

Socioeconomic Transformation of Women in National Capital Region of Delhi: A District Level Analysis

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Abstract: The gender gap or inequality is common in a developing country like India. This paper focuses on the gender gap in the National Capital Region of Delhi and women's socioeconomic conditions. It correlates the gender gap and the socioeconomic condition of women to assess the nature and trend of the prevailing gender gap across sectors of the economy. It was found that the major factor behind the inequality is the poor socioeconomic condition of women. Results indicate a high correlation when we compared the socioeconomic condition of women with that of the gender inequality index of Delhi NCR, with few exceptions. Women, who constitute nearly half of the demographic dividend potential of India, however, are contributing much less than their male counterparts. It is observed that Delhi NCT is the most developed part of NCR, having the least gender inequality as opposed to peripheral regions. Education, work participation, income, and social structure are pillars to uphold women's position in society, which may help form a better and gender-balanced nation.

Keywords: Gender gap, women, social structure, empowerment, development

Women contribute to half of the world's population but are denied this equality regarding income, decision-making or active participation in national issues. In India, economic development is accelerated, and it is emerging as one of the global powers. Still, when talking about the condition of women, it is observed that the gender gap is widely spread in India. Women being prohibited from contributing to remunerative work leads to lower chances of successful economic development of a nation. Women's participation in the workforce and control of income shall lead to

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greater empowerment. Women have undergone a great change in their condition since Vedic times. It will not be wrong to say that women at those times experienced and enjoyed greater freedom and empowerment than today. India is in a period where it is striving to accelerate its economic growth and has been emerging as a global player on the one hand. However, on the other hand, it is also witnessing various dimensions of socioeconomic disparity aggravating further. The gender gap seems to be most widely spread in India according to the gender-wise data on the work participation rate. According to UNICEF, gender equality means that women and men enjoy the same rights, resources, opportunities and protections. However, prohibiting women's participation in economic and social activities puts half the populace outside the chance to build a prosperous economy (Vaughen, 2010). It is well understood that economic empowerment increases women's access to the economy, resources and opportunities, including jobs, financial services, property, skill development and market information. Hence, it becomes important for any nation to provide ample opportunities to both sexes to strengthen economic empowerment further.

While the international conference on population and development brought about an international consensus on the centrality of women's empowerment and gender equity as desired national goals. However, the conceptualisation and measurement of empowerment in the subjects of demography and economics have been largely understood in a relational and family welfare context where women's altruistic behaviour within the household is tied to development or child health outcomes (Samanta, 2020). Women's condition in India has changed greatly since Vedic times. They enjoyed more freedom than they do today. Women were educated and used to participate in all religious ceremonies. There was no bar for women to study Vedas, and twenty women earned the honour of being included amongst the composers of the Rig Vedic Hymns (Sahgel, 1951). However, women do not enjoy as much liberty and equality as before. There are, however, several modifications to provide recognition and reputed positions to women. However, there is a long way to traverse to unleash a positive and constructive change in the socio-cultural outlook and overall thought process of the people and society.

By and large, in Indian society, women are traditionally discriminated against and excluded from political and family-related decisions barring a few exceptions in some liberalised and matrilineal-headed societies. Despite the work women are supposed to perform daily to support their families, their opinions are rarely acknowledged, and their rights are also limited.

Recently, India is often characterised as an emerging superpower. The huge demographic dividend, the higher quality engineering and management talent, the

powerful Indian diaspora and the emerging Indian transnational power and optimism are seen as stepping stones for harnessing this dream. In contrast, there is another profile of India which rather presents a gloomy picture. Data and evidence show it houses the largest number of the world's poor, illiterate, and unemployed segments. India constitutes about 17 per cent of the world's population but accounts for about 35 per cent of the poor and 40 per cent of the illiterate population (Kurian, 2007). In India, the gender gap in the workplace is reinforced by the extremely low participation of women in the economy and low wages for those who work. On average, data and evidence show that 66% of women's work in India is unpaid and remains unaccounted for, compared to only 12% of men. India has experienced a further decline in its overall global gender gap index ranking by slipping 21 places. The reason for this may be largely attributable to a widening gender gap in political empowerment, healthy life expectancy, and even basic literacy, which is still low. The skewed sex ratio in India in favour of males, too, leads to the identification and poor conditions of "missing" women. Thus, all these pieces of evidence show a broader perspective of India's hollow state of development, where part of its potential dividend continues to be underprivileged even after more than seven decades of Independence (PhD Research Bureau, 2018).

