

Digital technologies can empower women by increasing their awareness, strengthening their social networks and providing them with larger socio-economic opportunities. Substantial literature suggests that women greatly benefit from Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), as they enable access to a bank of knowledge, financial services and more; therefore, access to information and devices or tools is an important enabler of women’s empowerment. The UNHLP panel also outlined that access to financial, digital, and property assets is critical for economic empowerment of women. Lee (2009), based on the NFHS cross-sectional data (2004-05), found that access to mobile phones reduced tolerance for domestic violence and increased women’s autonomy in mobility and economic independence. But, there is no official source (including the Ministry of Telecommunications) for providing statistics on the use of digital devices and services such as mobile phones, computers, internet, etc. As per the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) May 2019 press release, as of 31 March, the total number of mobile phones in use (or mobile subscribers) is 1,161.81 million in India (tele-density is 88.46)\(^{10}\). These data are also available for rural and urban areas separately, however no gender-disaggregated information is available.

\(^{10}\) https://main.trai.gov.in/sites/default/files/PR_No.40of2019_0.pdf
As per ‘The mobile gender gap report’, 59 per cent women own mobiles, as compared to 80 per cent men in India. Similarly, the percentage of women internet users is a meagre 16 per cent, as compared to 36 per cent men internet users (GSMA report, 2019). Another important observation is that 42 per cent of Indian women are aware of mobile internet now (compared to a mere 19 per cent in 2018). The gender gap in mobile internet use and the mobile ownership gap is almost same. To address the mobile gender gap, there is a need for gender-disaggregated data on mobile access and use. Such data are currently limited, despite being critical to understanding and measuring the gender gap and informing policy that can help bridge this gap. The report stated that affordability of mobile is the top barrier to mobile ownership and mobile internet use for women. Other factors including literacy and digital skills, and a perceived lack of relevance, work as constraints.

KANTAR IMRB’s I-CUBE was initiated in 1998, and is the longest available study on the Indian internet market. This provides important insights on the gender dimension of the internet user base, and is deemed crucial in the absence of official data sources on the concerned matter. As per its 2019 report, for the first time, the internet user base in India has exceeded the 500 million (50 crore) mark. Internet users were estimated to be 566 million in December 2018, and the number is expected to reach 627 million (62.7 crore) by December 2019, mostly driven by rapid internet usage and growth in rural areas which saw 35 per cent growth over the past year. The report also noted that internet usage is now more gender balanced, or in other words, the gender inequality in internet usage has declined. Of the total internet users, women comprise 42 per cent, and they are spending as much time on the internet as men, i.e., they are equally active and engaged in the digital world. Increased accessibility of bandwidth, affordable data plans, and raised awareness are some of the key reasons behind this trend.

6. Financial Inclusion

Data on financial inclusion are available from the Basic Statistical Returns (BSR) reports of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), and also NSSO. Account-level information covering all major heads, such as the number of accounts, amount of credit and deposits outstanding, interest rates and occupations, at the level of various types of banks and branches, is available in the BSR reports. Over time, these reports have also started to disseminate separate information on accounts held by women, but there is a need to widen the scope of the BSR reports and ensure that it provides gender-based information for all major heads. For example, the BSR reports do not provide any information on credit accessed by women, either by occupation or by interest rate. RBI provides gender-disaggregated state-wise information on bank accounts/borrowable

with credit limits above INR 2 lakh. However, statistics are not available at the state level for accounts with credit limits up to INR 2 lakh and on women’s ownership of shares and other financial instruments. Usually, household surveys collect data on bank accounts at the household level but not at the individual level.

NFHS and IHDS collect information from eligible women on holding a bank account. However, they do not provide any information on savings pattern or visits to banks and Automated Teller Machines (ATMs). Similarly, information on loans for consumption or production is available at the household level, as the household is the sampling unit but there is no gender-disaggregated information.

