Shared Prosperity: Women’s Contribution to India’s Growth

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Abstract

Not all women and girls are able to pursue optimal life choices, enjoy a variety of leisure activities, and garner fair and equitable wages for their labor. Women are thus precluded from equitable enjoyment and participation in personal and communal growth, as well as access to the fruits of their production. *Shared Prosperity* investigates the financial realities of Indian women, and how their fiscal circumstances affect India’s economy.

Central to the analysis is the intersection of women’s rights and national growth effects as reflected through Martin Prosperity Institute’s tolerance and talent metrics for place prosperity. How does gender inequality stunt India’s economic progress? How do women contribute to India’s growth, and by what means can these contributions be maximized through increased gender equality measures? These are the overarching questions *Shared Prosperity* tackles.

Through examination of relationships and connections between unpaid labour, education, literacy, informal/unorganized employment, and lack of access to economic resources (such as land ownership rights), to women’s prosperity outcomes and, by extension, national economic advancement, the result of this research provides an overview of Indian women’s economic positions, as well as policy proposals toward improved economic results for Indian women and India as a whole.

*Shared Prosperity* analyzes aspects of Indian women’s current prosperity as well as the potential economic impact reform can have for Indian women, and moves on to propose broad policy recommendations to enhance Indian women’s prosperity. The conclusion outlines how increased equality for women and girls will make India a more productive and prosperous country.
Introduction

Lack of equal access to land, credit, technology, and education, as well as inequitable household and unpaid workload distribution are major factors that affect Indian women's prosperity (Government of India, 2013). Increasing Indian women's access to employment, land ownership, health, education, and other economic resources will improve their economic wealth.

In their article, *Feminist Economics of Inequality, Development, and Growth*, Berik, van der Meulen Rodgers, and Seguino (2009), note a plethora of research that links gender inequalities to slowed overall country growth rates, and observe that access to land rights, income equality and other increased equality factors all contribute to regional growth. However, the writers warn that increased equality in one sector (such as education) does not indicate increased overall equality as women with lower wage bargaining power may not be able to access wage equality or “translate increased skill into commensurate remuneration” (ibid. 17). This means that, in order to increase women’s prosperity and by extension India’s prosperity, India must increase women’s overall equality by simultaneously counteracting diverse inequalities to produce the best possible results: increased prosperity for women and India as a whole.

According to the Martin Prosperity Institute's, *The Rise of Women in the Creative Class* (Florida, Mellander, King, 2011), areas with higher levels of tolerance, talent and technology (the 3Ts) fare better economically. It stands to reason: a country with greater support, acceptance and respect for women’s rights and equality of outcome (given a similar pool of talent and technology) will fare better economically than one that does not extend inclusive practices to all of its constituents. In line with the Martin Prosperity Institute's assessments, cities with greater Creative Class populations have stronger economic prospects than cities with reduced Creative Class communities. Therefore, enhancement of women and girls’ participation in all areas of India’s development will increase India’s Creative Classes through the integration of up to 46 percent of its society into better opportunities for education, employment, and prosperity growth, which will, in turn, allow more women to enter Creative Class occupations with greater ease (**Exhibit 1**).
Although the recent Global Tolerance rankings (Florida, Mellander, and Stolarick, 2013), considers India moderately tolerant in comparison to developing and developed countries with a ranking of 30th out of 80 countries, specific gender-based metrics were not included in India’s overall tolerance measure. Conversely, Freedom House recently released a report that states rape, harassment, and other offenses against women are serious problems in India, with particular vulnerability attributed to lower-caste and tribal women (Freedom House, 2013). Increased gender-fair inclusion — inclusion fits within the MPI 3T tolerance model — of Indian women and girls (regardless of caste and religious affiliation) will amplify talent growth among India’s women and thus also positively affect India’s fiscal growth.

The first section of this report conducts an analysis of some aspects of Indian women’s current prosperity: their legal rights, economic outcomes, educational achievement, and labour participation.

The second section investigates policy reform options and their potential economic impact on Indian women, proposes broad recommendations to enhance Indian women’s working conditions, legal outcomes and societal positions — their prosperity — and discusses how increased gender equality will make India a more productive, inclusive, and prosperous country.
Definitions:
Although many of the following terms can be defined in a myriad of ways, for our purposes, Shared Prosperity defines the ensuing terms in the following ways:

**Formal and Substantive Equality**
Formal equality, or equality stipulated in the law, is not enough on its own to create real change for women. Substantive equality, or the equality of outcome rather than just the equality of opportunity, must be considered within a feminist analysis of women’s prosperity drivers and indicators. Without substantive equality, formal equality fails women and only acts as a deterrent to further investigation into the systematic disadvantages women experience.

**Prosperity**
Shared Prosperity defines prosperity for women and girls through a feminist lens that entails (but is not limited to) these metrics:

1. Sustainability (or an ability to sustain prosperity and wellbeing going forward and pass it on to the next generation);
2. Equity (both formal and substantive);
3. Political freedom and the ability to choose between a variety of optimal bundles of lifestyles and life options that include (but are not limited to) leisure activities.