Women in India tend to be engaged mostly in non-remunerative work, whereas when talking about working hours, women tend to work for more duration than men. However, now, women have also started working, but their work is mostly confined to nursing, teaching, and caretaking business. The problems for women start right from the stage of recruitment. Women tend to opt for less demanding jobs even if they are highly qualified as they are ever ready for compromise at any stage owing to unemployment on the one hand and the availability of a surplus labour force on the other hand. Even now, women are only appreciated for some of the work. Women are only considered fit for some of the jobs. Society does not accept a woman working on par with a man. It is an inbuilt conviction that women are lesser than men, and this mindset is not only of males but is also of women to some extent. Even a well-qualified woman finds it difficult to get a job suitable for her qualification. The basic problem of working women is getting a job suitable to their qualifications, wage security and wages at par with their male counterparts; the problem of work-culture politics mostly takes down the women into it.

However, in recent times, on the other hand, it is also noted that India is witnessing an increasing visibility of women in the public spheres with economic contributions in various sectors. Studies have indicated a strong correlation between female education and developmental indicators such as increased economic productivity, health improvement, delayed age at marriage, lower fertility, increased political participation and effective investment in the next generation (Singh, 2008).

This gives us an edge in understanding the areas where the contribution of women can be increased and how can their active participation be encouraged.

Database and Methodology

Data required to conduct the research has been taken from the Census of India 2011.

District PCA 2011 is used to acquire literacy data, sex ratio, workforce participation, place of residence and caste. C series Census Data for the level of education has been taken.

R.L. series for religion data from the R.L. series of Census of India is used. Female as head of the family data has been extracted from PCA. B series Census Data for the sectoral share of women in the workforce has been utilised. For the formulation of the socioeconomic condition of women, indicators taken are workforce participation, sex ratio, religion, caste, female as head, place of residence, and literacy rate. The composite index of all the indicators of socioeconomic condition has been calculated.

To formulate the gender gap, a gender inequality index has been calculated using indicators: workforce participation, sex ratio, literacy rate, and women in primary, secondary and tertiary education. The value of the composite index is compared with the gender inequality index. Maps, tables and graphs are used for illustration purposes.

Study Area

The NCR was created under the National Capital Region Planning Board Act 1985. The act defines the NCR as the whole of Delhi and some adjacent districts of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. At the time of the creation, the districts were- Gurgaon, Faridabad, Sonapat, Rohtak (including Jhajjar) and Rewari (in Mahendragarh) from Haryana; Bulandshahr, Muzaffarnagar, Meerut (including Baghpat), Ghaziabad (including Hapur) from Uttar Pradesh; and some parts of Alwar districts from Rajasthan. The latest and detailed list of districts in NCR other than Delhi is—Alwar, Bharatpur (Rajasthan), Baghpat, Bulandshahr, Muzaffarnagar, Meerut, Ghaziabad, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Hapur, Shamli (Uttar Pradesh), Bhiwani, Chakri Dadri, Faridabad, Gurgaon, Jhajjar, Jind, Karnal, Mahendragarh, Nuh, Palwal, Panipat, Rewari, Rohtak, Sonipat (Haryana).

Delhi, the metropolitan region of India, is taken for this study to understand the gap in gender as it is assumed that the capital may be one of the most developed parts of the country. Analysis from this study shall help comprehend and unleash the nuances of gender gaps and may help to evolve the gender-specific policies for the population more inclusively.