Besides, the World Bank’s Global F index database is the most comprehensive data set on financial inclusion. As per the Global F index report of 2017\(^{13}\), though 80 per cent Indians now have a bank account, and the share has more than doubled since 2011\(^{14}\), financial inclusion levels are still among the world’s worst, even lower than sub-Saharan Africa on some counts. The report mentioned that, between 2014 and 2017, female bank-account ownership increased by 79 per cent, and as a result the gender gap in account ownership also narrowed to 6 percentage point. However, women’s financial literacy and participation in financial services is much lower in comparison to their male counterparts.

7. Digital Labour Platforms/Gig Economy

Digital labour platforms are a product of technological advances. And with the emergence of digital labour platforms, the world of work is experiencing prominent transformations. Digital labour platforms include both web-based platforms (crowd work), and location-based applications (apps). Web-based platforms largely work in industries such as IT, and programming, animation, content, academic writing, finance, human resource, design, and marketing and sales\(^{15}\). On the other hand, app based jobs include taxi drivers (of Uber India/Ola), delivery executives (of Zomato, Swiggy, UberEats, etc.), service providers (Urban Clap, Housejoy, etc.). There are no formal statistics available on the extent and magnitude of gig economy workers, but there are a variety of media and other reports pointing to the incremental gig workforce in India. As per one such estimate from Team Lease Services (a human resource firm), approximately 56 per cent of new employment in India is being generated in the gig economy, which is inclusive of both the blue-collar and white-collar manpower. And Delhi is the top destination for migrant workers joining the gig economy, as it added 560,000 people to its gig economy in the six months to March 31, and recorded an 88 per cent jump from the first half of the FY19. On

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\(^{13}\) The first Global Findex survey was completed in 2011, followed by a second round in 2014 and the latest one in 2017.

\(^{14}\) The report identified that the important factor driving this increase was a government’s flagship programme ‘Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana’, launched in 2014.

the other hand, Bengaluru’s gig economy only rose a moderate 29 per cent in the same period\textsuperscript{16}. Another study stated that there is gender parity in the gig economy as far as the ratio of men and women is concerned (50:50), against the traditional workforce, where the ratio is about 70:30\textsuperscript{17}.

Women in India are participating in both the platforms (though mostly as service providers), but there is a lack of formal statistics, and thereby no reliable data are available that could throw light on the magnitude of such a workforce in India. The literature suggests that the gig economy opens up new opportunities for women as they can balance their work and family life. But a traditional mind-set and lack of networking platforms act as barriers in embracing the gig economy and women are the worst sufferers. It is assumed that digital inclusion can empower women not only by improving their individual agency but also by dismantling other societal norms surrounding gender.

8. Health

Health is an important domain of women’s empowerment and central to their well being, capability enhancement, productivity and child health. Women, overall, live longer but lose more healthy life to disability than men and so suffer an excess of disease burdens (WHO, 2009). Not only biological but social-structural factors have important consequences on their health. Data are required to meet women’s health needs to generate a complete picture of the services women and girls require. In other words, in order to achieve universal health coverage, we need a complete picture of all those who are seeking care, particularly in the areas of maternal and child health. There are a number of data sources\textsuperscript{18} providing extensive information on the health of the population and health services in India. However, their scope, coverage and periodicity differ. These sources provide information on the sex ratio, maternal and child mortality, child delivery, immunisation, morbidity, natal care, health service utilisation and expenditure, violence against women, health infrastructure, etc. However, several gaps exist as identified below.

Mental health problems are a major contributor to the total disease burden, but the gaps in information on mental health are huge in developing countries for both women and men. This issue affects large numbers of women and, despite its impact, data are inadequate. More data are needed to measure the extent and understand the causes of these issues for designing appropriate measures to address them.