Freedom, health, equality under the law, environment (present and future), personal metrics of happiness, political voice, social connection, material living standards, access to affordable child care, and reproductive freedoms as issues of agency, as well as personal and social empowerment will also be used (to the extent possible), to help determine women’s prosperity and access to prosperity.

**Unpaid Labour**
The OECD *Unpaid Work Around the World* report recognizes unpaid labour as the production of goods and services by family members that are not sold on the market, including work that is for consumption within the family (cooking, gardening, house cleaning) and work consumed by people not living in the household (cooking for friends, assisting elderly relatives etcetera). The report further identifies the boundary between paid and unpaid work as determined by the “third-person” criterion (OECD, 2013). The “third-person” criterion states that if a third person could be paid to perform the activity (such as cooking, cleaning, childcare, laundry) the activity is considered work. Alternatively, someone else cannot be paid to watch a TV show or silently read the newspaper on behalf of another person; these activities are thus considered leisure and not work (ibid.).

**Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB)**
According to United Nations Women (UN Women), Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) is government planning, programming and budgeting that supports gender equality and women’s rights advancement. GRB pinpoints required interventions
to address gender gaps in sector and local government policies, plans and budgets, and analyzes the gender-differentiated impact of revenue-raising policies and the allocation of domestic resources and Official Development Assistance.

**Gender Budget Statement (GBS)**

The Gender Budget Statement (GBS) evaluates what percentage of total budget expenditure drifts to women, through lists of various programs/schemes across ministries/departments with their corresponding disbursements for women/girls (UN Women, 2013). In her paper entitled Breaking New Frontiers for Gender Responsive Budgeting, Mishra describes a Gender Budget Statement as a government statement that examines budget documents from a gender lens around the effects of a budget on gender equality and women’s empowerment, and analyzes a particular budget for its gender implications (Mishra, 2011).

Gender Budget Statements are not the same as Gender Responsive Budgeting because the goal is to create more gender responsive budgets and policies; investigating public expenditure is insufficient (ibid).

**Alternatively-employed Workers**

Informal, or unorganized, workers are classified as different from entrepreneurs, because entrepreneurs create their own market and are not financially dependent on the people they work for. Thus, although the informal worker cannot be classified as an “employee”, they also cannot be classified as truly “self-employed” (WIEGO, 2013). However, possibly for lack of proper terminology, workers in India’s informal economy are often officially classified as “self-employed”. For the purposes of this paper, we shall refer to informal workers as “alternatively-employed” in order to differentiate them from the traditionally understood meaning of self-employed.
1. Gender Inequality: India’s Creative Class Losses

In his What Makes Women Rich article, Richard Florida states that women’s economic opportunities are closely linked with countries’ moves to “knowledge-driven economic structures with higher levels of human capital and more creative class occupations” (Florida, 2010). Florida further notes that women’s economic opportunity is greater in more open and tolerant nations (ibid). Florida found a close relationship between women’s economic opportunities and the Global Creativity Index. And, thus advanced the understanding that “creating economic and social structures to develop women’s full talents and afford them the full range of economic opportunity is a key element in securing lasting economic prosperity” (ibid). Conversely, it stands to reason that when women are precluded from equal economic growth potential, women suffer, children suffer, families suffer, and GDP suffers.

If India strengthens and increases its measures to include women in all aspects of national growth through solidification of women’s access to equality of outcomes, more Indian women are likely to enter Creative Class occupations. According to Understanding the Creative Economy in India’s Cities report, The Creative Class is fundamentally responsible for producing innovative concepts and designs that produce economic growth (Stolarick, Fasche, Goyal, Gilligan and Segal, 2013). A talented, creative, and well-informed workforce nurtures competitive advantage, initiates innovation, and encourages overall productivity and prosperity improvements (Florida, 2002; Florida, Mellander and Stolarick, 2008; Florida, Mellander and Stolarick, 2009; Martin Prosperity Institute, 2009). Thus, increasing India’s creative class through improved gender equity will positively affect India’s economic advancement.

The Gender Inequality Index (GII), which illustrates potential human development losses as a result of gender inequality, fluctuates between 0, where women and men fare equally; and 1, where either gender fares as poorly as possible in every measurement, ranked India 136th out of 186 countries, with a score of 0.61 (2012); almost at the bottom of the GII (UNDP, 2012). The 2011 UNDP Inequality-adjusted Human development Index (IHDI), used to capture distributional measurements of human development, such as income, education, and health to adjust for inequalities in attainments across people, added a loss of 32 percent of its value to India’s previous 119 out of 169 global Human Development Index (HDI) ranking when adjusted for inequalities, or IHDI (UNDP 2011). Immense gender inequality translates into enormous human capital losses for India.

