



# INDIA

## CITIZENS CALL FOR A GENDER-EQUAL WORLD : A ROADMAP FOR ACTION<sup>1</sup>



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### WHAT DO RESPONDENTS IN INDIA THINK ABOUT GENDER EQUALITY?

- ➔ Compared to 25 years ago, 62 percent of female respondents and 66 percent of male respondents think gender equality in India is *“better.”* Nineteen percent of female respondents think gender equality is *“more or less the same”* as 25 years ago, and 16 percent think it is *“worse.”*
- ➔ **A large majority (76 percent) of respondents in India think the government “should do more” to promote gender equality.** Fifty percent want the government to do *“a lot more”* and 26 percent *“a bit more.”* Both male (72 percent) and female respondents (79 percent) think the government *“should do more”* to promote gender equality in India.
- ➔ In terms of explanations for gender inequality in India, the most widely-believed reasons are to do with culture and expectations. **Forty-four percent of respondents believe that a main reason for gender inequality is “because of religion and culture that do not treat women and men as equals.”** The second most widely-held explanation (43 percent) is *“because boys and girls are treated differently growing up.”*
- ➔ **Gender equality is personally “important” to 90 percent of respondents in India and only unimportant to three percent.** Seventy-eight percent of female respondents say that gender equality is *“very important”* to them. India is one of two surveyed countries (along with Tunisia) where male respondents declare a greater interest for gender equality as their age increases (from 82 percent of male respondents aged 18 to 24 to 97 percent of those aged 60 and older). Among female respondents, the trend is reversed, decreasing from 97 percent to 83 percent.
- ➔ **In order to advance gender equality in India, 49 percent of respondents want the government to “reform laws to promote equality between women and men and end discrimination against women.”** Thirty-seven percent think the government should *“implement mass media campaigns to raise awareness of the importance of gender equality issues.”* Only one percent of respondents want the government to do none of the prompted policies and not try to advance gender equality in India.

<sup>1</sup> This country data sheet captures findings from a public perception survey on gender equality for India. This work is co-led by Focus 2030 and Women Deliver. The survey was executed through an online poll, conducted by Deltapoll, in 17 countries. Approximately one thousand respondents in each country were surveyed in July/August 2020. Demographic data collected included: gender, age, income level, education level, last vote in national elections (where applicable), ethnicity (where applicable), migrant status, and region of residency. In India, 1,003 respondents were surveyed, including 485 female respondents, 515 male respondents, and 3 respondents who identified “in another way”. Of the 1,003 respondents, 191 were aged 18 to 24, 469 were aged 25 to 44, 238 were aged 45 to 59, and 105 were aged 60 and older. Please see [www.focus2030.org](http://www.focus2030.org) and [www.womendeliver.org](http://www.womendeliver.org) for more information.

<sup>2</sup> Text in italics and quotes reflect survey response options presented to respondents.



## GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

- ➔ **Ending gender-based violence is the top priority** for respondents in India, as 28 percent of respondents say “*end violence against women*” is the top area for the government to focus on to improve gender equality. Sixty-one percent rank gender-based violence as a top-three priority.
- ➔ Among a range of proposed measures to tackle violence against women, **54 percent would like the government to “end traditional practices that are harmful to women and girls (for example, child marriage, and female genital mutilation).”** Fifty-two percent of respondents in India think the government should “*increase accountability for [perpetrators of] physical and sexual crimes against women,*” and 47 percent think the government should “*address the unequal balance of power between women and men at home within families, marriages, and relationships.*” Each of these three measures has majority support among female respondents in India. Only one percent of respondents want the government to not do any of the proposed measures and not work to end gender-based violence.
- ➔ **In India, 87 percent of female respondents feel at risk, or know someone who feels at risk, of assault or harassment in some place or another, rising to 98 percent among female respondents aged 18 to 24.** The most common place is “*public spaces,*” where 57 percent of female respondents feel at risk, or know someone who feels at risk, of assault or harassment. Fifty-five percent of female respondents feel at risk, or know someone who feels at risk, “*online,*” and 40 percent do “*in the place where [they] work or study.*” **Twenty-six percent of female respondents in India feel at risk, or know someone who feels at risk, of assault or harassment in their home.**
- ➔ Forty-five percent of respondents in India think it is “*acceptable*” “for women to always obey their partner” (29 percent think this “*unacceptable*”). Sixty percent of respondents think it “*acceptable*” “for women to refuse sexual intercourse with their partner” (16 percent “*unacceptable*”). Thirty-four percent think it “*acceptable*” “to whistle at a woman in the street, or touch her without her consent” (56 percent “*unacceptable*”). Thirty-five percent think it “*acceptable*” “to share a sexist joke about a woman with friends or on social media” (51 percent “*unacceptable*”).
- ➔ Forty-eight percent of female respondents in India state that they have had their “*freedom of movement restricted against their will by family members or [their] partner.*” Among female respondents aged 18 to 24, this rises to 65 percent.



## ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND RIGHTS

- ➔ **Advancing women's economic justice and rights is the second priority**, as 17 percent of respondents rank *"implement access to well paid jobs, equal pay, financial independence, and property rights"* as their number one priority. Fifty-seven percent of respondents think women's economic justice and rights is a top-three priority.
- ➔ In order to improve women's economic opportunities and decision-making powers, **41 percent of respondents in India think the government should "prevent violence and sexual harassment in the workplace."** The next most often cited measures are **"guarantee social protection and decent working conditions for women in low paying jobs"** and **"achieve equal access to education and professional training for women and men," both with 38 percent support.** Of the eight prompted measures, only one percent of respondents in India think the government should do none and not improve women's economic opportunities.
- ➔ **Twenty-six percent of female respondents in India say that they are "not paid as much as male counterparts where [they] work."** This rises to 32 percent among female respondents aged 45 to 59. Furthermore, **28 percent of female respondents feel that they have "not had the same access to promotion opportunities as [their] male peers."** Twenty-six percent of female respondents have *"not or will not receive the same inheritance as male relatives,"* and 30 percent *"have had difficulty accessing education and professional training compared to [their] male peers or relatives."*
- ➔ Fifty-one percent of respondents in India think it *"unacceptable"* that women earn less than men for the same work, and 35 percent think it *"acceptable."* Additionally, 43 percent of respondents think it is *"unacceptable"* to ask a woman during a job interview whether she has, or would like to have, children, while 40 percent think this *"acceptable."* Forty percent of male respondents and 44 percent of female respondents think it *"acceptable"* to let women do the majority of housework, childcare, and elderly care, while 34 percent of respondents overall think this is *"unacceptable."*
- ➔ **During the COVID-19 pandemic, 67 percent of female respondents in India say that their "time doing household work has increased."** Fifty-two percent of female respondents also say their *"time dedicated to the care of others has increased."* Ten percent of female respondents have *"lost [their] job"* and 29 percent *"could not do as many hours of paid work as [they] usually would."*



## FEMINIST MOVEMENTS AND LEADERSHIP

- ➔ **Feminist movements and leadership is the third most often cited issue**, as 16 percent of respondents choose *"improve women's participation and leadership in politics, and cultural and social movements"* as the first area the government should focus on to improve gender equality in the country. Forty-nine percent say feminist movements and leadership is a top-three priority.

- ➔ To improve women’s involvement in politics and movements, **43 percent of respondents in India think their government should “achieve equal representation of women in politics.”** Forty-one percent of respondents think the government should “support women’s political leadership and participation,” and 38 percent want the government to “support women’s participation in peace processes and as human rights defenders.” Only one percent of respondents think the government should do none of the prompted measures and not improve women’s representation in leadership and politics.
- ➔ **Seventy-five percent of respondents “agree” that imposing gender quotas in all political decision-making bodies is a good way to advance gender equality in India,** and only seven percent think gender quotas are not good measure to achieve equality.



## TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION FOR GENDER EQUALITY

- ➔ **Technology and innovation for gender equality is the fourth most cited priority,** as 13 percent of respondents say “invest in technology to improve women’s access to health services, education, and economic opportunities” should be the first priority for the government to focus on to improve gender equality. Forty-five percent of respondents see it as a top-three priority.
- ➔ To promote the use of technology and innovation for gender equality, **58 percent of respondents want the government to “increase safety of digital spaces for girls and women.”** This is closely followed by “providing equal opportunities for girls and women to study and work in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics),” with 57 percent of respondents supporting this measure. Only two percent of respondents think the government should do none of the prompted policies and not promote the use of technology and innovation for gender equality.



