



A Peer Reviewed International Journal of Asian
Academic Research Associates

AARJSH
ASIAN ACADEMIC RESEARCH
JOURNAL OF SOCIAL
SCIENCE & HUMANITIES



INTER-STATE COMPARISON OF GENDER GAP IN THE POST-LIBERALIZATION PERIOD IN INDIA

DR. TARUN SENGUPTA¹; KSHANAPRAVA GHOSH²

¹Asst. Prof. Dept. of Economics, South Malda College, Malda.

²Govt. Appv. PTT., Dept. Of Commerce. South Malda College, Malda.

Abstract

Liberalization and globalization has enormous potential in accelerating economic growth through the integration with the global economy. But the impacts of globalization on poverty reduction and in reducing gender inequality have remained uneven in India. The association between globalization and poverty reduction hide substantial variations within countries in their experiences with international economic integration. Several decades of rising trade and capital flows with increased growth have also influenced increasing inequality in India particularly in gender dimensions. Despite rapid economic growth, the explosion of microcredit programs and self-help groups, and laudable efforts to increase women's political participation, gender disparities have remained deep and persistent in India. The UN Gender Inequality Index has ranked India below several sub-Saharan African countries. Gender disparities are even more pronounced in economic and political participation in India. Here we try to focus on whether the benefits of accelerated growth reach the poor by studying inter- state variations in income as well as the gender inequality. The present paper shows that economic development alone is insufficient to ensure significant progress in important dimensions of women's empowerment, in particular, significant progress in decision-making ability in the face of pervasive stereotypes against women's ability. Inter-state study of the income and gender gap shows that the growth in income has not been transmitted into overall development of women in India. The Gini, Theil and Atkinson indices are used to measure the inter-state inequality and rural-urban inequality in income distribution. Interstate variations are also shown through state level GII (gender inequality index) and gender specific IHDI (inequality adjusted Human Development Index) over a period of time. The study shows that the inter-state inequality in gender dimension and also in human development dimension increased in the post reform period. In a bid to attract the FDI to their states, many states have completely overlooked the rural sector and concentrated their development in urban areas. This has resulted in increased rural-urban inequality. The study covers all the major states in India over the period ranging 2000-01 to 2014-15.

Key Words: Liberalization, Income Inequality, Inequality Index, Theil, Atkinson, GII, IHDI.

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