1 As a point of reference, Canada (for example) weighed in at 11th, with a score of .0119
Sex-based discrimination sits at the root of Indian women’s compounding losses and negatively affects many areas of India’s growth. Women who experience gendered discrimination are often not able to complete their education or, for those who do complete their education, opt out of the workforce (possibly due to socially accepted norms around marriage, family and household labour production). Women who are unable to access education, and especially women who are also unable to enjoy equal rights to land and property ownership (compounded with issues of child care and inflexible work hour requirements) — formal inequality — find themselves entrenched in India’s massive unorganized (also referred to as informal) economy. This destructive mix of formal and substantive inequality negatively affects Indian women’s prosperity.

Because India’s informal economy often runs without attention to formal equality — established labor and gender rights — informal female workers fall prey to wage inequality, extremely long working hours, and exaggerated gender discrimination: substantive inequality. These effects translate into a lack of fiscal and formal power that cripples women workers’ abilities to invest in themselves and their families. This is to say that, among other things, many women are unable to allot a portion of their economic resources to education, recreation, savings, health, and retirement, which all negatively affect the sustainability element of prosperity. Furthermore, women’s lack of equal access to land and property rights also translates into a lack of access to financial investment capital, which converts into lost economic power to such an extent as to lower India’s overall economic growth due to women’s lack of investment and savings possibilities (Exhibit 2).
1.1 Compounded discrimination and entrenched gender role attitudes: Women’s generational poverty cycles

In her paper, entitled Gender Role Attitudes and Women’s Labor Market Participation, Fortin contends that gender role attitudes account for about a third of gender differences in the evolution of labor force participation (Fortin, 2009). What could account for the other two thirds of gender differences in labour force participation? What happens to women imprisoned in the lowest of castes in the Hindu caste hierarchy — the Dalit caste?

In 2005, an estimated 95 percent of India’s 700,000 manual scavengers were women (ILO, 2011). Discrimination on grounds of sex and social origin trap consecutive generations of Dalit women in conventionally caste-based jobs, like manual scavenging (ibid.). Manual scavenging is a dangerous, unhealthy working environment that involves by-hand removal of human excreta from public streets, septic tanks, gutters, and sewage (ibid.).

As a result of compounded discrimination based on both caste and gender, many Indian women are trapped in generational poverty cycles (ILO, 2011). Targets of this multifaceted form of discrimination are pushed into the margins of poorest compensated, precarious occupations, and express highest unemployment levels (ibid).

Persistent discriminatory practices based on gender, and intersecting with caste, continued dowry practices (despite India’s legal reform), ongoing “honor killings”, and increased access to sex selective abortion practices have created a poisonous environment for Indian women and girls in many Indian states that includes (but is not limited to) sustained child bride customs and gender-based feticide regardless of laws meant to curb these behaviors. In fact, 2011 census data exposed added decline in some of India’s states’ female/male sex ratio, pointing to the failure of laws aimed at reducing sex-selective abortions (ILO, 2011). As a result, some Indian states now experience extreme gender disparities that have grown exponentially since 2001 (Exhibit 3).

Deterioration in India’s child sex ratio leads to stark socio-economic, demographic and social consequences (Janaki Ramaiah, Chandrasekarayya, and Vinayaga Murthy, 2011). Although not conclusive, the evidence demonstrates the severity of gender-discriminatory practices (such as sex-selective abortions) that have led to diminished numbers of women and girls, falling below the world average of 105 male for every 100 female babies (ibid.). Janaki Ramaiah et. Al. identify a number of causes that contribute to the drop in female sex ratio at birth: sex selective abortions, son preference, high mortality rate, female foeticide, cultural practices, neglect of the girl child, and sex-selective abortions (ibid). India’s 2011 child sex ratio (914) was inferior to the overall sex ratio (940), exposing the severity of this issue (Ibid. pp. 185–186).
Gender distribution disparity over time

Exhibit 3

India, 2001 and 2011
Share of population by gender per state
With regards to the child sex ratio (quantity of female children per 1,000 male within the 0–6 years age group) gender distribution disparity reductions have been noted in Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Mizoram, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands; however, increased gender disparity remains in the other 27 states and Union Territories (Janaki Ramaiah, Chandrasekarayya, and Vinayaga Murthy, 2011) (Exhibit 4).

Child sex ratio share by highest and lowest areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Child Sex Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mizoram</td>
<td>971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haryana</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahendragarh</td>
<td>778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jhajjar</td>
<td>774</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Martin Prosperity Institute analysis adapted from Janaki Ramaiah, Chandrasekarayya, and Vinayaga Murthy, 2011
2. Indian Women’s Literacy and Education: It’s a Good Start, But It’s Not Enough

Literacy and education alone are not enough to grow prosperity for Indian women. Although college-educated Indian women are more likely to be in the workforce, only 34 percent of college-educated Indian women are in the Indian labor force (Crabtree and Pugliese, 2012). Economic outcome improvements for Indian women rely on a number of supporting forces including (but not limited to):

1. Reduction of unpaid labour (through provision of state-supported child and elderly care, and greater enforcement of pay equity between genders);
2. Extension and greater enforcement of land ownership rights for all Indian women;
3. Implementation of, and support for, gender equality education for all;
4. Ongoing financial support of rights awareness and utilization programs for rural-based Indian communities

Approximately 85 percent of rural and 59 percent of urban Indian women remain illiterate or only literate to a primary level (World Bank Group, 2011). Without increased educational outcomes, Indian women are less likely to enter India’s organized economy, where they are more likely to access fair wages and social benefits. Understanding the Creative Economy in India’s Cities report findings show that, as officially measured, young Indian women’s recent literacy rates appear on par with young Indian men (Stolarick, Fasche, Goyal, Gilligan, and Segal, 2013) (Exhibit 5); a good sign that Indian women may become a stronger and more represented force in India’s labour markets going forward.