Results and Discussion

The results in this paper show an obvious relation between the level of socioeconomic conditions of women and gender inequality. There is a clear picture of an inverse relationship between both components. The reason for this relationship and exceptions have been elaborately discussed below.

Determinants of Gender Inequality

Table 1 (a)

Determinants of Gender Inequality Index, Delhi NCR 2011

Districts	Sex ratio	Literacy rate	Primary education	Secondary education	Tertiary education
Alwar	895	47.4	6.2	4.0	0.7
Baghpat	861	51.1	5.4	4.8	1.0
Bharatpur	880	45.0	6.1	3.2	0.5
Bhiwani	886	55.6	6.1	6.2	1.4
Bulandshahr	907	47.1	5.8	3.6	0.8
Central	892	73.5	5.2	6.1	2.0
East	884	75.4	5.1	6.1	2.8
Faridabad	873	63.7	5.5	5.7	2.2
GB Nagar	851	60.3	5.4	4.9	1.8
Ghaziabad	881	59.8	5.3	5.1	1.9
Gurgaon	854	67.7	4.9	5.4	2.2
Jhajjar	862	62.3	5.4	6.6	1.8
Jind	871	53.2	5.9	5.6	1.2
Karnal	887	58.4	5.3	5.1	1.6
Mahendragarh	895	57.4	5.9	6.8	1.3
Meerut	886	54.8	5.2	5.1	1.7
Mewat	907	28.3	3.4	1.0	0.2
Muzaffarnagar	889	49.7	5.3	4.0	0.8
New Delhi	822	75.7	5.4	8.1	3.7
North	869	72.6	5.8	6.3	2.7
North East	886	66.4	6.0	5.8	1.8
North West	865	68.8	5.7	5.5	2.2
Palwal	880	45.1	5.9	3.9	0.7
Panipat	864	57.7	5.4	5.2	1.3
Rewari	898	61.4	5.5	6.4	1.5
Rohtak	867	63.2	5.5	6.7	2.2
Sonipat	856	61.1	5.5	6.4	1.8
South	862	70.6	5.6	5.7	2.5
South West	840	72.8	5.2	6.3	2.7
West	875	73.1	5.0	6.1	1.9

Table 1 (b)*Determinants of Gender Inequality Index, Delhi NCR 2011, contd.*

Districts	Workforce	Primary activity	Second activity	Tertiary activity
Alwar	41.2	84.5	5.2	10.3
Baghpat	12.3	44.2	17.5	38.3
Bharatpur	35.5	80.9	5.2	13.9
Bhiwani	25.1	74.8	5.4	19.7
Bulandshahr	16.7	48.2	17.7	34.0
Central	10.8	1.1	15.5	83.4
East	11.6	1.2	11.3	87.5
Faridabad	12.1	10.5	16.0	73.5
GB Nagar	16.6	19.0	11.5	69.5
Ghaziabad	13.2	21.8	15.3	62.9
Gurgaon	16.1	17.2	12.8	70.0
Jhajjar	17.2	54.3	8.1	37.5
Jind	25.0	72.4	6.2	21.4
Karnal	14.8	46.4	13.0	40.6
Mahendragarh	24.3	68.7	6.6	24.7
Meerut	11.9	36.0	11.8	52.2
Mewat	12.6	69.7	7.9	22.5
Muzaffarnagar	10.8	48.9	11.8	39.3
New Delhi	19.7	0.8	5.3	93.9
North	9.4	2.3	14.8	82.9
North East	6.4	1.0	26.0	73.0
North West	9.8	2.5	18.7	78.8
Palwal	13.9	59.1	7.5	33.4
Panipat	15.0	32.1	31.4	36.4
Rewari	24.0	64.2	11.3	24.4
Rohtak	14.9	46.8	10.4	42.9
Sonipat	19.8	50.5	12.4	37.1
South	11.8	1.1	10.5	88.5
South West	12.2	2.0	11.3	86.7
West	11.9	0.8	13.2	86.0

