W20: FOSTERING THE GOAL OF WOMEN-LED DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

India's G-20 (the group of 20 nations) presidency offers the opportunity for us to set the agenda for the next phase of development. Women-20 (W20) is an official engagement group under the G-20 which focuses on actualizing vision of "Women-Led Development" in order to create a world of equality and equity. The new India envisions women as equal partners in the sustainable development of the country which is possible only when there is gender inclusiveness in all spheres of public and political life. The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets women's effective participation and opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making, promotes gender inclusive public administration and institutions. In the light of above discussion this research paper is an attempt to find out how gender inclusive Indian Public Administration is? Further the paper suggest ways, W20 can adopt to prioritize the collection of gender-disaggregated data for developing targeted interventions and monitoring progress towards gender equality. Also how W20 will play crucial role in advancing the SDG target of an inclusive administration which is sensitive towards women led growth of the country.

Keywords

Women-20 (W20), Gender-Inclusive, Women-Led Development, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), Indian Public Administration

Introduction

The global concept *Vasudev Kutumbakam*, or One Earth, One Family, One Future, expands in 2024 when India relinquishes its G-20 presidency to Brazil, guaranteeing inclusive growth for all. The nation has concentrated its efforts on advancing gender equality and women's socio-economic empowerment, as well as climate action and job-rich economic growth. The Indian presidency of the G-20 has been inclusive, ambitious, decisive, and action-oriented. As the honorable Prime Minister of India has assured the global platform while presiding over it that the G-20 will act as a global "prime mover" to envision new ideas and accelerate collective action for inclusive growth of society, it becomes necessary to act and take both legal and informal steps to fulfill the promises made. Although achieving gender inclusivity in public organizations is a long-term aim. As a result, Gender Equity is the primary purpose of the W20, the G-20's official involvement group. By integrating W20 aims and SDG aspirations, the goal of 'gender inclusive public administration' may be accelerated.

Commonalities in Women20 and Sustainable Development Goals

The theme of W20, 2023 is the Pursuit of gender equality, equity, and dignity for Women Lead Development. It ensures that gender considerations are mainstreamed in the G-20 discussions and translated into the G-20 leaders' declaration as policies and commitments. The vision of the event is to create a world where women live with dignity and an enabling environment for women to thrive, transcend, and transform their lives. The key priority areas of the W20 are women's entrepreneurship to increase women's participation in the workforce, grassroots women leadership, to increase women stakeholders in various domains, bridging the gender digital divide, to reduce the disparity in assessing the technology education and skill development, to develop life skills and enhance their capability and finally climate change to help women adapt to the adverse effects of climate change. The question arises who are these stakeholders, these stakeholders the women themselves living in the tribal, rural, and urban areas or those women who are differently abled or were involved in different fields like agriculture, handloom, handicrafts, and micro and nano-entrepreneurship cooperatives.

The key to achieving Sustainable Development Goals is to end discrimination in all forms. Women can have control over their private life and their ability to make decisions and hence participate in the development process. Along with Sustainable Development Goals, there are a few targets and indicators. Indicator 5.5.1 ensures the full participation and leadership and decision-making positions. It indicates the proportion of women in national parliaments and local government. The SDG target 5C adopts and strengthens the policies and unforeseeable legislation for gender equality. It suggests countries with systems to track public allocation for gender equality and women's empowerment. The other goal of SDG16, promote just, peaceful, and inclusive societies. Indicator 16.6.2 indicates the proportion of the population satisfied with their last experience of public services, whose data is unavailable. Target 16.7 ensures responsive, inclusive, and representative decision making i.e. good governance. Indicator 16.7.1 indicates the proportion of women, men, or persons with disability as per the age in public institutions, national & local legislation, public services, and judiciary

compared to the national distribution. The indicator16.7.1.B indicates the proportions of women in positions in public institutions, national and local, including the public service, compared to national distributions. The SDG indicator 16.7.2 asks for inclusive and responsive decision-making, proportion by sex, age and disability, and whose data is unavailable. According to the Progress Report, 2022 of Sustainable Development Goals published by the United Nations Economic and Social Council 'the status of countries in achieving gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls is not satisfactory.' Countries do not have a system to track the budgets for gender equality. They have limited allocation of public resources to implement policies and institutions to advance gender equality.

Gender and Sustainable Development report by Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) illustrates how gender mainstreaming in statistics studies and statutes can lead to more sustainable government policies and a better world economy. It highlights issues like unequal representation in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), uneven wages, and household work that still need to be reflected in official statistics. There is also a need to ensure family-friendly work practices and to ensure a balanced representation of men and women in all parts of public offices.

Outcomes assigned by The Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) formulated by the International Labor Organisation (ILO) for India 2023–2027 are Outcome 2.1. Promote Employment-intensive growth and strengthen gender-inclusive job creation; Outcome 1.3. By 2027, the institutional capacity of constituents must be strengthened to advance gender equality, and make workplaces free from violence, harassment, and discrimination; Outcome 2.4. By 2027, constituents must have strengthened the capacity to design and implement, educate wage determination systems, and reduce the gender pay gap through social dialogue. Universal social protection also includes strengthening capacities to collect and analyze gender-disaggregated statistics and track progress in achieving social protection through SDG indicators.