Macroeconomic theory and policy must be created within a human well-being framework, as opposed to macroeconomic ‘achievement’ framework, with wellbeing understood as the combination of adequate provisioning that entails ‘paid labor, unpaid care activities, and entitlements provided by the state or community; and capabilities (Berik, van der Meulen Rodgers, and Seguino, 2009). Likewise, development is the expansion of the above competences and thus stresses the need for “not only equality of opportunity but also equality of outcomes” — substantive equality. Thus, increased equality in education does not necessarily point to increased overall equality as women with lower wage bargaining power may not be able to access wage equality or “translate increased skill into commensurate remuneration” (Ibid. 17).
Despite increased educational outcomes, India displays the largest female workforce drop-out rates (known as the “leaking pipeline”) (Crabtree and Pugliese, 2012) between the junior and middle levels (ibid.). The earlier women leave the workforce, the more the female worker base shrinks, and the less women there are left to climb corporate ranks. This results in less women with senior positions (ibid.). Ergo, increased literacy alone will not substantially improve women’s economic outcomes. Women’s economic outcomes will not improve while strong gender-based substantive inequities persist with unpaid labour consuming a large portion of Indian women and girls’ time, which translate into less time and fewer opportunities for women and girls to earn employment experience. Consequently, reduction in experience produces further reduction in wages (Bhalla and Kaur, 2011) (Exhibit 6).

Childcare, for example, is a costly endeavor for women, as years spent taking care of children are lifespan earnings opportunity costs; the more time a woman spends taking care of children, the less time she is able to spend garnering the experience she needs to provide her with higher wages. Hence, childcare further
translates into lost lifespan earnings for women (Asia Research Centre, 2011) — lowered overall prosperity outcomes due to substantive inequality that dictates that women must have children and must also bear the heaviest portion of unpaid childcare labour (Exhibit 7).
3. Where is India’s Female Workforce?

Women account for 47.69 percent of India’s 117 billion people (World Bank Group, 2011). That’s almost 58 billion units of people power. However, only 35 percent of working-age females toil in India’s formal workforce (ibid.), compared to the 65 percent of women in the labour force OECD average (OECD, 2013).

Some possible reasons for Indian women’s exclusion from the organized workforce include (but are not limited to):

- Literacy and educational barriers;
- Entrenchment in unpaid labour and unpaid family work, such as child care, household chores, and elderly care — 74 percent of rural and 50 percent of urban women who identify as self-employed are unpaid family workers (Rustagi, 2010);
- Ongoing legal discrepancies and lack of access to land and property ownership rights;
- Gender-based and compounded discrimination

3.1 Women’s piece of the pie: Alternatively employed women’s roles in India’s informal economy

The large majority of India’s workforce labor inside an informal economy (Naik, 2009). Formalization of India’s informal economy may profit the country and its most vulnerable workers. Income tax garnered from newly formalized employment contracts may grow government income. Formalized private and business permit payments and renewals will also increase overall government revenue. Bigger savings and investment opportunities, fair wages, and overall health care cost savings realized through improved worker access to basic social security will translate into a stronger overall Indian workforce. The above would also grow Indian women’s prosperity through increased sustainability (health benefits), equity (wage equality), and freedom (fair and equitable working hours that provide opportunities for leisure activities).

What is often denoted as formal and informal employment, many of India’s government and statistical reports refer to as organized and unorganized labour with the two terms often used interchangeably. Between 2009 and 2010, an estimated 83.6 percent of India’s workforce toiled in the “unorganized” employment sector with a high proportion of workers classified as “self-employed” (ILO and WIEGO, 2012) (Exhibit 8).
According to the ILO, the informal sector can be described as unregistered or small unincorporated private enterprises that provide goods and/or services for sale or barter (ILO, 2013). These jobs, found in formal and informal sectors as well as households, normally lack basic social and legal safeguards and benefits (ibid.).

Unorganized labor is a form of work and income security that may compensate for lack of formal employment, and/or low productivity of existing work, and allows workers to navigate multiple duties efficiently (WIEGO, 2013). Unorganized labour participation can also be a lucrative, competitive, productive, and fulfilling alternative to organized employment. It is important to note that an alternatively employed worker is not necessarily a worker who lacks economic prosperity.