Tables 1 (a) and 1 (b) represent the determinants used to create the gender inequality index for Delhi NCR. The determinants used are- sex ratio, which shows fewer females than males in all the districts of NCR, and literacy rate, which shows a lower proportion of women educated. This is further categorised into primary education, which incorporates education up to fifth; secondary education, which includes education up to 8th and tertiary education up to graduation. The workforce

is another determinant used, which again is categorised as a primary sector, including agriculture and allied activities, secondary and tertiary sectors. To calculate the gender inequality index, the traditional method comprises three broad dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment and labour market participation. These dimensions have further sub-categories of indicators, including MMR and AFR for reproductive health, higher education and share of parliamentary seats for empowerment and labour market. Due to the lack of required data in this inequality index, the indicators are modified, keeping the dimensions as such. In this, reproductive health includes sex ratio, empowerment includes only education at all levels, and the labour market includes participation in the workforce at all sectors of the economy.

Women in the Workforce in Different Sectors of the Economy in Delhi NCR

Table 2 shows the participation rate of women in various sectors of the economy across the districts of Delhi NCR. Table 2 infers that the share of the secondary sector in attracting the female workforce could be much higher when compared to other sectors, i.e., primary and tertiary, in all the districts of NCR. Maximum involvement is visible in the tertiary sector, while few districts also show maximum involvement in the primary sector. Districts showing women's maximum participation rate in the primary sector are Alwar, Bharatpur, Bhiwani, Jind, Mewat, Mahendragarh, Rewari, Palwal, Jhajjar and Sonipat, etc. Districts that show higher rates of women's participation in the secondary sector are Panipat, North East Delhi, North West Delhi, Bulandshahr, Baghpat and Faridabad etc. Districts showing the maximum participation rate of women in the tertiary sector include all the districts of Delhi. A few districts have a higher share in both sectors of the economy, i.e., involvement in secondary and tertiary such as Faridabad, Ghaziabad, Gurugram and Gautam Buddha Nagar etc.

Table 2*Proportion of Women Workforce in Different Sectors of the Economy*

Districts	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Alwar	84.49	5.24	10.27
Bharatpur	80.90	5.19	13.91
Bhiwani	74.83	5.45	19.73
Jind	72.44	6.17	21.39
Mewat	69.65	7.85	22.50
Mahendragarh	68.70	6.64	24.67
Rewari	64.24	11.32	24.44
Palwal	59.09	7.49	33.42
Jhajjar	54.32	8.14	37.55
Sonipat	50.51	12.41	37.09
Muzaffarnagar	48.90	11.85	39.26
Bulandshahr	48.25	17.72	34.03
Rohtak	46.75	10.38	42.87
Karnal	46.40	12.99	40.61
Baghpat	44.15	17.52	38.32
Meerut	35.98	11.82	52.19
Panipat	32.15	31.45	36.41
Ghaziabad	21.76	15.34	62.90
GB Nagar	19.04	11.47	69.48
Gurgaon	17.25	12.79	69.96
Faridabad	10.53	15.97	73.50
North West	2.45	18.74	78.80
North	2.32	14.75	82.93
South West	2.01	11.27	86.72
East	1.20	11.28	87.53
Central	1.12	15.49	83.39
South	1.05	10.49	88.46
North East	0.97	26.00	73.03
West	0.83	13.18	85.99
New Delhi	0.76	5.33	93.91

Determinants of Socioeconomic Condition of Women

Table 3 (a)

