

AN ASSESSMENT OF GENDER SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN BRICS COUNTRIES: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO GENDER SOCIAL NORMS INDEX (GSNI)

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ABSTRACT

Greater gender equality will enhance economic productivity; and improve development outcomes for the upcoming generation. The Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI) stresses the importance of combining different dimensions to assess biases against gender equality, because they might interact in different ways to block a woman's progress. The objectives of this paper are to interpret the GSNI Index of BRICS Countries, to identify the influential dimensions of GSNI of those Economies and to relate sustainable women empowerment with the valuation of this index. The major findings were based on the core GSNI value, with the computation of overall Average Value, it was found that the highest and lowest value of biasness lies in the Physical Integrity and Educational dimensions respectively. The regression analysis revealed that how each of the four dimensions influence the valuation of the core GSNI value. It was concluded that with adopting more inclusive data collection techniques and developing appropriate models for interpreting the index through proper valuation and assessment could facilitate the government in formulation and implementation of more women centric policies and welfare measures that would minimize the gender gap and paves way for the development of society and nation as on whole.

KEYWORDS: Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI), Gender Equality, Sustainable Women Empowerment, BRICS Economies, Social Development, Inclusive Policy.

INTRODUCTION

'Gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenges of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance' (Kofi Annan, 1998). Greater gender equality will enhance economic productivity; improve development outcomes for the upcoming generation. Many gender disparities remain even in developed countries. A study shows that if gender inequality is removed completely, the per capita income will be 30.2% higher than the benchmark economy after one generation and 71.1% higher after two generations. It was also found that the aggregate income in the hypothetical gender-equal economy will be 6.6% and 14.5% higher than the benchmark economy after one and two generations, respectively. 'Claudia Goldin believes that gender rights require women to take on more responsibility for caring for children and other family members through unpaid work. These expectations point to how domestic workers should be divided into men and women to make different job choices. For example, women with children tend to choose jobs that offer the flexibility of being an "on-call" caregiver, many of which pay less' (Claudia Goldin, 2021). Gender equality will lead to macroeconomic and financial stability and it also stimulate economic growth, encourage private and public sector performance and reduce gender income inequality.

'The UNDP's composite measure of gender inequality in empowerment, the global Gender Inequality Index (GII), has remained stagnant since 2019. Although significant advancements have been made for women across the world in various fundamental areas, such as gaining the right to vote and attaining equal access to education, progress has been slow in terms of empowering women and amplifying their voices. Women continue to be

underrepresented in positions of leadership, ranging from corporate boardrooms to presidential cabinets. The reason is that the undervaluation of women's capabilities and rights in society," says the report. It outlines shocking figures such as nine out of 10 men and women hold biases against women; only 28 percent of managerial positions worldwide are held by women; 28 percent people believe that university is more important for men than for women, etc.' (Samidha Jain, 2023).

The Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI) emphasizes how crucial it is to integrate several aspects in order to evaluate prejudices against gender equality, as these factors may combine in various ways to impede the advancement of women.

The GSNI is an experimental measure to quantify the extent of biases against gender equality, disaggregated by country and gender. The GSNI stresses the importance of combining different dimensions to assess biases against gender equality, because they might interact in different ways to block a woman's progress. 'Discussing American women's educational and entrepreneurial choices in the 1950s, Claudia Goldin argues that the greatest constraint for these women was the time standards that required those with children to stay at home if they were working' (Claudia Goldin, 2021).

The GSNI is estimated with the data from the World Values Survey (WVS) that uses questionnaires that valuates social, political, economic and cultural values and norms. The WVS furnishes micro data captured in different waves, which facilitates the examination of shifts in cultural values, attitudes and beliefs across countries and over time. Seven component indicators are framed with responses to selected WVS questions; each indicator takes a value of 1 when an individual has a bias and 0 when the individual does not. Two GSNI values are calculated by employing different ways of aggregation. The first, the core GSNI value calculates the percentage of people with at least one bias. This aggregation is flexible, combining all unions and intersections of biases, such that it even accounts for situations where only one bias from one person could block a woman's progress in society. The second, the GSNI2 value calculates the percentage of people with at least two biases, reporting the share of people with moderate to intense bias. Both indexes range from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating higher bias against gender equality and women's empowerment. Recording the share of people with no bias (among the seven indicators) is also indispensable for measuring the progress.

