Research Paper

A Telling Gap on the Gender Map

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ABSTRACT : *In this paper, the status of women in a village set-up in Indian Society with an analytical report are discussed. The women between age 18 years to 45 years were surveyed and inference was drawn. Data with respect to their social position, gender equality, superiority over men, priorities with respect to decision making, marriage leniency, freedom of thought, their rights and awareness of law, are analyzed and conclusion drawn using 'Data-metrics'. Obtained results proved to be at variance with the generally accepted women centric issues in society on the local level. The same was extrapolated at a national scale keeping the prevalent law and government schemes.*
KEYWORDS: *Social status, Data analytics, Gender parity, Behaviors of the family system.*

I.   INTRODUCTION

As a child, I have seen my mother as my role model whether running the household or working in a large organization. I have seen her as a focal point in festivals and cultural events. I have seen her toil in the village farm with my grandmother. In such festivals, we as family members used to worship Goddess Durga during Dassera, Goddess Lakshmi during Diwali. I have seen our society has always recognized and revered women in the form of goddesses,

- *Lakshmi* as Goddess of Wealth,
- *Saraswati* as Goddess of Wisdom and Education,
- *Durga* as Goddess of Strength
- *Kali* as Goddess of Energy and Battle spirit.

I have seen importance given to my father in making decisions be it with regards education, or the money matters. I have seen matters regarding such decisions taken with my brother, too. I felt the difference and restrictions on me. While taking admission for my KG in school, in the interview the principal asked my mother why she was a working woman. They felt, that being a homemaker, was beneficial to me and my family. With such experiences, I have grown to notice that there is a bias towards the girl child and women, what is called 'Gender Gap' in common parlance. In India, I have seen God being a balance of the Male and the Female powers, the *Purush* and *Prakriti*, referred to as '<u>*Ardhanareshwar - half male, half female*</u>'. I have been addressed as 'Miss' while my mother was always 'Mrs' (Missis) and father a 'Mr.'(Mister). I have always seen that somethings remained missing in my mother's or my life. I also understand that women have played various roles in her life, being a daughter, a mother, a wife, a sister, a daughter-in-law, a mother-in-law, sister-in-law etc. I have heard stories of brave Indian women like Rani Laxmibai, Jijabai, Sarojini Naidu etc.

In course of my life journey, I have come across the following quote, which has touched me and guided me thus far:

> *"God may be in the details,*
> *But the Goddess is in the question.*
> *Once we begin to ask them,*
> *There's no turning back……."*

In my numerous family engagement, the one thing I have noticed through my travel from an urban habitat to my native village, is that Women still feel inferior in status in society. She still thinks, she is inferior to men, she cannot take decisions, or join the army or participate in sports activities of her choice. I have heard, my mother being called as '*Ghar ki Lakshmi*'. But no one has encouraged her to work in disciplines she is interested in. No one has ever thought of making her a bread-earner for the family through her own independent skills! However, things are changing now. In the current scenario, society has started recognizing this quality of women to be the bread earner of the families. Traditionally, women were deeply involved in doing many activities, in agriculture and allied sectors, thereby contributing substantially to the Indian GDP.

When COVID pandemic struck, my mother and in general, the womenfolk were given lots and lots of importance. Thereafter, the role of women and society changed remarkably. With income shortage and changed socio-economic scenario, however, I have found that women have adapted well in different working environments be it a teacher, software engineer, a professional or an entrepreneur. The major contributors to this changing mindset, I feel, is the increased awareness through media outreach including social media and several government policies on 'Women and Girlchild'(*Beti Bachao, Beti Padhavo*- Save the girlchild, educate the girl child). But I don't find this aspect reaching to either me as a girl child or women in society. During my interaction in villages, I have observed that the average income of member in a family is still meagre though not hand-to-mouth existence. The standard of living and per capita income is still abysmally low. Although data with regards women's status can be collected through various channels like surveys, sensitivity to literacy, age-old mindset, and regional divide, there are some of the conditions that makes the results unpredictable or 'chaotic' in the current set up. This paper discusses the position and role of the women in society through 'survey methodology' employing live interactions, exploring their demands through questionnaire within sampling of around 2 batches of 60 women of specific age and region and the like. In the next section, a statistical model of analysis is deployed to investigate and suggest solutions by using a spreadsheet-Excel. Whereas in the final section, the status and behavior of the rural women members are compared with statistics taken from National Economic Surveys, National Budget etc. and solutions for their social upliftment are discussed in the later part.

This paper not only analyzed the dynamics of the social system but also discussed the needs and legal awareness of today's women and presents a study, directed towards their emancipation. An analysis and comparison between the Konkan region and other parts of the Indian terrain are utilized to draw the final report with intention to not only highlight their status but also suggest practical schemes depending on their social strata.

II.   DATA SYSTEM

In order to measure and evaluate the status of women in society, I have devised a Research methodology to conduct surveys, interviews with the young women in two villages. This Researcher worked in village Talavli of Taluka Roha, Raigad district, about 100 km away from Mumbai and village Dolvi, Pen district, about 65 km away from Mumbai for carrying out research to obtain basic data about the status of women in society. Most of them are agriculturist, having nuclear family, working in farms for their livelihood and give financial support to their families though men work in nearby townships. The interaction with them was conceptualized along with family members through '*Haldi-Kunku*' program, an exchange of greetings constituting women members, by application of red turmeric on forehead. The survey revealed that the women believed in education as a tool for their progress. They were found to be self sufficient with their economic and social status though they were largely dependent on their male family members for a 'decision' but longing to do something more and different. Majority of them lived in *pucca* (permanent) houses with good drinking water and sanitation. The Sarpanch(Village chief) and Up-Sarpanch(his deputy) and the women members were apprised about the purpose of data-collection. Interviews of select few were taken and questionnaire distributed to collect data for conducting Research.