Determinants of Socioeconomic Condition of Women Delhi NCR, 2011

Districts	Female-headed	Literacy rate	Workforce	Sex ratio	SC	ST	Other castes
Alwar	8.2	47.4	41.2	895	17.9	7.8	74.3
Baghpat	10.5	51.1	12.3	861	11.5	0.0	88.5
Bharatpur	7.8	45.0	35.5	880	21.9	2.1	76.0
Bhiwani	12.7	55.6	25.1	886	20.8	0.0	79.2
Bulandshahr	12.5	47.1	16.7	907	20.6	0.0	79.4
Central	17.7	73.5	10.8	892	25.3	0.0	74.7
East	12.0	75.4	11.6	884	16.6	0.0	83.4
Faridabad	9.5	63.7	12.1	873	12.4	0.0	87.6
GB Nagar	8.2	60.3	16.6	851	13.3	0.1	86.6
Ghaziabad	9.6	59.8	13.2	881	16.4	0.1	83.5
Gurgaon	9.9	67.7	16.1	854	13.4	0.0	86.6
Jhajjar	14.8	62.3	17.2	862	17.9	0.0	82.1
Jind	11.7	53.2	25.0	871	21.2	0.0	78.8
Karnal	11.1	58.4	14.8	887	22.6	0.0	77.4
Mahendragarh	13.3	57.4	24.3	895	17.0	0.0	83.0
Meerut	11.3	54.8	11.9	886	17.9	0.1	82.0
Mewat	8.5	28.3	12.6	907	14.5	0.0	93.1
Muzaffarnagar	9.7	49.7	10.8	889	13.5	0.0	86.5
New Delhi	10.3	75.7	19.7	822	24.0	0.0	76.0
North	12.9	72.6	9.4	869	19.0	0.0	81.0
North East	10.8	66.4	6.4	886	16.8	0.0	83.2
North West	11.3	68.8	9.8	865	19.2	0.0	80.8
Palwal	9.6	45.1	13.9	880	19.5	0.0	80.5
Panipat	10.2	57.7	15.0	864	17.3	0.0	82.7
Rewari	13.6	61.4	24.0	898	20.4	0.0	79.6
Rohtak	15.3	63.2	14.9	867	20.6	0.0	79.4
Sonipat	12.8	61.1	19.8	856	18.8	0.0	81.2
South	10.4	70.6	11.8	862	15.8	0.0	84.2
South West	9.7	72.8	12.2	840	14.2	0.0	85.8
West	13.0	73.1	11.9	875	14.9	0.0	85.1

Table 3 (b)*Determinants of Socioeconomic Condition of Women Delhi NCR, 2011 contd.*

Districts	Rural	Urban	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Sikh	Buddhist	Jain	Others
Alwar	82.4	17.6	47.1	48.1	46.6	48.5	47.9	47.8	45.4
Baghpat	78.6	21.4	45.6	47.8	47.4	43.7	41.0	47.4	36.0
Bharatpur	80.5	19.5	46.6	48.0	47.3	48.4	45.6	48.2	44.4
Bhiwani	80.4	19.6	47.0	47.2	47.2	47.8	51.6	47.2	46.2
Bulandshahr	75.0	25.0	47.0	48.2	47.8	47.2	42.2	47.5	44.2
Central	0.0	100.0	47.0	47.2	52.5	49.1	48.1	48.3	40.2
East	0.2	99.8	46.9	46.0	50.5	48.4	47.1	48.6	45.6
Faridabad	20.5	79.5	46.5	47.1	49.4	47.8	47.8	49.0	52.6
GB Nagar	41.5	58.5	46.0	46.2	49.3	49.1	47.2	49.1	41.8
Ghaziabad	32.4	67.6	46.6	47.5	49.3	47.1	46.2	48.8	40.4
Gurgaon	31.6	68.4	46.2	43.2	50.2	47.2	47.5	49.4	48.8
Jhajjar	74.6	25.4	46.3	44.0	43.3	40.6	44.8	48.7	45.5
Jind	77.0	23.0	46.5	47.3	48.0	47.3	47.1	46.7	51.8
Karnal	69.7	30.3	47.0	46.8	48.7	47.5	47.9	48.5	46.9
Mahendragarh	85.6	14.4	47.2	47.3	45.5	47.2	42.7	47.0	33.3
Meerut	48.8	51.2	46.4	47.9	48.0	45.0	46.1	48.5	50.0
Mewat	88.6	11.4	47.0	47.7	45.8	46.6	45.5	45.5	25.0
Muzaffarnagar	71.1	28.9	46.5	47.9	47.4	46.6	46.6	47.6	45.0
New Delhi	2.5	97.5	45.1	42.3	51.2	42.5	50.3	53.2	37.9
North	0.0	100.0	46.3	46.8	50.9	48.1	48.1	48.5	55.6
North East	2.0	98.0	46.7	47.4	49.5	48.4	47.1	48.3	58.3
North West	0.9	99.1	46.3	45.8	50.8	48.3	47.3	48.2	48.7
Palwal	5.8	94.2	46.6	47.5	46.0	48.6	47.0	47.2	40.0
Panipat	77.3	22.7	46.3	46.6	46.1	47.2	44.3	48.5	48.5
Rewari	53.8	46.2	47.3	44.3	46.2	44.9	42.1	46.4	41.7
Rohtak	74.5	25.5	46.4	46.0	43.9	46.4	43.0	48.0	41.7
Sonipat	57.4	42.6	46.1	46.9	48.7	47.0	45.5	47.9	34.5
South	68.5	31.5	46.3	45.4	51.9	48.4	49.3	49.5	49.8
South West	0.4	99.6	45.7	41.9	50.4	48.3	47.5	48.5	50.8
West	6.3	93.7	46.6	44.1	51.7	48.5	48.1	48.5	42.9