Alternatively Employed workers are a subsection of India’s Informal economy inadequately labeled as Self-employed workers. These particular workers are comprised of a number of subsections of alternatively-employed workers including employers, unpaid contributing family workers, informal employees (including paid domestic workers employed by private households, as well as informal worker in both formal and informal enterprises), members of informal producer cooperatives, and own account workers. Own account workers create their own informal
employment initiatives for themselves and/or with their family and do not hire other employees (WIEGO, 2013) and make up the majority of India’s alternatively-employed workers (Unni & Rani, 2012) including street vendors, waste pickers and others (see Exhibit 9).

Types of employment often found in India’s unorganized labour market include contract workers, sub-contract workers, and alternatively-employed workers who are employed in their own informal initiatives; employers employed in their own informal enterprises; contributing family workers; members of informal producers’ cooperatives; employees in informal jobs in formal enterprises, informal enterprises, or as paid domestic workers hired by households; and own-account workers (ILO, 2013).

Alternatively employed workers can be split up into five categories: 1. own account workers, who can be further dissected into street vendors, waste pickers, forest gatherers, fish workers, and other own account style employment; 2. employers; 3. unpaid contributing family workers; 4. Informal employees, who can further be split into informal employees who work at informal jobs in formal enterprises, informal employees who work at informal jobs in informal enterprises, and paid domestic workers employed by households; 5. Members of informal producer cooperatives (Exhibit 9).
Women bear the heaviest contributing family worker burdens (ILO, 2013). It is thus no surprise that, in light of competing family duties, long unpaid home labour hours and general gender inequalities, women are more engaged in unorganized labour (WIEGO, 2013). The level of income in the informal economy also differs by gender and type of activity. Generally, however, female workers’ annual incomes are inferior to men’s, and piece-rate workers — women form the majority of piece-rate workers — experience the lowest incomes (ibid.). This translates into extreme substantive inequality for Indian women regardless of their formal equality rights.

As of 2011, it is estimated that approximately 94 percent of total women workers are employed in India’s unorganized economy (Gupta, 2011). The number of alternatively-employed female workers in India is far greater than that of other countries, such as China (Exhibit 10).

As the unorganized economy does not always conform to the country’s labour and equity laws, many informal Indian women workers face gender discrimination (Gupta, 2011). As a result, Indian women often earn less income than that of their male counterparts (ibid).

Although the Unorganized Workers’ Social Security Act of 2008 can serve as a gateway for informal workers to access basic social security (Government of India, 2008), the nature of unorganized employment creates difficulties for workers.
to acquire benefits and supports, such as regulated safe working conditions and access to the resources they require for ongoing employment — waste pickers, for example, require ongoing access to urban waste.

3.1.1 Waste pickers: India’s robust recycling economy
Waste pickers, one of India’s immense unorganized labour sectors dominated by women, depend on their ability to access urban waste as a natural resource and thus would benefit from formal acknowledgment as a valued labour portion of India’s recycling industry and invaluable asset to India’s environmental sustainability.

On a daily basis, Indian waste pickers (also known as rag pickers) collect and separate recyclables from urban waste, and transfer the finds to small dealers. Small dealers peddle the waste to medium or large dealers, who sell it to recycling units (Annepu, 2013). Waste picking is an affirmative source of revenue for many of India’s urban poor, whose average earnings (of the least prosperous) still surpass the legal minimum wage (Annepu, 2013).

As many municipalities have yet to validate waste picking, waste picking is a somewhat lucrative career that any unemployed person can enter into with few (if any) legal or educational barriers, thus proving an expedient job for those who arrive, destitute, to new cities. The majority of the waste pickers in Pune, for example, are descendants of families that migrated there from Solapur and Ahmedbagar villages affected by the 1972 draughts.

Waste picking is also an economic way for Indian cities to recycle their urban waste. An estimated 56 percent of overall recycling in India is generated by waste-pickers, a very high amount when juxtaposed with the approximated 30 percent realized by various infrastructure-intensive centralized waste management systems in Europe and the US (Annepu, 2013).

Realizing the potential savings involved, some Indian municipalities have taken steps to formalize informal waste picker economies. In Pune, India, for example, waste pickers enjoy a contractual agreement with the Pune Municipal Corporation, (signed in 2008) that provides formally paid (through the collection of user-fees for service) employment for over 2,100 waste pickers intended for door-to-door waste collection services to more than 360,000 city households (World Bank, 2013). Although Pune’s municipality provides waste pickers with health insurance and purchases their necessary equipment (carts, gloves, etc.), its overall waste recycling and collection costs are far lower than the costs it would incur through contracts with private collection and disposal agencies (ibid.).

Because waste pickers reap their living from urban waste production, waste pickers’ labour requirements intertwine with Indian municipal policies on disposal of waste, environmental laws and regulations, mechanizations through privatization of waste collection, and tendering policies and practices for solid waste management (WIEGO, 2013).
Waste pickers’ inherent legal rights to basic social security (as per the Unorganized Workers’ Social Security Act of 2008), must be recognized and strengthened. In order to strengthen women’s economic powers, India should also provide waste pickers with ongoing, sole legal access to urban waste. This proposition, of course, is not without its own issues; generally, after being “picked”, a significant amount of urban waste remains piled up on the streets. Best outcomes would entail a clean-up solution for the waste that is not “picked”. This could be an opportunity to create further employment in the field.