The questionnaire issued on site was in local language- Marathi and is presented in **Diagram1**. It was found convenient to collect data encompassing their past, present and future aspirations of the young women in particular so as to define their future goals through public and government initiatives. Accordingly, personal details were collected in the format as depicted in **Diagram 2**. In these diagrams, Questions represent inter-alia, aspects related to male domination, Political say, Gender equality, marriage related issues such as Dowry, Inter-caste relations, conducive age factors, women violence, their rights and legislation etc. The data collated was used to derive a pattern of their social resurgence or otherwise, in the section that follows.

DETAILED ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE
Total Sample Size: 48 Respondents

1. **Women are less intelligent than men.**
   No. of women agreed -12
   No. of women disagreed - 36

2. **Women should always vote for the same political party that the men of the house suggest.**
   No. of women agreed - 18
   No. of women disagreed - 30

3. **It is not important for a woman to speak English in order to be liberated.**
   No. of women agreed - 27
   No. of women disagreed - 21

4. **Dowry should be given in order to cover the wife's expenses.**
   No. of women agreed – 2
   No. of women disagreed - 46

5. **The rightful place for a lady is within her home.**
   No. of women agreed - 17
   No. of women disagreed- 31

6. **Only men should drive cars.**
   No. of women agreed - 5
   No. of women disagreed - 43

7. **Adopting children is acceptable.**
   No. of women agreed - 26
   No. of women disagreed - 22

8. **It is important to have a son in order to carry forward the family name.**
   No. of women agreed - 12
   No. of women disagreed - 36

9. **Men should be paid more for the same job that a woman does.**
   No. of women agreed - 7
   No. of women disagreed – 41

10. **A lady is always answerable to her father, husband and son.**
    No. of women agreed - 24
    No. of women disagreed - 24

11. Men should help a lady with chores at home.   15
   No. of women agreed – 6
   No. of women disagreed – 42

12. The highest posts in offices should only be handled by men.
   No. of women agreed - 8
   No. of women disagreed - 40

13. Women should eat only after the family is fed.
   No. of women agreed - 2
   No. of women disagreed - 46

14. Men resorting to violence is justifiable, but not women.
   No. of women agreed - 12
   No. of women disagreed - 36

15. In your family, would a daughter be permitted to choose her field of Education?
   No. of women answered Yes – 6
   No. of women answered No - 42

16. In your family, is a girl expected to marry an individual unknown to her?
   No. of women answered Yes - 12
   No. of women answered No - 36

17. Are sons and daughters treated equally at your home?
   No. of women answered Yes - 6
   No. of women answered No – 42

18. Do women have a role in decision making in your family?
   No. of women answered Yes - 1
   No. of women answered No - 47

19. The legal marriageable age for a girl is :
   No. of women answered 16 years - NIL
   No. of women answered 18 years - 2
   No. of women answered 20 years - 46

20. Do you know there are laws protecting women?
   No. of women answered Yes - 5
   No. of women answered No - 43

Diagram 1

Personal Questions with regards their age, marital status, were also asked in the following format:

1. Age- _____ years

2. Educational level: Never studied/Studied up to _____/Studying in _____

3. Marital status: Married/ Unmarried/Deserted/Widowed

4. Live in a Hut/Chawl/Building/Bungalow

5. Family income (per month): < 5, 000 / <7,000 / <15,000 / >15,000 or more

6. Total Number of Members of your family: _____

7. Family structure: Joint/ Nuclear

8. Up to what level has your mother been educated? _____

9. How many siblings do you have? _____

Diagram 2

III.   PICTORIAL REPRESENTATION

In this section, based on the aforesaid data collected, the correlation of AGE, EDUCATION MARITAL STATUS, INCOME, FAMILY SIZE was established. These quantities were entered into an Excel spread sheet to represent each woman. Part A shows their Personal details and Part B shows the parameters to be evaluated.
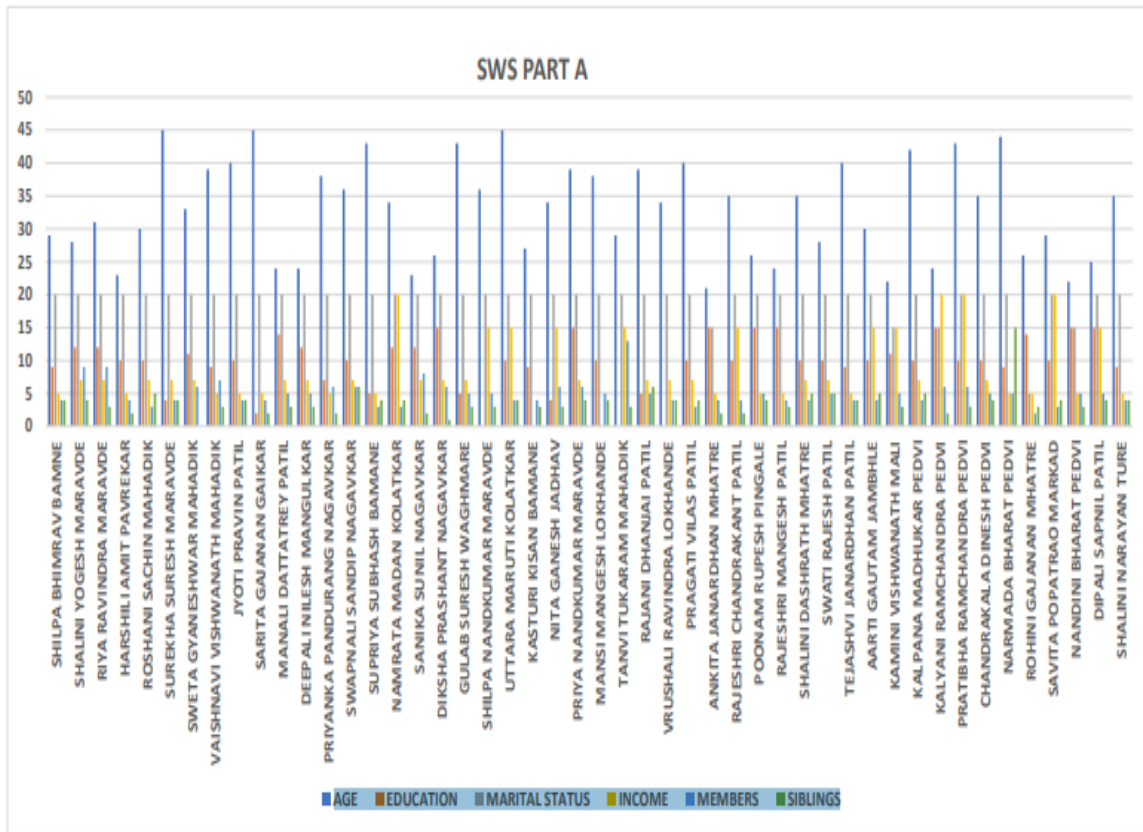
		PART A								PART B																			
Sr	Name	Age	STD	M/N	Income	No	SIB	Edu	N/J	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	2	INFERENCE
1	SHILPA BHIMRAV BAMNE	29	9TH	M	5000	4	4	P	J	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	20	Y	INHIBITED
2	SHALINI YOGESH MARAVDE	28	12TH	M	7000	9	4	P	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	20	N	INHIBITED
3	RIYA RAVINDRA MARAVDE	31	12TH	M	7000	9	3	P		N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	NA	N	Y	20	N	INHIBITED
4	HARSHILI AMIT PAVREKAR	23	10TH	M	5000	4	2	P	J	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	20	Y	AWARE
5	ROSHANI SACHIN MAHADIK	30	10TH	M	7000	3	5	P	N	NA	Y	Y	N	Y	N	NA	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	20	Y	AWARE
6	SUREKHA SURESH MARAVDE	45	4TH	M	7000	4	4	NO	J	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	20	Y	AWARE
7	SWETA GYANESHWAR MAHADIK	33	11TH	M	7000	6	0	P	J	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	20	Y	AWARE
8	VAISHNAVI VISHWANATH MAHADIK	39	9TH	M	5000	7	3	P	J	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	18	Y	AWARE
9	JYOTI PRAVIN PATIL	40	10TH	M	5000	4	4	P	J	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	20	N	INFORMED
10	SARITA GAJANAN GAIKAR	45	2ND	M	5000	4	2	NO		N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	18	Y	AWARE
11	MANALI DATTATREY PATIL	24	BCOM	M	7000	5	3	P	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	20	Y	AWARE
12	DEEPALI NILESH MANGULKAR	24	12TH	M	7000	5	3	P	J	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	20	Y	AWARE
13	PRIYANKA PANDURANG NAGAVKAR	38	7TH	M	5000	6	2	P	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	20	Y	INFORMED
14	SWAPNALI SANDIP NAGAVKAR	36	10TH	M	7000	6	6	P	J	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	20	Y	INFORMED
15	SUPRIYA SUBHASH BAMANE	43	5TH	M	5000	3	4	P	J	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	20	Y	AWARE
16	NAMRATA MADAN KOLATKAR	34	12TH	M	>15000	3	4	P	J	Y	NA	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	20	Y	INFORMED
17	SANIKA SUNIL NAGAVKAR	23	12TH	M	7000	8	2	P	J	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	20	Y	AWARE
18	DIKSHA PRASHANT NAGAVKAR	26	15TH	M	7000	6	1	P	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	20	Y	INFORMED
19	GULAB SURESH WAGHMARE	43	5TH	M	7000	5	3	P	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	20	Y	AWARE
20	SHILPA NANDKUMAR MARAVDE	36		M	15000	5	3	P	J	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	20	Y	AWARE
21	UTTARA MARUTI KOLATKAR	45	10TH	M	15000	4	4	P		Y	N	N	N	NA	N	N	N	N	Y	NA	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	20	Y	INFORMED

Sr	NAME	Age	STD	M/N	INCOME	No.	SIB	Edu.	N/J	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	INFERENCE
22	KASTURI KISAN BAMANE	27	9TH STD	M		4	3	P	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y			20	Y	AWARE
23	NITA GANESH JADHAV	34	4TH STD	M	15000	6	3	P	J	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y			20	Y	INHIBITED
24	PRIYA NANDKUMAR MARAVDE	39	TYBCOM	M	7000	6	4	P	J	N	N	N	N	N	N		N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	20	Y	AWARE
25	MANSI MANGESH LOKHANDE	38	10TH STD	M		5	4	P	J	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	20	Y	AWARE
26	TANVI TUKARAM MAHADIK	29		M	15000	13	3	P	J	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	20	Y	AWARE
27	RAJANI DHANJAI PATIL	39	5TH STD	M	7000	5	6	NO	J	N	N	N	N	N	N		N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	20	Y	AWARE
28	VRUSHALI RAVINDRA LOKHANDE	34	NONE	M	7000	4	4	N	J	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	20	Y	INFORMED
29	PRAGATI VILAS PATIL	40	10TH STD	M	7000	3	4	P	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N		N	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	20	N	AWARE
30	ANKITA JANARDHAN MHATRE	21	TYBCOM	N	5000	4	2	P	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	20	Y	INFORMED
31	RAJESHRI CHANDRAKANT PATIL	35	10THSTD	M	<15000	4	2	P	J	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N		N	N	18	Y	INFORMED
32	POONAM RUPESH PINGALE	26	BCOM	M	5000	5	4	P	J	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	20	Y	LIBERATED
33	RAJESHRI MANGESH PATIL	24	BCOM	M	5000	4	3	P	J	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	20	Y	AWARE
34	SHALINI DASHRATH MHATRE	35	10THSTD	M	7000	4	5	P	J	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	20	Y	AWARE
35	SWATI RAJESH PATIL	28	10THSTD	M	7000	5	5	P	J	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N			Y	N	Y	Y	Y		20	Y	LIBERATED
36	TEJASHVI JANARDHAN PATIL	40	9TH STD	M	5000	4	4	P	N	N	N	N	N	N	N		N	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	20	Y	LIBERATED
37	AARTI GAUTAM JAMBHLE	30	10THSTD	M	<15000	4	5	P	J	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N		Y	Y	N	N	Y		20	Y	INFORMED
38	KAMINI VISHWANATH MALI	22	FYBCOM	N	<15000	5	3	P	J	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		20	N	AWARE
39	KALPANA MADHUKAR PEDVI	42	10THSTD	M	7000	4	5	NO	J	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	20	Y	LIBERATED
40	KALYANI RAMCHANDRA PEDVI	24	MBA	N	>15000	6	2	P	J	N	N	N	N	N	N		N	N		Y	N	N	N	Y		Y	Y	20	Y	AWARE
41	PRATIBHA RAMCHANDRA PEDVI	43	10THSTD	M	>15000	6	3	P	J	N	N	N	N	N	N		N	N		Y	N	N	N			Y	Y	20	Y	AWARE
42	CHANDRAKALA DINESH PEDVI	35	10THSTD	M	7000	5	4	P	J	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y		20	Y	AWARE
43	NARMADA BHARAT PEDVI	44	9TH STD	M	5000	5	15	P	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	20	Y	AWARE
44	ROHINI GAJANAN MHATRE	26	SYBA	W	5000	2	3	P	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N		N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	20	Y	AWARE
45	SAVITA POPATRAO MARKAD	29	10THSTD	M	>15000	3	4	P		N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N		Y	N	Y	Y	20	Y	AWARE
46	NANDINI BHARAT PEDVI	22	BA	N	5000	5	3	P	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	20	Y	AWARE
47	DIPALI SAPNIL PATIL	25	BA	M	<15000	5	4	P	J	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	20	Y	AWARE
48	SHALINI NARAYAN TURE	35	9THSTD	M	5000	4	4	P	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	20	Y	AWARE