Workforce Participation of Women

Employment is of critical importance for poverty reduction on the one hand and for enhancing women's overall status in society on the other hand. Women still seem largely self-employed or employed as casual labourers in agricultural and allied activities. They face various forms of discrimination, including the unhealthy prevalence of job typing that gradually pushes them into low-paying jobs (Srivastava, N. & Srivastava, R., 2010).

Education

Higher workforce participation 'per se' only leads to better outcomes if accompanied by the fruits of higher education. Education may not positively influence a women's participation in work. Still, education is the most important determinant of quality non-agriculture work for women in the workforce, providing the maximum economic benefit (Srivastava, N. & Srivastava, R., 2010). Literacy is considered the basic building block towards getting an education. It is a basic component of social cohesion and national identity. It improves the depth and quality of public opinion and garners more active participation of the marginalised sections of the populace as a part of the democratic process.

Political Empowerment

The Indian Republic had started its journey with the ideals of liberty, equality, and justice, making the Indian women feel secure with promises of survival, equal treatment and gender justice. However, their dream of being equal citizens still needs to be fulfilled even today with sharp variations. The progressive vision of the Constitution needs to be revised to address the complexities of gender-related forms of discrimination. In the given study, political empowerment could have been considerably more visible. Therefore, it has yet to be incorporated into calculating the inequality index.

Place of Residence

Women in rural areas tend to be engaged in the workforce, primarily in the primary sector. However, they also remain deprived of opportunities, rights and privileges. The Alwar district is one such example which shows good socioeconomic conditions due to its workforce component, which is high for Alwar. Therefore, it shows lower levels of inequality as a major proportion of the workforce comprises women primarily engaged in the primary sector.

Caste Composition

It is observed in most cases that women from lower castes tend to work more as compared to that of upper castes women. Despite contributing more to the workforce, they need better socioeconomic conditions. They are deprived of proper education and decent living standards, even in the so-called developed regions such as Delhi NCR.

Religious Composition

There are various instances where it has been observed that the socioeconomic condition of women is also determined by the religion to which she

belongs. Some religions, such as Islam, do not allow much liberty to women. It is also evident from the data analysis of this study. Mewat is a region mostly dominated by a Muslim population, which shows low socioeconomic conditions and a higher proportion of inequality than other regions/districts of Delhi NCR.