There is a lack of data on care needs and inequitable care burden. Care giving within the home saves both the time and cost of the public health system. Hence

\textsuperscript{16} Compounded migration along with readily available job training is responsible for migrants joining the gig economy. See: https://www.livemint.com/companies/start-ups/delhi-and-not-bengaluru-is-the-place-to-be-for-gig-economy-workers-1555013405684.html
\textsuperscript{18} National Family Health Survey, District Level Household Survey, NSSO, Census, Sample Registration System, Central Bureau of Health Intelligence, Annual Health Survey.
appropriate indicators are needed to capture months of care provisioning, support provided by the state, and distribution of the care burden between men and women.

Though the data on deaths are available, information on the reason for death is often not collected. Statistics on deaths due to certain diseases such as cholera, polio, malaria, diphtheria, etc., may provide useful information for formulating preventive and curative measures.

It is important to collect data on adolescent health along with maternal and child health. The determinants of healthy behaviours are particularly important during adolescence since actions at this age chart the path for the rest of women’s lives. The data sources on adolescent health should include information on biological and social determinants of health.

There is a lack of information on infrastructure and human resources available in the private sector which provides a large proportion of the health services in India. Available data sources also lack information on different types of disability as well as prevalence and incidence of multiple disabilities. Further, reliable data on accessibility, affordability, and appropriateness of health services will guide the design of health interventions to better meet women’s needs.

9. Education

Education is both a means and an end to human development. It has high economic and social returns as well as positive spill-over effects. Gender disparity in skill and education due to pre-market discrimination has important implications for gender gaps in economic and social outcomes and women’s empowerment. There are a number of official data sources providing sex-disaggregated information on education at various levels. The Census provides literacy rates and the recent NSSO survey on social consumption also provides information on educational attainment, expenditure and socio-demographic profile of household members. The Unified District Information System for Education (U-DISE) collects information on school profile, physical infrastructure as well as teacher and student profile. The All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) presents information on higher educational institutions. There are other periodical surveys conducted by different agencies too. However, some gap exists in the available sources which has been noted here.

The education departments in the states generally do not collect information from unrecognised institutions. In the AISHE survey conducted by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), data from such institutions have also been collected but it has not been possible to ensure complete coverage and reliability of information from such institutions. U-DISE has attempted this more recently. However, this information is being collected.

19 Census, NSSO, U-DISE, Secondary Education Management Information System, AISHE, All India Educational Surveys.
through schools and there is scope for manipulation at that level. Also, it does not capture information pertaining to the situation of children and its impact on education. Better information on girls who are socially excluded due to race, ethnicity, religion, location or disability and likely to suffer the double disadvantage of gender and social exclusion, resulting in lower enrolment levels and in poor learning outcomes, would provide a better understanding of the gaps.

Information on non-formal education needs to be captured. Also, data on learning outcomes, which indicate the quality of education, need to be systematically collected by social category and gender.

Although data are collected on enrolment and current attendance, no data are collected systematically on average daily attendance of girls and boys in schools. This is very important for planning, as they indicate how existing facilities are being utilised and can track girls and boys with low attendance.

Also, definitional issues in data on drop-outs and out-of-school children from different sources present a problem in comparing results for a comprehensive understanding.

Improvement in educational attainment but falling labour force participation remains a reality for India. Surveys capturing adolescent girls’ transition from education to the workforce, as well as what happens to the large number of young women who fail to make this transition, would be valuable information for targeted policy making. Cohort-based panel surveys can be a rich source of information.

10. Others

This section highlights the existing data gaps in other dimensions such as violence and crime against women, and participation in decision making. NFHS presents data on violence against girls and women in the 15-49 age group across rural and urban areas, religions and castes. However, there is no information on girls below the age of 15 or women above the age of 49, and the severity of violence. Also, data are provided only at the national and state levels. Another source of information on crimes against women is the National Crime Records Bureau. It provides data on rape, kidnapping, dowry deaths, cruelty by husband and relatives, sexual harassment, etc. These data are based on administrative sources or police/crime records and are available state-wise on an annual basis. However, since the actual registration of the cases happens in only a small proportion of actual incidences, and the compilation takes place at different levels, its representativeness is questionable. Also, unlike the NFHS, these do not provide detailed information on violence.