Diagram 3

The aforementioned data has been used to portray a GRAPH diagram. The said GRAPH reveals the relationship between the various issues faced by women in the present society. The names of the women who participated in the survey have been depicted on the *x-axis* while the data which determine their status such as income, education, marital status, family size etc. are shown on the *y-axis* and given respective colour codes. These data have been entered in Excel and a GRAPH has been drawn to illustrate the social standings of women. The above Pictorial Diagram is drawn on the basis of an Excel sheet representing the data collected as part of the live session with rural women of two regions separated by about 40 kms in Konkan region of interior State of Maharashtra, India. The said spreadsheet with the parameters to gauge the status of women is shown in **Diagram 3**. Let us firstly discuss and draw 'Observations' especially some which determine the core framework of women in society. The said pattern has been used as a sample to extrapolate on a larger National level. The analytical findings have been used to compare these women with the National Survey in the context of women and girlchild. To simplify our numerical analysis, the following **Diagram 4** is reproduced:

Diagram 4

IV.   ANALYSIS & INFERENCE
With a view to give values to the determination of status of women, the following equations were used:

4.1   Evaluation of Personal Details
Education has/has not had an impact on:
i) Socio-Economic Status: Family Income   =
                    Number of Members
 lower (less than 5,000) / **middle** (5,000-8,000) / **higher** (greater than 8,000)
ii) Family Norm: **Traditional** (Joint)/ **Modern** (Nuclear)
iii) Number of siblings: **Small** (1-2)/**Medium** (3-4)/**Large** (more than 4) family
iv) Profile of woman in the family: Comparing the mother's level of education and the respondent's level of education, we can say there is **No**/ **Negative**/ **Positive growth**.

4.2   Analysis and Observations
1)   On analyzing the respondents 'Socio-Economic Status', it is observed that 15 respondents comprising 30.61 percent belong to the Lower category, 19 respondents comprising 38.77 percent belong to the Middle category and 13 respondents comprising 26.53 percent belong to the Higher category of the Socio-Economic Status. Hence majority of the respondents belong to the **MIDDLE** Socio-Economic Status.

2)   Analysis of the respondents 'Family Norm', shows that 14 respondents comprising 28.57 percent belong to the Modern family norm and the remaining 31 respondents comprising 63.26 percent belong to the Traditional family norm. Hence majority of the respondents belong to the **TRADITIONAL** family norm.

3)   On analyzing the number of siblings, it is observed that 7 respondents comprising 14.28 percent belong to the small family size, 32 respondents comprising 65.30 percent belong to the medium family size, and 9 respondents comprising 18.36 percent belong to the Large family size. Hence majority of the respondents belong to the **MEDIUM** family size.

4)   On analyzing the Profile of Woman in the Family, it is observed that 4 respondents comprising 8.16 percent show no growth, 1 respondent shows a negative growth, and the remaining 43 respondents comprising 89.79 percent shows a growth. Hence majority of the respondents show a **GROWTH** in the profile of woman in the family.

The terms connote age, qualifications, marital status, family size, income and whether the family is joint or nuclear. Plugging in the coordinates above, we obtain the following chart:
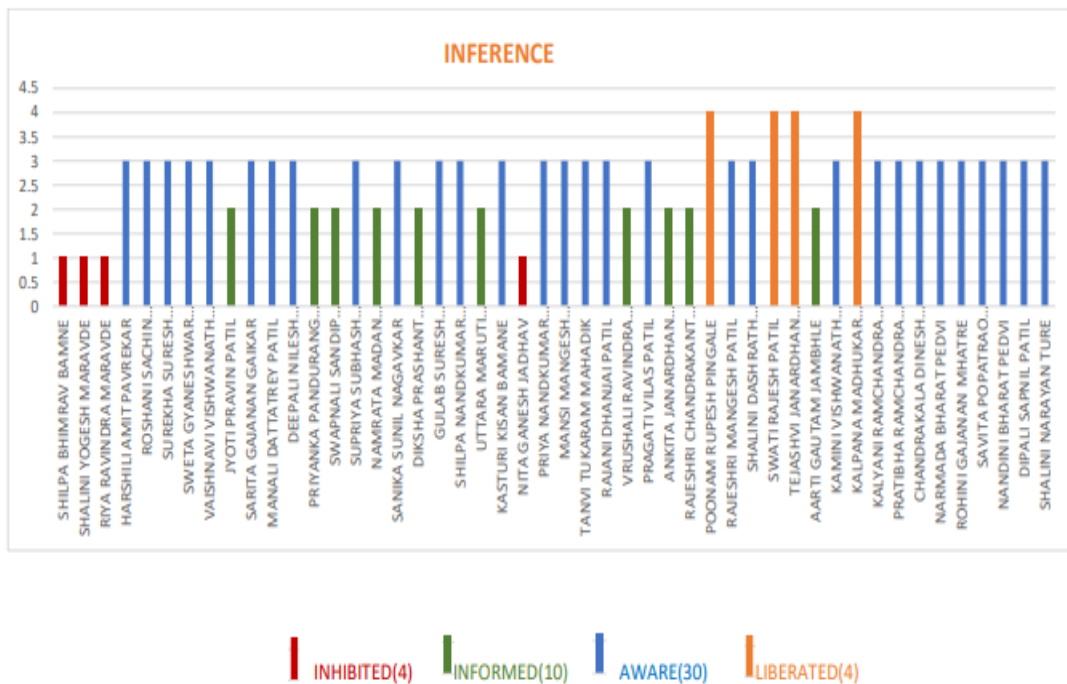
Diagram 5