Thus, in the case of waste pickers, to formalize this section of the unorganized labour market, the Indian government must additionally acknowledge waste pickers’ rights and labour requirements in municipal policies on disposal of waste, environmental laws and regulations, mechanizations through privatization of waste collection, and tendering policies and practices for solid waste management (WIEGO, 2013).

### 3.2 No Women’s Land: Indian women, prosperity, and land rights

Landlessness is chief forecaster for poverty around the world (Government of India). Property rights influence wealth distribution, production and market development, including credit markets, which developed as economic growth and poverty reduction prerequisites (Roy, 2011). Arable land ownership generates wealth and sustains incomes (Agarwal, 2002). With 86 percent of all rural Indian women workers employed in agriculture (ibid), greater government support for the land rights of all women regardless of caste, religion, community affiliation, or cultural attitudes and social norms is imperative for increased growth and prosperity.

In India, a woman’s property rights differ depending on her religion, her marital status, the state she comes from, and her tribal identity. Due to differences in laws, regulations, and standards, some women in India have more land ownership rights than others. Hindu women, for example, benefit from the Hindu Succession Act (1956); amended in 2005 to correct ambiguities with particular regard to joint family property and tenancy rights. The Hindu Succession Act also applies to Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains. Conversely, Christians have their own property rights codes. And, Muslim property rights codes differ from all the aforementioned groups.

Although policies and laws that support some women’s equality to land ownership do exist, implementation of policies that enforce equal land rights is fragile, lax, or non-existent. While land ownership is traditionally passed through family vis-à-vis inheritance, many practiced rules and culturally accepted norms around land and property succession preclude women from land inheritance and property ownership. Tribal status affects women’s property ownership access. In different states, property rights are governed by their customs and norms as states are allowed to enact their own succession laws (ibid.).
Of the approximate 117 million women employed in India, the vast majority toil in agriculture, outnumbering male agriculture workers year after year. As male workers move into non-agricultural positions, the larger share of household subsistence, and thus farm management and agricultural work burdens, falls onto women’s shoulders, yet lack of property titles remains a major constraint for these women (Crabtree and Pugliese, 2012) even as their rates in agricultural work prove substantially higher than that of their male counterparts (Exhibit 11).

Improved land ownership rights for women positively relates with upsurges in women and girls’ education levels by as high as 11 percent (Roy, 2011), a factor that creates rises in employment and income outcomes. In fact, an Indian woman’s wage positively correlates with growths (of about 14 percent) for each extra year in education (Bhalla and Kaur, 2011). Women’s increased access to formal and substantive land ownership will decrease India’s poverty levels and raise overall productivity (Exhibit 12).
Women’s increased access to land rights and equal opportunities will strengthen India’s economy.

**Increased access to land rights and employment**
- Extended legal protection for all Indian women regardless of religion or place of birth
- Initialized and enforced policies that support women’s access to land rights
- Public education campaigns that work to change traditional views of women
- Enforced public education for girls and boys until the age of 18

**Increased prosperity**
- Enhanced literacy
- Increased employability
- Increased ability to access land ownership rights

**Stronger Indian Economy**
- Increased income and employment rates for women
- Decreased gender inequality
- Increased investments
4. Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB), Is It Enough?

Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) initiatives create empowering policy structures, build capacity, and strengthen monitoring mechanisms that support accountability to women (UN Women). In her paper entitled, Gender Budget: A Case Study of India, Patel discusses Budget policy as an avenue for resource creation and resource reallocations to diverse sectors of the economy, and describes the Budget as an important state tool for affirmative action to advance gender relations and decrease gender gaps (Patel, 2009). Patel further argues that budgetary policies must consider gender dynamics in economy and society, and focus on participatory approaches to enhance women’s empowerment and decrease the monetary gap between economic classes (Ibid). In India, one state has put this approach into action: Kerala.

4.1 The case of Kerala, India

(Adapted excerpt from: UN Women, Mishra, Yamini, BREAKING NEW FRONTIERS FOR GENDER, 2011)

Kerala, India’s southernmost state, employed local level participatory planning to develop active local governance (United Nations democracy Fund, 2013). This state practices Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) that reaches women at the grassroots levels in areas such as infrastructure, housing, health, education, and safety.

In Kerala, women’s employment participation is facilitated through the creation of infrastructure that acknowledges women’s needs, such as separate rest rooms, toilets, and drinking water facilities in areas where women travel or work. For further safety measures, women working in minor ports receive bus services geared for women workers, as well as night shelters, and separate waiting rooms for fisherwomen — Fisherwomen wait for hours at fish drying units — to increase women’s safety and ease waiting strain.

Kerala has also pioneered regulated low-rent housing schemes that support underprivileged working women and the families they head, or collections of working women who combine resources for easier access to urban housing near areas of employment.