Participation in economic and other decision making in household affairs and for self is another important indicator of empowerment. Data from NFHS and IHDS provide information on the participation of women in decisions regarding
expenditure, household needs, seeking health care and mobility. However, other aspects such as decisions regarding sharing of household and outside duties and settlement of issues need to be included.

11. Scheme-based Information

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

The MGNREGA was launched by the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) in 2005, and its website provides information on its implementation status. Details on demand and allocation of work, expenditures, work done and worker account details are available state-wise annually. However, gender-disaggregated data are available only for the total person-days worked. Information on supportive facilities, wages, and duration of work are not available by sex.

National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM)

NRLM, now renamed as Ajeevika, was launched by the MoRD in June 2011 to create efficient institutional platforms of the rural poor, enabling them to increase household income through sustainable livelihood enhancements and improved access to financial services. State-wise yearly data on physical and financial progress (formation of self-help groups, fund support, bank credit, etc.) of the scheme are provided by MoRD. However, detailed data on type of work, gender-disaggregated member-wise credit access and utilisation details, participation and performance are lacking.

Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY)

The scheme was launched in April 2015 to provide loans of up to INR 10 lakhs to non-corporate, non-farm small/micro enterprises. Loans are advanced by commercial banks, regional rural banks, small finance banks, cooperative banks, microfinance institutions and non-banking finance companies. Under this scheme, three types of loans – Sishu (up to INR 50,000), Kishor (INR 50,000 to 500,000) and Tarun (INR 500,000 to 1,000,000) – are available. The goal of this scheme is to promote self-employment by providing credit to small entrepreneurs aiming to establish or expand small businesses. The PMMY official website provides information on the number of women entrepreneurs who have availed the benefits. However, disaggregated information under all three categories of loans is not available. Further, it is mentioned in the scheme guideline that women are entitled to low rates of interest but data related to such accessibility of the benefits are also not available.

The scheme is launched in April 2015 for providing loans up to INR 10 lakhs to the non-corporate, non-farm small/micro enterprises. The loans are given by commercial banks, regional rural banks, small finance banks, cooperative banks, micro finance institutions and non-banking financial companies. Under
this scheme, Sishu, Kishor and Tarun loans are available. The aim of this scheme is to promote self-employment by providing credit to small entrepreneurs aiming to establish or expand small businesses. But there are no interest rate concessions associated with loans under the PMMY, with interest rates on the loans ranging between 9 and 12 per cent. Further, women entrepreneurs face a major challenge in accessing finance and financial institutional borrowings are very low in India. So, women entrepreneurs should be more encouraged to wipe out the difficulties faced by them.

Skill India

Skill India was launched in July 2015 to train over 40 crore people in India in different skills by 2022. Its initiatives include National Skill Development Mission, National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship 2015, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana and the Skill Loan scheme. The website provides gender-disaggregated details of the number of beneficiaries trained and trainings completed under the programme. However, it does not provide the details of regional or state-wise training as well as type of training imparted. It would be beneficial to have the Skill India information system provide details of training centres across India, both government and government affiliated.

Total Sanitation Campaign/Swachchh Bharat Abhiyan

The Government of India introduced the Total Sanitation Campaign in 1999 to accelerate sanitation coverage throughout the country, particularly in rural areas, through the construction of individual and community toilets, solid waste management and awareness campaigns. It was renamed Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan in 2012 and relaunched as Swachh Bharat Abhiyan in 2014, expanding its coverage to urban areas as well. The progress of the scheme in rural and urban areas is administered by different ministries. Though its website provides aggregate figures on toilets built and open defecation free areas, detailed data on use of toilets, quality of construction, completion status, maintenance, etc., are not available. Though the Census and IHDS provide information on open defecation practices, other information under the scheme is missing.