A sample of the questionnaire distributed to the women members is shown in the following Diagram 6:

नाव : सौ. शामिनी गणेश मरवडे

Name of the researcher: Vidyasagar Ubale, LLM-1

भाग अ : वैयक्तिक माहिती

1. वय......28.............

2. शैक्षणिक स्तर: कधीच अभ्यास केला नाही/..12...पर्यंत अभ्यास केला/......वर्गात आता आहे

3. विवाहित स्थिती/ विवाहित / अविवाहित / निर्जंज / विधवा

4. झोपडी / चाळी / इमारत / बंगल्यात राहतात / ? —

5. कौटुंबिक उत्पन्न (दरमहा): <5000 / <7000 / <15000 /> 15000 किंवा अधिक

6. आपल्या कुटुंबातील सदस्यांची एकूण संख्या:_____9_____

7. कौटुंबिक रचना: संयुक्त / विभक्त

8. आपल्या आईला कोणत्या स्तरापर्यंत शिक्षण दिले गेले आहे?____7-वी

9. तुम्ही किती भावंडे आहात   4

भाग बी: कृपया खालील प्रश्नांची उत्तरे द्या (आपल्या निवडीवर टिक करा)

1. पुरुषांपेक्षा स्त्रिया कमी हुशार असतात: सहमत / असहमत

2. घरातील पुरुष सुचवलेल्या राजकीय पक्षाला महिलांनी नेहमीच मतदान करायला हवे: होय / नाही

3. स्त्रियांना मुक्त होण्यासाठी इंग्रजी बोलणे महत्त्वाचे नाही: सहमत / असहमत

4. पत्नीचा खर्च भागविण्यासाठी हुंडा द्यावा: सहमत / असहमत

5. स्त्रीसाठी योग्य जागा तिच्या घरात आहे: सहमत / असहमत

6. केवळ पुरुषांनी कार चालवायला हवी: सहमत / असहमत

7. मुलांना दत्तक घेण्यासारखे आहे: सहमत / असहमत

8. कौटुंबिक नाव पुढे ठेवण्यासाठी मुलगा असणे महत्त्वाचे आहे: सहमत / असहमत

9. स्त्रिया ज्या नोकरी करतात त्याच नोकरीसाठी पुरुषांना जास्त मोबदला देण्यात यावा: सहमत / असहमत

10. एक महिला नेहमीच तिचे वडील, पती आणि मुलाला जबाबदार असते: सहमत / असहमत

11. पुरुषांनी घरातील प्रत्येक स्त्रीला मदत करावी: सहमत / असहमत

12. कार्यालयांमधील सर्वोच्च पदे केवळ पुरुषच हाताळली पाहिजेत: सहमत / असहमत

13. कुटुंबाला आहार दिल्यानंतरच स्त्रियांनी खावे: सहमत / असहमत

14. हिंसाचाराला आश्रय देणारे पुरुष न्याय्य आहेत, परंतु स्त्रिया नाहीत: सहमत / असहमत

15. तुमच्या कुटुंबात, मुलीला शिक्षण क्षेत्र निवडण्याची परवानगी आहे का? होय / नाही

16. तुमच्या कुटुंबात मुलीने अनोळखी व्यक्तीशी लग्न करावे अशी अपेक्षा आहे का? होय / नाही