Head of the Family

The head of the family helps to understand the power of decision-making. If more and more families have a female as the head of the family, it is a good and healthy sign for women's empowerment in that area. Empowerment comes only with the rights of decision-making that may lead the family/region or nation in the positive direction of gender-balanced development. However, no such area shows females as heads in more than 15% of instances. This shows there is a long way to go to attain empowerment, even in the most developed part of the country.

Comparative Analysis of Gender Inequality Index and Socioeconomic Condition of Women in Delhi NCR

Figure 1

Socioeconomic Condition of Women Delhi NCR, 2011

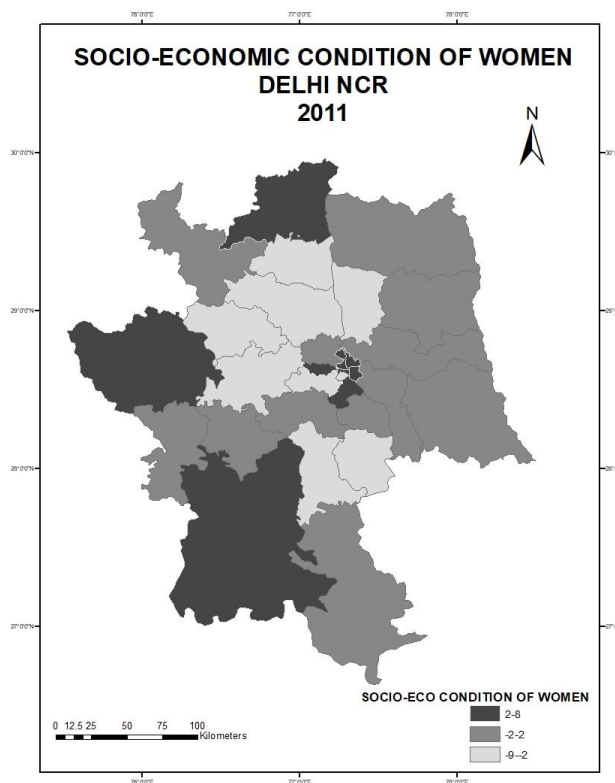
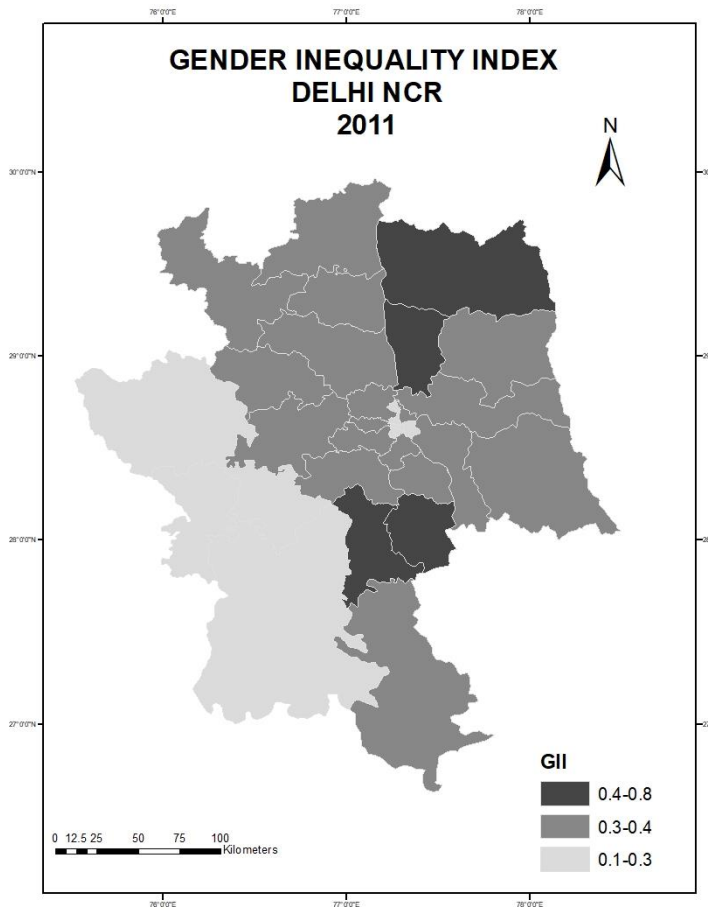