National Health Mission (NHM)

The NHM, with its two sub-missions (National Rural Health Mission was launched in 2005 and National Urban Health Mission was launched in 2013), aims to provide accessible, affordable and quality health care to the population. It targets to reduce maternal and infant mortality rates, total fertility rate, anaemia prevalence, morbidity, and incidence of tuberculosis, malaria, leprosy and Kala-azar. The progress and outcomes of various schemes under NHM can be assessed using databases such as NFHS and Health Management Information Systems (HMIS). Under HMIS, data are uploaded by the states and districts across the country to the national web-portal. It is a useful source of information for health monitoring by district teams. However, poor quality data present
serious limitations for analysis and policy making. The HMIS should be further strengthened and expanded to provide good quality data on new and emerging programme components including gender-disaggregated information. Effort is needed to collect district-level data on programme outcomes and other health indicators with a regular periodicity.

**Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)**

Operational since 2000-01, SSA is Government of India’s flagship programme for achieving universalization of elementary education. It aims to provide free and compulsory education to children in the six to 14 years age group by filling the teacher gap, training teachers, and providing grants for developing and strengthening of the academic support structure at block and district levels. With the passage of the Right to Education Act, SSA’s approach has been modified to incorporate the vision of child entitlements and quality elementary education in regular schools.

U-DISE data, collected annually, are an important source to assess the progress of SSA. It provides information on physical infrastructure and facilities in schools, availability and training of teachers, enrolment by social category, age, number of instruction days, average attendance, etc. Besides, the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration publishes a range of reports every year, such as Flash Statistics, State Report Cards, District Report Cards, and Elementary Education in India: Rural/Urban based on the data received from the states. Recently, the online portal ‘Shagun’ has been launched which provides state-level performance for key educational indicators such as the number of out-of-school children mainstreamed, enrolment in government and private schools, expenditure details, etc. However, since the data are provided by school authorities, verification is needed for greater reliability. Indiastat compiles information on resource allocation and utilisation under SSA from sources such as Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha questions. However, scheme-specific data and gender disaggregation are not available in the public domain.

**12. Private Databases**

Apart from the official surveys and information system, a number of private databases are also in place. A few of them are discussed below:

**National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER)-National Data Innovation Centre (NDIC)**

NCAER, in association with other partners, established NDIC to strengthen India’s statistical apparatus. It collects information on a wide range of indicators through national surveys to complement existing surveys. The IHDS panel household survey, conducted during 2004-05 and 2011-12, provides information on various dimensions of human development, and thereby allows a wide scope
for analysis of social and economic progress of India over seven years. However, it is not representative beyond state levels because of its small sample size. The Additional Rural Income Surveys are periodic surveys of rural households conducted since 1969, covering 17 major states, in four rounds between 1971 and 2006. As a panel dataset, it allows an in-depth analysis of economic, social and demographic changes in rural India.

Under the consumer survey, the Market Information Survey of Households was initiated by NCAER in 1985-86 to estimate market size and provide a profile of consumer households in terms of income, occupation and location. Further, in 2004-05, NCAER undertook the first National Survey of Household Income and Expenditure (NSHIE) to collect robust and reliable estimates on household well-being (such as income, expenditure, savings and related indicators) for all major states. The second round of NSHIE was conducted in 2011 and it improved the database by doubling the sample size and also including several other relevant variables. It provided both panel data and cross-sectional data.

NCAER also conducts a wide range of sector-based surveys, such as agriculture, handlooms, housing, information and communication technology, and so on. It played an important role in the Handloom Census conducted during 1987-88, 1995 and 2009. Data on the total number of units engaged in handloom activities, total count of looms, and number of workers involved were collected. However, there is no gender-disaggregated information in the survey. Another sectoral survey is an assessment of present conditions and short-term prospects for India’s business environment, based on responses from more than 500 companies in India. The survey collects information on company characteristics, its expectations of change in input and output costs, labour employment and wage situations, inventories, prospects for sales, exports and imports and profits.

Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE)

CMIE provides two types of databases: company and household.