17. तुमच्या घरी मुला-मुलींशी समान वागणूक आहे का? होय / नाही

18. तुमच्या कुटुंबात निर्णय घेण्यामध्ये महिलांची भूमिका आहे: होय / नाही

19. मुलीचे विवाह योग्य वय: 16 वर्षे / 18 वर्षे / 20 वर्षे

20. आपणास माहित आहे की महिलांचे संरक्षण करणारे कायदे आहेत: होय / नाही

Diagram 6

From the above analysis, it can be safely said that Education has had a **POSITIVE** impact on the respondent. She belongs to the **MIDDLE** income group reflecting the **TRADITIONAL** family norm. Her family profile shows **POSITIVE** growth, and the woman seems to be '**AWARE**'. Average 'Family income' is Rs.2,68,000 for 245 members, the ratio of family income and number of members i.e., the **Socio-Economic Status is Rs.1093 which is very low.**
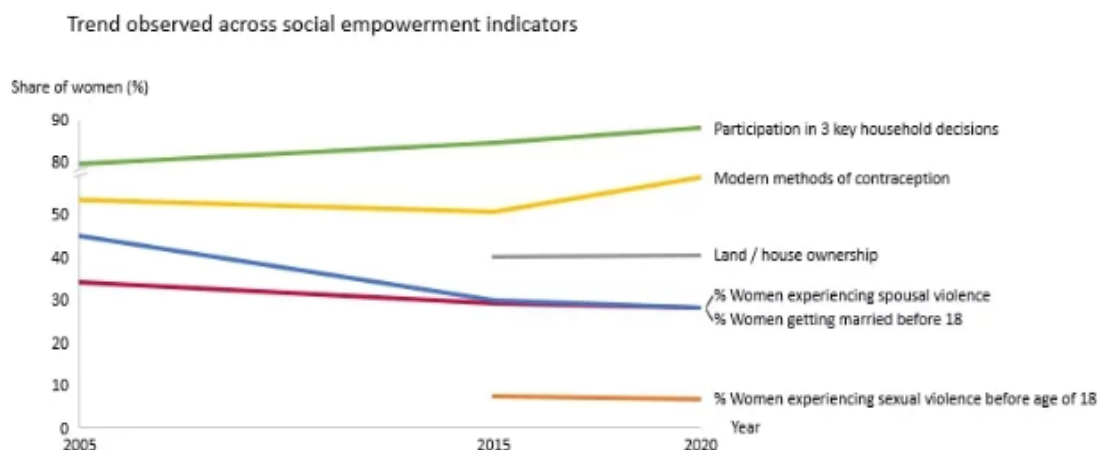
V.   INDICATORS & LAW

5.1   Having undertaken an empirical study as above using sampling technique over gender and region-specific criteria, it was found that women welcome positive change through the medium of education. Their family income has shown a growth, but rate of growth is low. They continue to be the focal point holding the family together and are bound by cultural ties as seen from their "traditional' family setup as compared to the 'nuclear' one. But the worrying factor remains that even today they are 'socio-economically backward'

5.2   Keeping in mind, the above evaluation, I ventured to apply a legal basis to the issues as faced by my research subjects. I have visited Police stations to find the role they play in helping women in society. I found violence cases, cyber crime cases, quarreling parents etc. I understood that for every dispute, there are laws and government policies to find solutions to such disputes. Legislations, Indian Constitution, and governance is required for a balanced society and impartial treatment of women in society. I found that social change and social justice can be met only through active participation of the urban and rural women. In a dynamic society, legal research must adopt multi or inter-disciplinary approach as the legal problems relate to social, political, economic, psychological issues. The issues that emanate out of the empirical analysis are:

i)   Patriarchal social norms and biases.
ii)   Political independence
iii)   Literacy
iv)   Women's rights and legislation
v)   Women's Discrimination
vi)   Adoption
vii)   Gender bias such as Pay parity, Birth of son, Job bias, Mismatches in sharing of resources/daily chores
viii)   Domestic Violence includes physical, emotional, sexual, and economic
ix)   Marriage rights such as inter-caste marriages, marriageable age, Dowry, Divorce
x)   Reservation in Politics, Policies, and education
xi)   Women's harassment
xii)   Governance shortfalls
xiii)   Cyber crime

The above issues have demonstrated that household decisions are paramount in a women's social index and is at the cost of all the above parameters. The following **Diagram7** brings out the dichotomy over a period spanning from year 2005 to 2020:

Trend observed across social empowerment indicators

Diagram 7

5.3   The above indicators do have a legal backing as mentioned hereunder in **Diagram 8**:

Sr.No	Issues	Legislations
1	Trafficking of minors for exploitation	The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956
2	Prevention of Dowry	The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961
3	Women's right to live with dignity	The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987
4	Violence against women/girl child	Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005
5	Protection of women at workplace	The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition And Redressal) Act, 2013
6	Crime specific to women	The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013
7	Reservation/priority in politics, service etc.	The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986
8	Sexual offences against minors	Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012
9	Rights of pregnant women	Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971
10	Female infanticide	Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation) Act (PCPNDT) 1994
8	Penalty, fine and imprisonment	The Indian Penal Code,1860
9	Evidence gathering	The Indian Evidence Act,1872
10	Article 21: right to life has been expanded to include right to Life with Dignity	right to divorce, live a life free from violence & right to safe abortions.
11	Article 51A: fundamental duties	renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.
12	Internet based crimes such as pornography, stalking, hacking etc.	The Information Technology Act,2000

Diagram 8

It can be deciphered from the above facts, that there is in existence legislations to tackle the issues with regards the women empowerment. There are punishments galore, but they have failed to be a deterrent in raising the status of women and the girlchild. But practically, these laws have been circumvented to establish male hegemony. For instance, in our village, the Chief (Sarpanch) is a women but her husband controls all the decisions. Though seats are reserved for women in elections, the decisions are taken by the men. If a man does not qualify being a reserved seat, his close relative i.e., daughter/wife contests the elections. Similar, is the situation in preference for male child or job reservation, those who are aware and in control in society corner largest share of such benefits! With the adaption of the new Business Model post COVID pandemic, most of the activities have their Digital avatar, be it entertainment, food, vehicle, movies, sports, banking, payments etc. With such digitization, comes Cyber crimes especially towards women, they have been given jargons such as stalking, defacing, blackmailing, fake profiling, morphing, and publishing or transmitting sexually explicit messages online. According to the World Health Organization, 1 in 3 women have experienced - physical or sexual violence. For such social malice, there is legislation and a socio-legal approach that points to a solution. The social issues thus may be seen to occupy space between the two extremes of a methodological spectrum. At one end, we have legislations and judicial precedents. We host our national flag and sing National Anthem without realising social injustice that is being inflicted on our women. It has also been found in the survey, that women do not know their constitutional and legal rights even to this day. Approaches at the other end, hamper the social justice towards women. But sadly, the women have not been made aware and educated on this front. In the next section a metric approach has been adopted to seek solutions to this crucial issue. To reiterate, let us ask this question to the MEN, for once their counterparts are liberated, the society will progress and the goals of social justice towards women and girlchild will be automatically met.

VI. FINDING A DATAMETRIC SOLUTION

In the light of the above survey, let us see some of the parameters which need to be factored for women's justice by extrapolation to the National level.