Indian Public Administration

Regional variations exist in the quantity of gender-disaggregated public administration data that is obtainable. On the one hand, 93 percent of nations in Europe and North America, 75 percent in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, 75 percent in Northern Africa and Western Asia, and 72 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean have access to recent data (from 2015 to 2020) on women's participation. Comparable data, however, were only available in 29% of Oceanian countries and 58% of Sub-Saharan African countries. In Sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania, data are frequently out of date; while there is some information on women's involvement in public administration, it is not updated.

The low and shrinking percentage of women in the labor force has been one of the unsettling trends in the Indian labor market. The growth in unpaid domestic work and caregiving, which are both either inadequately recorded in the System of National Accounting (SNA) or not included at all, is the reason for the drop in Female Labor Force Participation Rate (FLFPR). The ratio of female to male LFPR for a period of at least

fifteen years in 2020–2021 indicated a gender disparity of approximately 0.4. Furthermore, it is challenging to calculate the size of the female labor force because the majority of data on India's female labor rate that are currently accessible exclude the unpaid labor that women perform. In 2021, the percentage of Indian males who are employed is 75.1%, while the percentage of Indian females employed is 27% (*ILO Data Explorer*, n.d.). As per Labor Force Survey, Indian males employed as legislators, senior officials and managers are 29144.1 and Indian Females are 6050.2 (*ILO Data Explorer*, n.d.).

According to the Gender Inequality and Research Lab (GIRL) dataset on gender parity in the civil services, 2.90 percent of women worked in public administration overall in 2015. Data regarding the proportion of women in public administration before to 2015 is not yet available. It also lacks ministry-specific data about the representation of women. Finding out the percentage of women in public service across all occupational categories is necessary to determine the percent of women in the category of managers and decision-makers.

Women in Civil services in India: In 1951 the first woman joined the Indian Administrative Service (IAS). In 1970, women made up 9% of those entering the IAS; that proportion rose to 31% by 2020. Currently, 21% of serving IAS officers is women. Women's participation is low enough for several public services jobs at the Centre and States to facilitate free applications for women candidates. Fewer women appear for the CSE as compared to men across all categories. Additionally, women candidates are more likely than men to seek voluntary retirement from service. Despite this, as per Indian Administrative Services (IAS) data and the central government's employment census of 2011, less than 11 percent of its total employees were women. In 2020, this reached 13 percent. Out of a total of 11,569 IAS officers entering service between 1951 and 2020, only 1,527 were women. India has never had a woman Cabinet Secretary. There are only four women Chief Secretaries across Indian states and Union Territories as on 06.09.2023 (*URL Generated Report*, n.d.). Further, only 17 per cent of Secretaries in India are women as on 06.09.2023 i.e. only 16 out of 92 posts are held by women (*URL Generated Report*, n.d.-a).

Issues that hinder Gender Inclusive Administration

- Social factors that cause women to choose not to enter the civil service include structural barriers such as postings in remote cadres, patriarchal conditioning, and juggling work demands with home obligations.
- One of the biggest obstacles facing professional women is the widespread belief that women belong in "soft" ministries like social welfare, culture, women and child development, and that certain postings are off-limits to them. In India, women are more likely than men to be in charge of consumer affairs, industry and commerce, health, welfare, and women's and children's development, as well as cultural affairs, education, food, and civil supplies. They are far less likely to be in charge of finance, law enforcement, urban development, law and order, finance, general administration and energy.

- Women are discouraged from pursuing careers in politics on the grounds that it is not a "feminine" field since politics is frequently perceived as a male domain. Politicians, with whom IAS officers frequently interact, have a tendency to create boundaries when it comes to women.

At the ministry/department level, gender-disaggregated public administration data is essential for determining the remaining obstacles to women's inclusion and for formulating fact-based remedies. As it is widely recognized Gender Inclusive Administration is extremely important.

Following are a few bullets highlighting the importance of gender inclusive public administration:

- The presence of women public managers also signal to workers that institutions are committed to gender equality and promote work life balance. Civil servants in women lead agencies have even reported more favorable assessments of their leaders and higher job satisfaction than their counterparts in men led agencies.
- Inclusive institutions are led by diverse groups of women and men. Such institutions promote gender equality in practices and in culture. By modeling inclusive institutions, public institutions can effectively set standards for workplaces both in public and private sectors.
- Women's presence in powerful decision making positions sends the message that women can and should lead. This enhances the women's belief in their ability to govern, decreases the prices against women leaders and changes the men's assessment towards women's capacities.
- Inclusive decision making process increase public trust and confidence. As women's inclusion in decision making bodies causes citizens to attach greater legitimacy to decision making procedures.
- Inclusive institutions serve the interests and perspectives of diverse societies. Gender parity improves the quality of decision making. It increases the pool of talent, diversity of ideas, values and priorities that shape policy outcomes.