The Prowess provides panel data on financial performance of over 48,000 Indian companies, including those traded on the National Stock Exchange and the Bombay Stock Exchange, unlisted public limited companies and private limited companies. The database is built from annual reports, quarterly financial statements and Stock Exchange feeds.

The household database is based on the Consumer Pyramids Survey, conducted thrice a year. It is a longitudinal survey covering 166,744 households across India. The first wave was conducted in January 2014. Through a number of modules, it collects information on demographic profile, income, expense, basic amenities and assets, unemployment and consumer sentiments. The People of India database contains information on age, gender, religion, caste, state of origin, occupation, literacy, education level and discipline, and status of health and financial inclusion. The Composition of Incomes database provides
information regarding the monthly earning and source of earning for each household and each earning member of household surveyed. The Household Expense database provides information on monthly household expenditure on over 82 items including 29 food items and 53 non-food items. The recall period is four months preceding the month of survey. It also provides information on availability of basic amenities in households, ownership of assets, pattern of investments and sources and purpose of borrowing; data on employment and unemployment status of household members above 14 years of age; and information on consumers’ perceptions regarding current and future well-being of self and the country. However, the data are available on purchase only.

All the above surveys either do not provide gender-disaggregated data or do not consider the life-cycle approach of women in recording their employment. Since women face different constraints at different stages of their lives, the current static methodology in collecting data is inappropriate.

13. UN Data Systems

Gender Data Portal of the World Bank

The World Bank recognises that gender equality plays a pivotal role in sustainable development, and that data are required to facilitate evidence-based policy decisions. Therefore, it has a dedicated portal on gender statistics, known as Gender Data Portal\textsuperscript{20}, which is a comprehensive source for the latest sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics covering a large number of indicators, for all the countries for which the relevant data are available, based on a country’s official data sources. This portal also enables access to time-series gender data, data visualisation on various indicators of gender equality, and also gender data snapshots. The list of indicators on this portal is exhaustive, including data across a range of indicators covering demography, education, health, public life and decision making, economic opportunities, women’s agency, and economic and social contexts. The database is updated quarterly, which makes it easier to examine how women and men are faring across a range of global indicators and to measure progress over time. Some key World Bank gender statistics publications are: The little data book on gender, 2019; Women, business and the law, 2019; Voice and agency: Empowering women and girls for shared prosperity, 2014, etc.

ILOSTAT of International Labour Organisation (ILO)

ILO is responsible for labour force statistics under the international statistical system. Its central online statistics database, ILOSTAT\textsuperscript{21}, is the primary source for cross-country statistics on the labour market, and for global and regional

\textsuperscript{20} The World Bank’s Gender Data Portal is accessible at https://datatopics.worldbank.org/gender/about

\textsuperscript{21} ILOSTAT is accessible at www.ilo.org/ilostat
estimates. It provides a very comprehensive set of labour-related indicators with long time-series and country-level data, as well as global and regional aggregates for a number of key labour market indicators, namely labour force and employment, vulnerable employment and informality, unemployment and labour underutilisation, youth Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET), productivity and wages, social protection, industrial relations, occupational safety and health, etc. Besides, it provides sex-disaggregated data on most of the above mentioned indicators at the international level. The data are derived from official national sources, such as population census, household surveys, establishment census and surveys, administrative records, national accounts, and other official estimates of each country covered.

ILOSTAT also provides data on SDG labour market indicators under the ILO’s custodianship of Goal 8 (Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all). These include: labour productivity, informal employment, hourly earnings and pay gap, unemployment rate, youth NEET rate, child labour, and occupational injuries. In addition, ILOSTAT also renders data on indicators under the ILO’s custodianship of other goals, including social protection coverage, female share in management, and labour share of GDP. Besides, ILO is involved with provision of data on working poverty, and participation in education and training, and these data are also available on ILOSTAT.