6.1 Gender Parity- Expenditure

The survey revealed not a trace of spending towards mitigating the 'Gender Parity'. None of the participants ever mentioned any allocation of funds to redress this issue. In fact, according to the CII National Committee on Women Empowerment, India's gender gap has widened by 4.3%. India ranks 135 among a total of 146 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index 2022. The parameters which determined the above sorry rank are illustrated in **Diagram 9**.
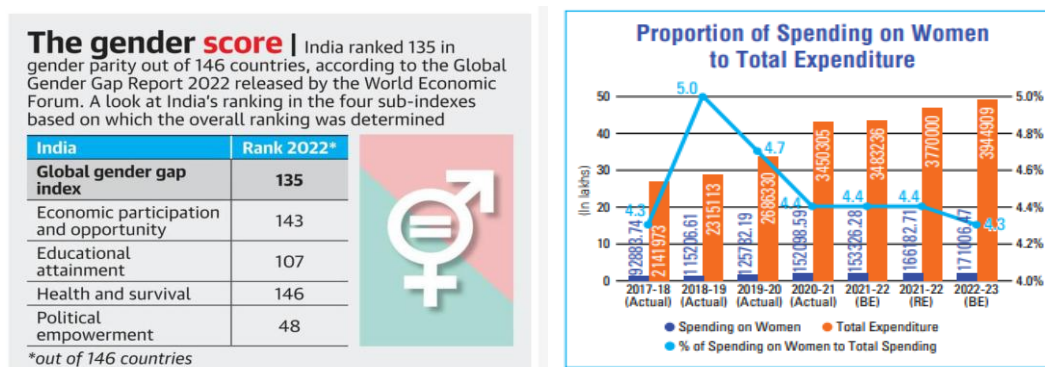
Diagram 9

India is ranked even below Bangladesh, Nepal, Maldives, and Sri Lanka. This implies that these countries offer better economic and social justice to women. The peculiar situation is further aggravated by lackadaisical government policies. The total expenditure/share of spending on women's welfare schemes has remained stagnant for three years and marginally reduced in the Budget Estimate of 2022-23. The aforesaid regretful situation is represented in **Diagram 10** below.
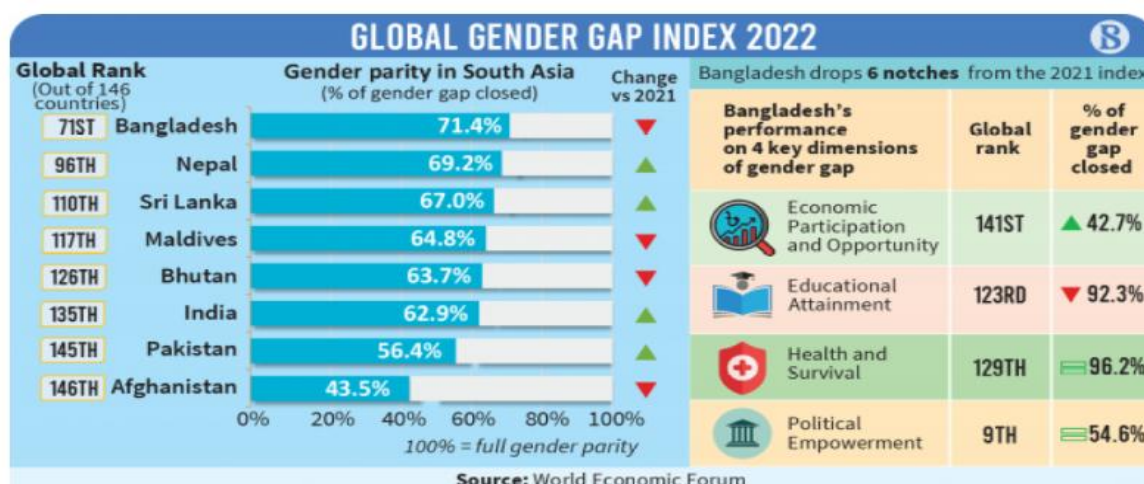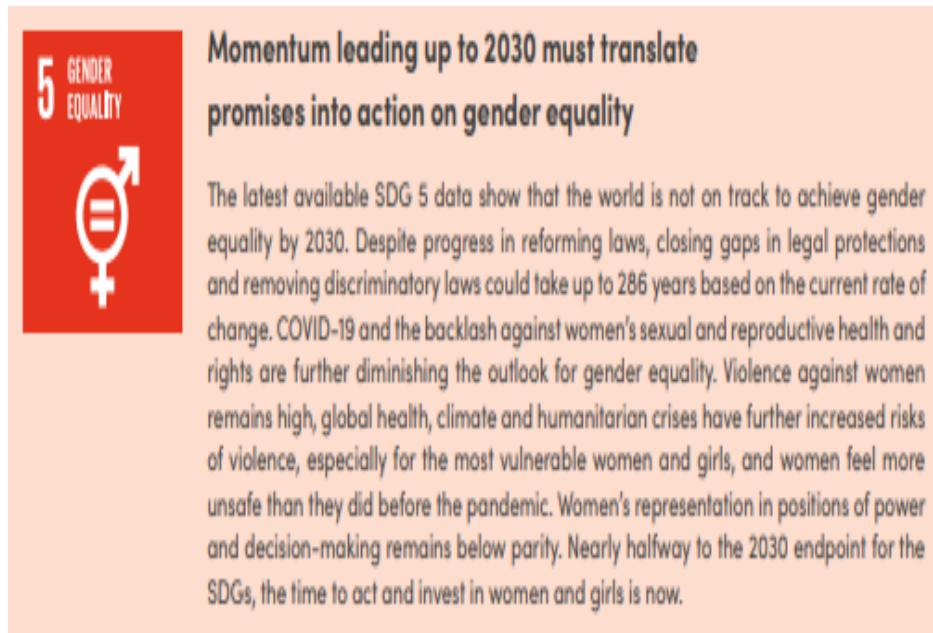

Diagram 10

Recently, the United Nations women launched '*Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG): The Gender Snapshot 2022*'. According to these findings, it will take close to 300 years to achieve full gender equality at the current rate of progress. Even considering, the above-mentioned laws towards women, the said report warns that it will take up to 286 years to close gaps in legal protection and remove discriminatory laws and 140 years for women to be represented equally in positions of power and leadership in the workplace at the current rate of progress.