Gender-inclusive administration is crucial for creating equitable and representative systems that reflect the diversity of society. Inclusivity fosters a more just society by challenging stereotypes and biases that perpetuate inequality. There is need to move forward and adopt some strategies to achieve the goal. By integrating these approaches, institutions and societies can progress towards a more inclusive and equitable future where individuals of all genders have equal opportunities to thrive.

Way forward for Women20

The problem of under representation is only superficial; the main problem is structural inequality where women are marginalized at different levels. The impact areas would be governance and participation in public life, women's economic empowerment and ending violence against women and girls. Approaches to be adopted should be gender responsive laws and policies, institutions financing for gender equality, engaging men and

boys, positive social norms, equitable access to the services and resources which is possible by the use of gender based data (*Strategic Plan for 2022-25. To Achieve Sustainable Development Goals by 2030*, 2021).

Every year, W20 should set some global targets to achieve Sustainable Development Goal of gender-equality and opportunity, to reduce inequalities, eliminating discriminatory laws promoting appropriate legislation, policies in this regard. W20 may use such global indicators to effectively monitor how the SDGs are being implemented for women. As there is a lack of gender disaggregated data in every aspect of public offices, W20 should initiate a systematic disaggregation by gender of all relevant indicators across all the SDG targets (Mishra, 2018).

Keeping in mind the recommendations put forward in the Report of the United Nations Secretary-General for the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the following is the way forward:

- Develop national gender equality plans for public administration with concrete mechanisms for implementation and accountability, in line with international frameworks.
- Develop evidence-based connections between gender equality and public administration, inclusive institutions, and quality public policy outcomes for all.
- Support women's education and preparedness for civil service careers with a focus on young women which includes scholarships, fellowships, and leadership and internship programs for women, and supporting secondary schools, and universities to build capacity.
- Harmonize laws and national action plans i.e. plans of W20 governing public administration with the Beijing Platform for Action.
- Advance women's full participation in public life and decision-making; consider quotas across public bodies, temporary special measures, targeted recruitment, hiring and promotion.
- Create a national gender budget and national gender equality plan to implement commitments to gender equality in public administration i.e. gender budgeting, focusing on making public administration more gender equal and making public services more gender-responsive.
- Ensure commitment to gender equality by walking the talk, and making the workplace a safe, respectful, and enriching space for every employee.
- Penalize sexism and harassment in institutional cultures and promote work-life balance for women and men both to affirm gender equality in the workplace.
- Adopt inclusive and transparent human resource policies, such as investing in leadership development, tearing down barriers to ensure women's participation at all decision-making levels, supporting capacity building and employees' performance by addressing gender biases, and taking affirmative action to improve executive accountability for gender balance.

- Introduce flexible work arrangements; provide support services to increase the appeal of public sector employment for women. Harness new opportunities for institutional change and for women to lead in bureaucracy.

- Strengthen the commitment to data availability, to track the progress of women in decision-making in public services which is also the agenda of SDG 16 and W20. Supporting the organizations to carry out voluntary national reviews and improving coordination with the United Nations to ensure gender equality in an integrated form.

- Partnering with UN Women and Women 20 to flag the lack of women's participation in public offices, collaborating with other important partners like I Know Politics & GEPA. Engage with a system-wide action plan for mainstreaming Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women to Women-led empowerment.

- Harness new partnerships to challenge the social norms that restrict the participation of women in public life, which can only be achieved by the members of W20 through its summits and priority areas. Convene power to work with the partners, to build more gender-responsive public institutions and working environment through an action plan (*Global Report on Gender Equality in Public Administration | United Nations Development Programme*, 2021).

Gender-inclusive administration and institutions must take a multidimensional strategy that includes policy reforms, cultural adjustments, and active participation at several levels. Administrations and institutions may work toward building settings that appreciate and support persons of all genders by implementing these techniques collectively and consistently, generating more equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Conclusion

Women are the architects of India's progress, rather than just being the passive beneficiaries of the development. India and other nations are transcending from women's development to women-led development by enabling an ecosystem for women to realize their full potential. The more the offices are gender-sensitive, the better the workplace and its workers' performance. Hence, to achieve the ultimate goal of a just, peaceful, and inclusive society there is a major need for the elimination of discrimination in the societies in the name of Gender and its associated stereotypes. The availability of gender-disaggregated data has improved over time in every region of the world. Still, data on decision-making positions and ministry-level intersectional data on public administration remains a large gap in the region (Gender Parity in Civil Service (Gen-PaCS) Dataset, 2021). Considering Local is Global and Global is Local, it is time to think globally and act locally. It can be concluded that engagement of W20 and SDG targets will be a cost-effective method of collecting regular basis data by national public service bodies. This partnership will have a multiplier effect as it can encourage them to embrace the 2030 agenda of commitment to responsive, inclusive, and representative public institutions.

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