Figure 2

Gender Inequality Index, Delhi NCR, 2011



The gender inequality index value ranges between 0 to 1. A value near 0 means the least inequality, while those near one show maximum inequality. After categorising the NCR districts based on the inequality index (Figure 2), it is found that districts such as New Delhi, Mahendragarh, Rewari, North Delhi, East Delhi, Bhiwani, Alwar, Central Delhi, Rohtak, South Delhi and North East Delhi have low inequality which means the women in these districts have better position compared to other districts. Districts that are categorised in a medium level of inequality are West Delhi, Jind, Jhajjar, North West Delhi, Faridabad, Sonapat, South West Delhi, Karnal, Ghaziabad, Bharatpur, Gurugram, Meerut, Bulandshahr, Gautam Buddha Nagar and Panipat. Districts with high levels of inequality are Palwal, Muzaffarnagar, Baghpat and Mewat.

The socioeconomic condition of women in districts of Delhi NCR can also be categorised into three categories based on their Composite Index values (Figure 1). Districts with poor socioeconomic conditions for women are, Baghpat, Jhajjar, Mewat, South West Delhi, Rohtak, New Delhi, Panipat, Palwal, Sonipat, Muzaffarnagar and Gautam Buddha Nagar. Districts with good socioeconomic

conditions are Central Delhi, Alwar, Bhiwani, North Delhi, East Delhi, North East Delhi, South Delhi, Karnal and West Delhi.

Comparing the socioeconomic condition of women with that of the gender inequality index of Delhi NCR, it is observed that it is highly correlated. Most states with good socioeconomic conditions also show the least gender inequality and vice-versa. There are some exceptions which are due to the indicators that are incorporated into the socioeconomic condition of women.

It is observed that Delhi NCT, which forms the centre of NCR, is the most developed part of NCR with the least inequality and maximum opportunities for women. However, while moving towards the peripheral regions, this trend decreases. In the peripheral regions, only those regions show good conditions for women, with a more developed primary sector and rural population base. The spread effect is taking place in the NCR region but slowly.

Concluding Remarks

The paper discussed the level of inequality prevailing in Delhi NCR and the socioeconomic condition of women. Delhi, the nation's capital, claims to provide the best educational opportunities, job opportunities, living conditions, etc. Still, it is observed that women remain marginalised to a considerable extent. The efforts have to be doubled to bridge this gap to facilitate the actual empowerment of women across all sectors of the economy. Political empowerment still needs to catch up. Only a few districts from Delhi itself have women as their political heads. Other regions of NCR, which form a part of other states, do not show any political empowerment of women. This has to be addressed seriously. The pay gap in the service sector is also a major problem that must be addressed immediately.

Education plays a major role in shaping the economy and social structure and further helps uplift marginalised sections of society. There is an urgent need to formulate a good and advanced policy that includes more and more women in higher education and technical education.

Delhi NCR being one of the most developed parts of the country, assumed to be full of opportunities and facilities, needs to show more eagerness towards improving women's condition and bridging the gap between the genders. This may pave the way for showing a trickledown effect to other parts of the country where women are more marginalised and deprived of their rights and liberty with inter and intra-regional variations. It is pertinent to remember that empowerment and equality have not only to be preached but practised too. All the aspects of empowerment have to be considered for the overall upliftment of women. This, however, shall lead to a progressive country with huge economic benefits and a great hold on the world, just like China has a comparable demographic structure. There is

a serious need to look deeper into half of the potential demographic dividend: women. If the nation properly addresses this aspect across the geographical regions, India may emerge as a superpower soon. Thus, a long way has to be treaded to untangle the socioeconomic complexities for unleashing the true nature of women's empowerment to achieve gender justice and so on.

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