In order to help move female labor away from low-wage, low-growth sectors, infrastructure facilities for skill enhancement were created in ten Women’s Colleges across Kerala that facilitate access to employment in high growth sectors, such as IT.
As a result of Kerala’s gender-responsive actions, gender ratio disparity in Kerala has shrunk (with women outnumbering men). Kerala also enjoys the highest literacy rates of all Indian states. Increased literacy rates have often been linked to increased economic growth (Exhibit 13).

**Exhibit 13**

Literacy rates in Kerala outnumber those of all other states

Source: Martin Prosperity Institute analysis based on statistical data
Along with the highest level of literacy rates in India, Kerala has also achieved the highest HDI score of all Indian states (UNDP, 2011). The UNDP has further stated that India's overall IHDI prospective loss is owing to inequality with India's highest IHDI losses concentrated in the area of education (Ibid).

Kerala also provides women survivors of violence with victim Support Cells that deliver a physical space inside their police station for women to discuss issues, such as sexual violence, in a private space. Some budget funds are earmarked for use by police to facilitate abused women's transportation costs between police station, hospital, counseling center, legal support cells, and other incidentals.

These schemes not only ensure mobility, security and safety, and thus address women's practical necessities; they also facilitate women's integration with, and access to, the market. Thereby addressing strategic gender needs.

Self-employed women in Kerala also enjoy Kerala’s Income Support Scheme, which ensures Rs.150 per day for at least 100 days of work, as well as the Food Security Scheme for workers who fall below poverty lines.

Nevertheless, in spite of the abovementioned strides in gender inclusivity and stresses on equality of outcome for women and girls in Kerala, Kerala continues to exhibit increased incidents of gender violence that has placed this state third most violent area for women (Exhibit 14).

Depression, suicide, and high workload and household responsibility on the differential wage structure between males and females — despite a strong trade union movement — are evident in Kerala (Mishra, 2011).

Regardless of 2006 laws, which ban dowry-related harassment, widen domestic violence definitions to include emotional and verbal abuse, and criminalize spousal rape; one in three married Indian women between the ages of 15 and 49 experience physical violence (Freedom House, 2013).

Indian women's high socio-demographic development indicators appear to occur simultaneously with low public participation and increased prevalence of gender-based violence. These results show that, although GRB is an indispensable tool toward gender equality and women's prosperity, there is a strong necessity for additional gender equality measures above and beyond GRB: implementation of gender equity education into early years development programs and school system curricula, as well as public education media campaigns will positively affect women's substantive equalities going forward through increased overall knowledge of women and girls’ rights.
Gender-based violence persists in Indian state with increased gender equality measures

Exhibit 14

India, 2011
Share of crimes against women by state

Source: Martin Prosperity Institute analysis based on statistical data
5. Policy Recommendations

Women must be placed at the center of gender responsive policy creation and implementation. Women’s consent or approval for particular measures is not enough to push policies forward; ongoing consultative instruments must be implemented in policy design and program operation in order to ensure women’s needs and aspirations remain central to policy outcomes (AWID, 2013).

General principles governing policy responses to gendered issues must identify and consider structural inequities, as well as support the human rights principles of universality and non-discrimination not to be limited to discrimination on the basis of gender and sexual identity, but also to acknowledge other oppressive constructions and ideologies like class, caste, race, religion, and ethnicity, which entails exploration of the “…gender-specificity of individual violations; gendered structures and ideologies pervading a given context…” (ibid).

Although by far not an exhaustive list, the following recommendations (coupled with the principles above) will advance women’s rights and prosperity outcomes and create a more prosperous, fair and inclusive India:

5.1 Formal acknowledgement of women’s unorganized and unpaid labour as valuable work and recognition of their rights to social supports and benefits, life insurance, injury insurance, disability insurance, pensions, and childcare

Formal acknowledgement of women’s unorganized and unpaid labour as valuable work — a public good — and recognition of women’s rights to land ownership, social supports and benefits, such as life insurance, injury insurance, disability insurance, pensions, and childcare (among others), are necessary first-step requirements for Indian women’s increased economic growth and improved gender equality.

Because women make up the majority of India’s unorganized workers, India must recognize women’s specific labour requirements as legal rights, in order to amplify economic growth through formalization of the unorganized labour market. These can include tax deduction schemes for childcare payments encompassed in national tax regulations\(^2\) as well as reduction of unpaid labour (through provision of state-supported child and elderly care, creation of a national pension plan, and greater enforcement of pay equity between genders), and implementation of and support for gender equality education for all. This, in turn, will also strengthen India’s overall productivity (Exhibit 15).

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\(^2\) Child care payments are not tax deductible, women are not allowed to work the same hours as men, laws have not established public childcare provision (World Bank, 2011)
Formal recognition of unorganized worker rights grows economic output

Employment benefits and guaranteed resource access

Increased income from equitable earnings as well as child care expenditure savings and benefit expenditure savings help create larger savings and enhanced health outcomes

Decreased poverty

Increased investments

Increased productivity

Source: Martin Prosperity Institute

5.2 Enlarged inclusion and enhanced enforcement of land rights for all Indian women irrespective of religion, community affiliation, cultural attitudes, and social norms

In order to escalate women’s labour participation, education, and prosperity — growth in these areas will positively correlate with India’s overall productivity — the Indian government must move beyond simple legal recognition for some women’s land rights and gender equality, to enhanced enforcement thereof for all Indian women irrespective of religion, community affiliation, cultural attitudes, and social norms.