This study analyzed about BRIC countries which was formed in 2001 and in 2010 it added the South Africa and named as BRICS and the meetings for these countries are held to improve economic conditions within their countries. Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa ranked among the world's fastest-growing emerging market economies for years. This is due to low labor costs, favorable demographics and abundant natural resources at a time of a global commodities boom. In 2023 they invited Saudi Arabia, Iran, Ethiopia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and Argentina were invited to join BRICS and formed as 9 member countries.

Objectives

1. To interpret the GSNI Index of BRICS Countries
2. To identify the influential dimensions of GSNI of those Economies
3. To relate sustainable women empowerment with the valuation of this index

Scope of the Study

The study has attempted to interpret the GSNI and identify the influential dimensions of this index. This could be further empirically validated and tested with appropriate techniques, with the proper assessment and valuation of the different dimensions for formulation of more women centric policies.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Rinkoo Shantnu and Monali Ray (2023)¹ attempted on comparative analysis of HDI, IHDI and GDI data of selected countries in each group. The findings of the study were that there was a significant difference in HDI& IHDI and HDI & GDI of selected countries in very high, high, medium and low HDI group of countries.

Arun Kumar et al., (2022)² analyzed the women participate on the entrepreneurs in India's standing among the BRICS Nations and challenge faced by them, and also suggested for Indian economic nation. And this paper drawn a conclusion based on females gaining education, women success, and women enabled in the economy and government has made more policies for gender equality for development of India.

Elena Sychenko et al., (2022)³ discussed about the gender employment in the BRICS nation and there is inequality in many of the sector and they have there is lack of education and awareness among them and among other countries South Africa has importance for women study have founded and suggested various steps and policies to attain gender equality.

¹Rinkoo Shantnu and Monali Ray (2023). A Cross Analysis of HDI with IHDI and GDI In Selected Countries, International Journal of Advanced Research in Arts, Science, Engineering & Management, 10(2), 1300-1306

²Arun Kumar & Suhani Arora, (2022). Female Economic Participation: A Comparative Analysis of BRICS Nations, *HANS SHODH SUDHA*, 2(4), 51-64

³Elena Sychenko, Mauro Laruccia, Dalton Cusciano, Rupa Korde, Flame Kabir Nagadia, Irina Chikireva, Jiaojiao Wang & Nasima Carrim, (2022). Gender Discrimination In Employment: BRICS Countries overview, *Brics Law Journal*, 9(2), 30-71

Xu Tian et al., (2022)⁴ studied the rapid globalization have given BRICS countries, an essential view in global economic and environmental resources development. This study had evaluated various links between economic-environmental resources within and between countries; that is with BRICS countries. The study had investigated these issues from a consumption-based perspective for the period 1995 to 2015 by using comprehensive MRIO data.

Alekseeva et al., (2018)⁵ carried out an analysis of the indicators of IHD of 2016 and also the comparative analysis of IHD, taking into account updating of the Index of inequality of IHRI. The study proved the need of inclusion of indexes of inequality, such as, gender inequality, poverty level, level of availability of the person to progress products. And also it was revealed the need of the solution of problems of inequality of human development within the country and its regions.

Diva Júlia Sousa Safe Coelho et al., (2019)⁶ focused on the gender inequality in the BRICS nation and discussed about the challenges faced by women in each nation and concluded that there was gender inequality in these nation and they suffered from serious problems regarding the effectiveness of guarantee of women's dignity, gender equality and respect and freedom.

Sanjay Mohanty and Bidyadhar Dehury (2012)⁷ compared the estimated HDI using the old and new (revised) methodology and examined the feasibility of constructing the new human development indices (IHDI, GII and MPI) in the states of India. The study indicated that the value of HDI computed using the new methodology is substantially lower than that computed with the old methodology cutting across the states.

Ramya Subrahmanian (2005)⁸ achieving gender parity is just one step towards gender equality in and through education. An education system with equal numbers of boys and girls participating, who may progress evenly through the system, may not in fact be based on gender equality. 'Following Wilson (Human Rights: Promoting gender equality in and through education. Background paper for EFA GMR 2003/4, 2003) a consideration of gender equality in education therefore needs to be understood as the right to education, as well as rights within education, and rights through education'.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The paper emphasized to interpret the GSNI of BRICS Countries that used second-hand published reports of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and employed the statistical tools of Percentage Analysis and Multiple Linear Regression.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study intended to interpret the GSNI Index of BRICS Countries and to identify the influential dimensions of GSNI of those Economies, for which the value of different measures of GSNI and its dimensions are taken and interpreted with percentage analysis and regression analysis.

