Global Gender Gap Index 2020

Why in News?

The Global Gender Gap Index 2020 was released by the World Economic Forum recently.

What is Global Gender Gap Index?

- The Global Gender Gap Report 2020 benchmarks 153 countries on their progress towards gender parity in 4 dimensions,
    1. Economic Participation and Opportunity,
    2. Educational Attainment,
    3. Health and Survival and
    4. Political Empowerment.
- In addition, this year's report examines gender gap prospects in the professions of the future.

What is the need for an assessment?

- Assessing women's access to equal opportunity and resources against the access that men have would be a scientific way of evaluating a nation's commitment to the advancement of its citizens.
- But going by the Global Gender Gap Index 2020, questions can be easily raised about whether this government is doing the right thing by the country's women.
- Notably, it measures gender-based gaps in access to resources and opportunities in countries, rather than the actual levels of the available resources and opportunities.

What does the index reveal?

- India has dropped four points from 2018, to take the **112th rank** on the Index.
- Despite a small score improvement, India has lost four positions as some countries ranked lower than India have shown better improvement.
- The country has reportedly closed 2/3rd of its overall gender gap, with a **score of 66.8%**
- But the report notes with concern that the condition of women in large fringes of Indian society is 'precarious'.

What do the sub-indices reveal?

- Of significant concern is the **economic gender gap**, with a score of 35.4%, at the 149th place and down 7 places since the previous edition.
- This indicates that only a third of the gap has been bridged.
- The participation of women in the labour force is also among the lowest in the world, and the female estimated earned income is only 1/5th of male income.
- An alarming statistic is that India is at 150th position on the very bottom of the **Health and Survival sub-index**.
- It is determined largely by the skewed sex ratio at birth, violence, forced marriage and discrimination in access to health.
- It is on the **educational attainment** (112th rank) and **political empowerment** (18th rank) fronts that the relative good news is buried.

What could be done?

- The Gender Gap Index presents India with an opportunity to make the necessary amends forthwith.
- Doing what the government is currently doing isn't going to be sufficient.
- The government needs to engage intimately with all aspects indicated by the Index to improve the score.
- It should set targets to reduce the gender gap in the foreseeable future.
- It will have to drastically scale up efforts it has introduced to encourage women's participation, and increase opportunities for them.
- To do so it also needs to make sure there is actual implementation at the ground level.
- A commitment to ameliorate the conditions for women is a non-negotiable duty of any state.

Source: The Hindu

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