Improved land ownership rights for women positively correlate with upsurges in women and girls’ education levels by as high as 11 percent (Roy, 2011), a factor that creates rises in employment and income outcomes. In fact, an Indian woman’s wage positively correlates with growths (of about 14 percent) for each extra year of education (Bhalla and Kaur, 2011) (Exhibit 16).
From rental revenue to production profits, land ownership creates increased income and educational access, which translates into increased earning and wealth potential for Indian women and girls.

Arable land ownership generates wealth and sustains incomes (Agarwal, 2002). With 86 percent of all rural women workers in India employed in agriculture (ibid), greater government support for the land rights of all women regardless of caste, religion, community affiliation, or cultural attitudes and social norms is imperative for increased growth and prosperity.

5.3 Improved support, through gender responsive budgeting (GRB) that adequately funds programs and initiatives to enforce social recognition of, and adherence to, gender equality must be prioritized in India’s fiscal agenda.

GRB should be included in all relevant budget planning on both a centralized and decentralized level in India. However, the principle of subsidiarity is grounded in the rationale that local governments are closer to citizens and thus provide more effective and efficient public services than higher levels of government. The subsidiarity principle reasons that fiscal decentralization is good for efficiency and equity in economy and gender development because local governments hold better information on gender disparities, requirements, and preferences (Chakraborty, 2010). As is demonstrated by the Kerala model, GRB is one strong and sustainable way to include women’s needs in government budget lines.

Improved support for decentralized gender budgeting that adequately funds programs and initiatives which enforce social recognition of, and adherence to, gender equality must also be prioritized in India’s fiscal agenda. Such support should be reflected in (but not limited to) allocation of funds for gender-equity programs; increased focus on rural gender equity enforcement and community education; and mandatory education for all children from early years programming up to the age of 18 with educational materials that are updated to include and highlight gender equality learning outcomes.
5.4 Implementation of and support for gender equality education in schools and public education campaigns

In order to support and strengthen GRB execution, gender equality education in school system curricula, and massive public education media campaigns to positively affect women's substantive equalities going forward through increased overall knowledge of women and girls' rights to equality ([Exhibit 17](#)) must be immediately implemented.

Increased education around equality for women creates increased prosperity for all — the missing piece of the pie
5.5 *Formal recognition of women-dominated informal sectors*

Official assistance for improved organization of and support for informal economies, in the direction of increased informal employment formalization, will improve alternative workers’ productivity through official access to tailored training and apprenticeship programs. Access to this type of employment-specific education links to increased social mobility, or the ability to find a better job (Bairagya, 2012), and hence also negatively correlate to poverty and informal employment entrenchment, consequently growing personal and national monetary returns.

**Conclusion: India’s Gendered Opportunity Costs**

Economic gender inequality disparages Indian women and needlessly squanders almost half of India’s human capital stock. Lack of formal and substantive equality for Indian women and girls proves a substantial opportunity cost for India. Although many Indian laws support equal employment opportunities — According to the government of India, women and men are to be paid equal wages for equal work and enjoy equal employment opportunities — and land ownership rights for some women, lack of legal supports for women in the formal workforce and (most notably) in the informal workforce, produce obstacles between women and substantive, practiced land ownership and create unequal economic consequences that greatly disadvantage women’s access to prosperity and diminish India’s overall economic potential.

Lack of social and government supports for Indian women to enter formal employment force many women into India’s immense informal economy. This economy does not provide access to basic labour rights and social security for workers. Informal working women’s shortage of benefits and supports further lowers Indian women’s incomes — social security that would otherwise be covered with organized employment benefits must be paid for out-of-pocket — creates increased gender vulnerability, and enlarges India’s unorganized economy (Exhibit 18).
Especially now, in these times of world-wide economic stress and uncertainty, it is of utmost importance to utilize every member of society to their utmost economic and personal potential. Such potential is impossible to reach without what the Martin Prosperity Institute has termed the 3 Ts: Technology, Talent and Tolerance, all of which play key roles in determining regional economic growth and prosperity. The fact that women continue to suffer wage and educational losses due to an overall lack of tolerance — inclusion — for women’s particular needs and appreciation for women and girl rights and equality proves damages not only women, future generations of girls, and overall regional economic growth and prosperity. Enlarged equality of outcome in education, wages, and employment will raise India’s overall economic potential through amplified tolerance, talent and technology. Investment in women and girls’ educational and employment participation through tolerance-building and creation of inclusive practices will produce greater opportunities for women to develop and implement their talents — thus creating a stronger talent-base. These new talented workers will, arguably, also positively affect technology (Exhibit 19). Women and girl’s prosperity is India’s prosperity; grow Indian women’s prosperity and India’s prosperity rises.
Enlarged equality of outcome in education, wages, and employment raises India’s overall economic potential through amplified tolerance, talent, and technology.
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