Table 1 –GSNI of BRICS Countries (in %)

Country	GSNI (share of people having atleast one bias)		GSNI2 (share of people having atleast two biases)		Share of people with no bias	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Brazil	84.17	84.78	43.09	52.66	15.83	15.22
Russia	87.02	96.02	68.00	84.25	12.98	3.98
India	98.88	99.45	80.75	90.03	1.12	0.55
China	90.04	93.97	63.61	74.30	9.96	6.03
South Africa	96.57	98.23	78.93	87.39	3.43	1.77
Egypt	99.16	99.82	91.82	97.30	0.84	0.18
Ethiopia	98.13	98.81	72.00	75.38	1.27	1.19

⁴Xu Tian, Joseph Sarkis, Yong Geng, Raimund Bleischwitz, Yiying Qian, Liquan Xu & Rui Wu, (2022). Examining the role of BRICS countries at the global economic and environmental resources nexus, *Journal of Environmental Management*, 265

⁵Alekseeva, O., Zelinskaya, E., Ryabtsev, A., Strashko, E. and Shunevych, O (2018). Influence Indicators of the Inequality of Human Development to the Human Development Index (HDI) of the World Countries, *Advances in Economics, Business and Management Research*, 47, 826-831

⁶Diva Júlia Sousa Safe Coelho, Ricardo Spindola Diniz & Saulo de Oliveira Pinto Coelho, (2019). The situation of women in BRIC countries: a comparative Analysis of the (in) effectiveness of public policies for the protection of women and reduction of gender inequality in the four largest emerging economies in the world, *UNIO – European Union Law Journal*, 5(1), 121-141

⁷Sanjay K. Mohanty and Bidyadhar Dehury (2012). Human Development Indices: Old and New, *Artha Vijnana*, 54(1), 19-38

⁸ Ramya Subrahmanian (2005). Gender equality in education: Definitions and measurements, *International Journal of Educational Development*, 25, 395–407

Iran	93.67	97.24	76.79	87.29	6.33	2.76
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Source: ‘2023 Gender Social Norms Index’, United Nations Development Programme

The above table 1 depicts the 3 different GSNI values of 8 BRICS Countries. The GSNI is calculated as the percentage of people (both women and men) having atleast one bias among the seven indicators. Egypt has the highest value in this measure for both women and men followed by India and Ethiopia. The lowest value is seen in Brazil followed by Russia. The next measure of GSNI2 is computed as the percentage of people (both women and men) having atleast two biases. The highest value of this measure is found with Egypt and lowest measure in Brazil as the previous measure. ‘Whether Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa can extend their economic growth will depend on whether they invest in policies that improve gender equality’ (Alison Holder, 2019). The measure of percentage of people (both women and men) with no bias which is the better indicator is found higher in Brazil and lower in Egypt, followed by India.

Table 2 – GSNI – share of people biased by dimensions (in %)

Country	Political		Educational		Economic		Physical Integrity	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Brazil	38.32	41.81	7.23	12.85	24.95	38.92	75.79	75.56
Russia	66.23	77.36	25.38	30.98	60.81	77.59	51.35	65.19
India	61.95	73.96	34.91	41.18	67.87	80.38	92.43	92.36
China	54.57	61.76	19.33	23.19	52.52	61.32	72.63	76.66
South Africa	73.56	81.50	63.98	39.83	52.18	61.85	88.95	90.63
Egypt	84.74	92.25	24.73	35.83	90.04	97.24	88.79	91.67
Ethiopia	43.24	46.71	14.74	17.42	58.87	64.52	94.54	95.81
Iran	62.45	72.16	36.54	57.8	73.14	81.7	62.07	72.14
Average Value	60.63	68.44	28.36	32.39	60.05	70.38	78.32	82.50

Source: ‘2023 Gender Social Norms Index’, United Nations Development Programme

‘Gender equality trouble spots for the BRICS countries is particularly evident in the lack of transparency in government budgets and the gaps in gender statistics: issues that include women’s safety from violence, low levels of women’s political participation, weak scores on key labor rights and high levels of economic inequality between the richest and poorest in society in general. Cumulatively, these statistics show a disproportionately negative impact on women and children’ (Alison Holder, 2019). The table 2 shows the percentage of people (both women and men) biased by the four different dimensions. In Political dimension, highest and lowest share of people biased were found in Egypt and Brazil. In Educational dimension, highest and lowest share of people biased were found in South Africa and Brazil. In Economic dimension, highest and lowest share of people biased were found in Egypt and Brazil. In Physical Integrity dimension, highest and lowest share of people biased were found in Ethiopia and Russia. With the computation of overall Average Value, it was found that the highest and lowest value of biasness lies in the Physical Integrity and Educational indices respectively.