## BODILY AUTONOMY AND SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

- ➔ **Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights is the fifth most cited priority,** as ten percent of respondents say “provide access to contraception and family planning, good maternal health, and sex education in schools” is their first priority for government action. Thirty-nine percent of respondents see it as a top-three priority.
- ➔ In order to improve women’s sexual and reproductive health and rights, respondents would like the government to “increase access to sexual health services” (45 percent) and “increase access to accurate information including sexual education in schools” (45 percent). Female respondents who migrated for a job or better economic opportunities are particularly likely to call on their government to “increase access to sexual health services” compared to other female respondents (16 percentage points difference), to “increase youth engagement in the implementation of sexual and reproductive health services” (13 percentage points), and to “prioritize the needs of women from marginalized groups” (8 percentage points). Only one percent think the government should do none of the prompted policies and not improve women’s rights to sexual and reproductive health.

- ➔ **Twenty-six percent of female respondents in India state that they “have had difficulty accessing their chosen method of contraception” and 20 percent “have had difficulty accessing abortion and post-abortion care.”**
- ➔ During the COVID-19 pandemic, 20 percent of female and 11 percent of male respondents have “had difficulty accessing contraception and other sexual health services.” Furthermore, 14 percent of female respondents have “had difficulties accessing abortion options or post-abortion care.”



## FEMINIST ACTION FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

- ➔ **Feminist action for climate justice is the sixth most cited priority**, as eight percent of respondents choose “*promote women’s participation in climate change action*” as their top priority for the government to focus on to improve gender equality. Twenty-four percent of respondents see it as a top-three priority.
- ➔ To promote women’s efforts to respond to climate change in India, **60 percent of respondents think the government should “increase girls’ and women’s participation in the development of solutions to tackle climate change” and 57 percent want the government to “promote the training and hiring of women in jobs related to climate change.”** Only three percent of respondents think the government should do none of the prompted measures and not promote women’s efforts in response to climate change.



## FINANCING FOR GENDER EQUALITY

- ➔ **Eighty-eight percent of respondents in India, and 91 percent of female respondents, think their government should increase its funding for gender equality in India.**
- ➔ Similarly, 79 percent of respondents think that the Indian government should increase its funding for international projects and organization fighting for gender equality around the world, while only three percent disagree.
- ➔ Eighty percent “agree” that achieving gender equality is essential to end poverty around the world. Only six percent of respondents “disagree.”



## WHAT ACTIONS ARE RESPONDENTS IN INDIA WILLING TO TAKE?

- ➔ To encourage policymakers to tackle gender inequality around the world, **95 percent of respondents in India are willing to take some sort of action.** Forty-eight percent of respondents are willing to “*vote in an election for a candidate supporting gender equality*” and 48 percent would “*share information about gender equality on social media.*” Forty-six percent would “*promote gender equality in everyday conversations and interactions*” and 41 percent would “*volunteer with an organisation working on gender equality.*”



## IMPACT OF COVID-19

- ➔ **Female respondents in India seem to have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic on a greater scale than their male counterparts.** During the pandemic, 30 percent of female respondents “*experienced illness of a family or household member*” (23 percent of male respondents) and 27 percent of them “*experienced physical illness*” themselves (18 percent of male respondents).
- ➔ Ten percent of respondents in India do not think that the government’s response to support people through the pandemic has met the needs of women and men equally. **Forty-five percent expect inequality between women and men will rise as a consequence of COVID-19.**
- ➔ A strong majority (89 percent) think that women should be involved in all aspects of the global health response and recovery efforts to COVID-19.

*This country data sheet is a supplement to Citizens Call for a Gender-Equal World: A Roadmap for Action, a global report on the findings from a 17-country public perception survey on gender equality. For the full report and all country data sheets, please visit: [www.focus2030.org](http://www.focus2030.org) and <http://womendeliver.org/citizens-call-for-a-gender-equal-world/>.*