Gender Statistics Portal of United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)

UNSD implements the Global Gender Statistics Programme22, and also serves as the secretariat of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics (IAEG-GS). This programme provides guidelines for strengthening of national statistical and technical capacity for the production, dissemination and use of gender relevant data, and also facilitates access to gender relevant data and meta data through its portal for various countries for which data are available23. Through this portal UNSD also promotes the inclusion of gender statistics into all fields of statistical activities, at both the national and international levels, and takes great interest in improving coherence among existing initiatives on gender statistics. Another important function of the gender programme is to examine the emerging and unaddressed gender issues and related data gaps. Based on the work of IAEG-GS, a list of minimum set of gender indicators has been prepared, which is a collection of 52 quantitative indicators, and 11 qualitative indicators addressing various issues related to gender equality and women’s empowerment. The detailed list of the included indicators is available at the portal24. The indicators are divided into five domains: economic structures and access to resources, education, health and related services, public life and

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22 This programme is mandated by the United Nations Statistical Commission.
23 https://genderstats.un.org/
decision-making, and human rights of women and child. These are further categorised into three tiers, based on definitions, and availability of data, etc.

14. Concluding Remarks and Key Pointers

There is a thrust for accurate and adequate gender statistics to arrive at a better understanding and analysis of women’s empowerment in India, wherein gender should not merely be included as a binary sex, when registering and producing data. Also, we recommend having coherent data systems, as fragmented ownership of official statistics is a primary challenge in any attempt to generate and use data for public policy or evidence-based policy making. After examining the official statistics, we would like to make the following recommendations to improve the gaps and better the gender statistics of India:

- On employment and wages front, we need to collect data more frequently (like quarterly, annually), and it is also recommended to reduce the time lags in disseminating unit-level data. Apart from regular LFS/PLFS, we also need regular TUS; it could be added to the forthcoming labour force surveys or an independent TUS carried out simultaneously. Moreover, collecting reliable statistics on earnings from self-employment, ownership of business and management would be crucial from a policy perspective. Economic aspects of female migration and condition of migrant workers need to be captured through added modules in the existing surveys. Data collection on access to child care, expectations and perceptions about the economy, saving and spending patterns, and entrepreneurial behaviour should be considered for inclusion in the future surveys.

- Gender-wise information on ownership of assets and utilisation of basic amenities would be important to understand intra-household distribution of resources and power, effectiveness of laws in changing social structures and empowerment of women. Therefore, it is urged that a question on ownership be included in the existing surveys and also in the forthcoming TUS.

- Since financial and digital inclusion of women is critical for women’s economic empowerment and gender equality, data support is crucial for evidence-based policy making. Compilation of data from different mobile service providers, financial institutions, and existing surveys would be a cost-effective way to collect this information.

- The collection of data on mental health and violence against women can be done through targeted questions in the existing surveys. Most information is available at the state level, which presents a limitation for the practical implementation of health programmes. District-level indicators can provide better evidence of problems and base for targeted programmes.

- Behavioural aspects of gender inequality, programme evaluation, perceptions and opinions of women are important aspect, and can be captured through survey modules and use of technology – the mobile
phone and internet. It is recommended that dedicated multidimensional panel surveys of adolescent girls’ lives are conducted.

• Participation in multi-country surveys such as PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) and SWTS (School-to-Work Transition Survey) would help in generating comparable data for international comparison. It is also extremely important to supplement police records on crime with survey data (like British Crime Surveys or US National Crime Victimisation Survey).

• Scheme-based and private databases are important sources of information. However, many of these suffer from the same above mentioned issues and allow support only of existing information rather than additional indicators. Additionally, private databases are rather expensive to get hold of and thereby results in limited accessibility and consumption, in comparison to government data. Availability of data in the public domain will encourage more empirical inputs for policy research, driving women’s empowerment discourse.


UN High-level Panel Report (2017). Leave no one behind, a call to action for gender equality and women’s economic empowerment, Report of the UN secretary-general’s high-level panel on women’s economic empowerment.

## Gender Data Matrix

<table>
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Identifying Gaps in Gender Statistics in India
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