Regression Analysis

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \mu$$

Where it was taken as Y = Core GSNI value, X₁= Political dimension, X₂= Educational dimension, X₃= Economic dimension, X₄= Physical Integrity dimension and μ = error term. The estimated regression coefficient for the core GSNI value was given in the table 3.

Table 3 – Regression Analysis

Models	Coefficients	t value	Significance
Constant	66.4282	11.938	0.0013
Political dimension	-0.0964	-1.0086	0.3875
Educational dimension	0.1301	1.7371	0.1808
Economic dimension	0.2133	3.0783	0.0542
Physical Integrity dimension	0.2079	3.576	0.0374
R ²	0.9337		

Adjusted R²	0.8452
F test	10.555
Significance	0.041

Source: Computed

The R² value came to 0.9337 revealing better explanatory power of the variables and it was found that the model estimated F test to be statistically significant.

Among the 4 independent variables, the political and educational dimension were found insignificant revealing that these influence the core GSNI value by -9% and 13% respectively and the economic and physical integrity dimension were found significant revealing that these influence the core GSNI value by 21% and 20% respectively.

GSNI and Sustainable Women Empowerment

Apart from seeing GSNI value as a simple numerical index, it could be interpreted with the various dimensions such as political, economic, educational and physical integrity and indicators such as Men make better political leaders than women do; Women have the same rights as men; University is more important for men than women; Men should have more right to do a job than women; Men make better business executives than women do; Proxy for intimate partner and Proxy for reproductive rights. The GSNI ranges from 0 to 1. Higher GSNI values indicate higher bias against gender equality. There is no country without bias against gender equality. The core GSNI can be interpreted as an estimate of the prevalence of biases in a country. On the other hand, the GSNI2 can be interpreted as an estimate of the prevalence of moderate to intense biases in a country.

‘None of the BRICs countries are yet making the changes in policies, laws and budget decisions needed to ensure that women and girls benefit equally from, and have the chance to contribute to, a future of shared and sustained growth across the BRICS bloc. All of the BRICS nations could do more to convert their economic wealth into driving progress for women and girls’ (Alison Holder, 2019). If the indicators of this index is specifically identified and considered in a nation, more women centric policies and schemes could be implemented based on the assessment and valuation of the dimensions. This would help to reduce the biases against gender equality and women empowerment that leads to sustainable growth of women welfare, contributing to stability in economic progress as well.

Gender Equality in Management Perspective

Women are underrepresented in decision-making positions around the world. However, gender equality and diversity are seen as beneficial to organizations, institutions and the economy as a whole. It is evident that removing the glass ceiling, the invisible barrier that prevents women from reaching senior positions, can not only lead to equality, but can also be beneficial.

According to 2016 data from the World Economic Forum, the global gender gap in business has decreased by only 59%. Policies and policies that promote women’s empowerment are important topics of discussion in many countries around the world. Gender equality is extremely important not only because equality between men and women is an important goal of development, but also because women’s participation in the economy is “part of development and equality”. Knowledge, human capital and productivity will benefit the global economy from women’s participation in the workforce. The lack of women in leadership does not conflict with strategies to promote skills that will encourage business and employment.

‘The World Economic Forum expects that it will take more than 130 years to close gender gaps worldwide, up from about 100 years before the pandemic. Globally, 64 million women lost their jobs during the pandemic (twice as many as men), because women are more likely to work in informal, temporary, and part-time jobs; in this type of jobs, employers tend to cut first in a downturn, with lower pay and less social protection. And an estimated 80 percent of people displaced by climate change are women’ (UNDP, 2016). Gender equality and development in developing countries are interconnected: greater gender equality creates conditions for and leads to economic growth; more growth leads to greater gender equality. Women are generally more educated than men and have a positive impact on the economy, contributing to economic growth. More women entering the labor market means an increase in domestic product. Finally, women’s participation in the labor market will have a positive impact on fertility and family health.

Gender Equality in Decision Making

The gender gap widens when we move from participation in business life to women in decision-making positions. Even in countries where women are in the workforce, only a few get into the top jobs. Much of the previous literature has focused on the benefits of diversity: including men and women in decision-making broadens perspectives, increases creativity and innovation, enables diverse talents and abilities, reduces conflict, improves decision-making, and leads to better representation of knowledge of company of all members. Women’s leadership also brings many benefits: Women are good at interpersonal relationships, are attentive to people’s needs, like to prevent and resolve conflicts, and can share ideas, cooperate with others, and put forth effort. They monitor and give further feedback to complete the contract.