The key highlights of the said report jointly produced by UN Women and the UN Statistics Division, are as under:

Diagram 11

Thus unless and until more funds are spent towards schemes to address the above matter with regards the 'Gender Parity', no justice on this aspect can be forthcoming.

6.2 Digital Divide

The survey revealed that amongst the subjects, out of 48 women, only 2 namely the Sarpanch and the Vice-Sarpanch had mobiles. This reveals a serious digital divide pointing to Gender bias. It is noteworthy to point out that the Government has come up with the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (*WEP*) which is a first-of-its-kind unified-access portal that seeks to overcome information asymmetry in the women entrepreneurial ecosystem. As noted in the analytical section of this project, women are seeking jobs but such ones which are to their specifications like a support to the traditional family set-up, earning income and getting training in the entrepreneurship area. In its most recent phase, *WEP Nxt* was launched with new features powered by artificial intelligence, natural language processing for advanced analytics-driven engagement of women entrepreneurs and partners. It remains to be seen how this venture shapes the life of women.

6.3 Care Sector

It has been found that expanding care services, particularly for children, the elderly, and the ailing, can positively impact women's participation in the labor force. The concept of Old-age homes is a characteristic of a urban nuclear set-up while Senior citizens stay in the villages with their younger family members moving out for jobs in nearby towns and cities. The village women along with the old men, form a sizeable rural labor workforce doing again allied agricultural or construction activities in the villages itself. It was noted from the research that the Old are also seen as a backup for their offspring working in urban areas.

6.4 Nirbhaya Funds (Women's safety)

There is an allocation of Rs. 10.4 crore versus Rs. 855.23 crore budget estimates for FY2020-21. The revised estimate for FY2020-21 has been cut to Rs. 8.53 crore which shows that this sector is not a priority for the Government, as of now. Thus, more needs to be done on this front of 'domestic abuse' – termed as the 'shadow pandemic' by women. The "women helpline" and "one stop centre" line items in the gender budget, both show reduced figures under revised estimates for FY2020-21, and these are, in fact, empty for FY2021-22. for FY2019-20. The Nirbhaya fund is Rs. 11.38 crore versus an allocation (budget estimate) of Rs. 891.23 crore.

6.5 Mission Shakti Health sector: Mental dimension

Mission for Empowerment & Protection of Women, has seen an allocation of Rs.3184.11 Crore, this is a marginal increase from the budgeted amount of Rs.3109.00 core in 2021-22. However, there has been a substantial decline to Rs.2121.09 crore in the Revised Estimate figure of 2021-22. While the budget claims to take a holistic approach to healthcare, there is no mention of mental health considering the women are even today subjected to mental trauma. Mental health is known to affect productivity, and emerging evidence on the impact of Covid-19 on vulnerable groups has noted differential effects of the crisis on the mental health of women in particular.

6.6 Smart Initiatives

This exercise undertaken by me, also revealed that the number of girls/women who are exposed to STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education are NIL. To tackle this aspect, as part of my IB (International Baccalaureate) curriculum, an awareness scheme has been launched by my team consisting of my schoolmates to educate students to opt for these streams. Visits to various schools and gatherings form part of these initiatives. As part of the Government initiative, the State Government in Gujarat has taken important steps in this direction by constituting a STEM quiz (*The Journey of a new generation*) for students of IXth to XIIth standards through their website: *stemquiz.gujarat.gov.in* to inculcate in them the importance of these streams. In this context, the World Bank via its smart economics approach defines gender equality as an integral part of economic development and aims to spur development through investing more efficiently in women and girls. It stresses that the gap between men and women in human capital, economic opportunities and voice/agency is a chief obstacle in achieving more efficient development. The Bank proclaimed that investing in women *"speeds economic development by raising productivity and promoting the more efficient use of resources; it produces significant social returns, improving child survival and reducing fertility, and it has considerable intergenerational pay-offs."* Under smart economics, falls the 'business case' for gender equality and the empowerment of women, by businesses and enterprises which are interested in contributing to social good. A good example is the *"Girl Effect initiative"* of the Nike Foundation.

VII. CONCLUSION

The Women eco-system is a very complex system but a necessary one, if Indian society needs to progress fast. It calls for the concept of sustainability- a confluence of nature, society, and economy. The survey shows that the local women issues are not dissimilar to those seen on the National scale. The COVID19 situation has brought in a whole new world before us. The way we trade, the way we think and the way we adapt is the new mantra for survival. There are strengths galore to be attained with adoption of the latest in science and technology. But there are before us new challenges and an opportunity that has sprouted, and it is for us that we care and tender the buds into beautiful flowers. It is for us to change the way we live our life and contributing to place the Indian Economy on the fast track. Women workforce can be the torchbearer to solve our long-standing problems of meeting social and economic justice. The legislations can put such women progress in a fast-forward mode and help to boost the income of the family and hence the society at large. Since 'Big Data' is the new 'Oil' today, parameters associated with this sector can also be a 'Unique Selling Proposition'(USP). Collecting data through surveys etc. can be an excellent data source and with Artificial Intelligence can strategize and plan future moves. Women can thus be a vital and core component of social engineering. Women centric Laws needs to be applied for the protection of the social justice and the Government policies needs to implement this legal justice. In the light of the aforesaid factual and legal matrix, there wont be an exaggeration to say. 'With the backing of our own men, our women can become the frontrunners of the Indian economy. This research study has made me aware of my rights as a girl child and a women, in particular. I have seen my brother doing IB and studying in US, I am now in IB-2 and would be in US for my further studies. I am taking an initiative and a small step to be on par with my brother. I am spreading this message through my STEM project. I have always believed drops of water make an ocean, and I believe that I am that drop of wonder, one that wants to close the gender gap which is still a telling issue on this map of society.

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