Gender equality in decision-making is beneficial for business. Diversity is not only beneficial in itself, but also leads to positive results if women are more competent, more responsible and less dependent on money than men.

The results are better for schools and organizations and have a positive impact on economic outcomes, employment outcomes and new processes. Measures to reduce discrimination can help improve the quality of work. We give many examples from the business world and politics. However, since the impact of gender equality on employment cannot be easily determined, more research is needed in this area.

Gender Equality towards Sustainable Development Goals

Gender equality is a right. Getting it right is our best chance to solve some of the most pressing issues of our time, from financial crises to healthcare shortages, climate change to violence against women and conflict. These issues are more complex, but there are strategies and practices to solve them. Gender disparity still holds many women and our world in its hands.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by world leaders in 2015, include achievements that leave no one behind. Achieving gender equality and empowering women is a key part of all 17 goals. Only by ensuring the rights of women, mothers and girls of all backgrounds can we achieve justice and inclusion, access jobs that work for everyone and support our environment now and for future generations. UN Women's 2018 landmark report "Translating commitments into action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda". Important and how these goals impact the real lives of women and girls around the world.

Gender Impact Assessment

Gender assessment is defined as the preliminary assessment, review or evaluation of a law, policy or program that allows for decision-making, protection where the decision will have a negative impact on equality between men and women. The evaluation follows two methods: existing gender-related studies that influence the policy being evaluated, and the need to influence women and men after the law is implemented. Designing the assessment is important; systematic, analytical and data.

The main purpose of gender Impact assessment is to improve the design and planning of controlled policies to prevent negative impacts on gender equality, to promote and improve gender equality through better design, changes in laws and regulations. The main aim is to change the laws so that all forms of discrimination are eliminated or minimized. In addition to avoiding negative impacts, gender analysis can promote gender equality in a more transformative way as a tool for defining gender equality goals and creating policies.

FINDINGS

- Based on the core GSNI value, BRICS Countries could be ranked as Egypt, India, Ethiopia, South Africa, Iran, China, Russia and Brazil.
- Based on the GSNI2 value, the ranking was Egypt, India, South Africa, Iran, Ethiopia, Russia, China and Brazil.
- The ranking of GSNI value of share of people with no bias was Brazil, Russia, China, Iran, South Africa, Ethiopia, India and Egypt.
- With the computation of overall Average Value, it was found that the highest and lowest value of biasness lies in the Physical Integrity and Educational dimensions respectively.
- The value of HDI (female) was higher in Russia and lower in Ethiopia; The value of GDI was higher and lower in Russia and India respectively.
- The regression analysis revealed that how each of the four dimensions influence the valuation of the core GSNI value.

CONCLUSION

'The GII was developed to better depict differences in the distribution of achievements in women and men; the higher the GII value, the more disparities between women and men. India has the highest GII among the BRICS nations and the BRICS countries has the highest relative gender difference in inactivity prevalence' (Meilke and Brown, 2019). An attempt to interpret the GSNI and identify the influential dimensions of this index based on the core GSNI value, BRICS Countries could be ranked as Egypt, India, Ethiopia, South Africa, Iran, China, Russia and Brazil, but there is no country without bias against gender equality.

With adopting more inclusive data collection techniques and developing appropriate models for interpreting the index through proper valuation and assessment could facilitate the government in formulation and implementation of more women centric policies and welfare measures that would minimize the gender gap and paves way for the development of society and nation as on whole. 'Take women's political representation in senior government or ministerial positions. Leaving aside South Africa, which performs quite well on this measure, Brazil (just 4% of senior government positions are held by women), Russia (10%), China (10%), and India (19%) are in the bottom half of countries on this indicator. Women are not rising to the highest ranks of government power in four of the five BRICS countries. And yet much poorer countries like Rwanda, Nicaragua, Peru and Uganda top the world when it comes to having high proportions of women in senior government roles' (Alison Holder, 2019).

'Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI) shines a light on the barriers to gender equality in politics, work, and education. With data from 80 countries and territories, it reveals the urgent need for change' (Michelle Muschett, 2023). In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, donor countries agreed to primarily maximize investment to eliminate the gender gap. Promising equality in opportunities and potential to contribute in the economy can be catalytic for a quick recovery from recent downturns and an effective engine of progression for more resilient, sustainable and inclusive economies going forward. Well-designed macroeconomic, structural, and

financial policies can support efficient and inclusive outcomes and equitably benefit women, girls, and society in general.

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