The World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index aims at measuring and ranking countries on the basis of its progress towards gender parity across various dimensions. The emphasis on gender parity stems from the fact that it is a measure of sustainable and inclusive development and progress. The four areas that the index measures include economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival and political empowerment. The most important finding of this edition of the Index points to the fact that with current trends it would take 99.5 years to achieve gender parity. While the key driver for the progress made in the past year has been the political participation of women, it still remains an area where vast gap exists. The gap is advanced in the area of economic participation with the current gap estimated at 57.8%. The Nordic countries continue to lead the way with the countries on the top including Iceland, Norway, Finland and Sweden. This is also reflected in the recent elections in Finland and the initiatives taken in other countries to promote gender equality. closer to home, India slipped four places in this year’s index from 108 to 112 with a score of 68.8%. The biggest cause of concern remains the economic gender gap, with only 33.4% of the gap being bridged. India is also the only country where the gap in economic participation is wider than the gap in political representation.

Gendered Impact of the Citizenship Amendment Act and National Register of Citizens

Protests are rife across the country opposing the recently passed Citizenship Amendment Act and the National Register of Citizens and there is a need to look at them using a gendered lens as well. While both the CAA and the NRC threaten to disrupt the secular fabric of the country by discriminating based on religion, the impact of these legislations on those who identify as non-men remains widely undiscussed. In the case of both women and the transgender community, two major challenges emerge. The first is the fact that social ostracisation means that majority of the community does not maintain contact with their families. Secondly, those who have transitioned will face a challenge since their birth certificate will reflect a different identity, though other documentation will show otherwise.

In the wake of the protests against the passing of the Citizenship Amendment Act in the state of Assam, the government imposed a ban on internet services across the state. Leading the case in the court for the lifting of this ban was Swati Bidhan Baruah, the first transgender judge of Assam. This is definitely a silver lining for transgender rights in the country.

Assam’s First Transgender Lawyer Helps Lift Internet Ban

The 2020 Gender Gap Report Paints a Sobering Picture for Gender Equality

The IMPACT OF NRC & CAA ON WOMEN

Women have faced difficulty in furnishing documents in the Assam NRC, not only to face the current problems in a similar exercise in future because of the following reasons:

- Women marriage in India is uncommon. They tend to marry and then produce school certificates to show as documents.
- Early marriage for women is very common in India. They tend to produce all documents of the girl with the husband's family, in-law's documents and other married parents documents in most cases. Women also do not undergo marriage ceremony. In some cases, women do not have marriage certificates.
- When marriage ceremonies are done according to customs and not registered, there is no official document certifying the marriage in Assam. Documents like marriage certificates or a pre-marriage testimony were not accepted as proof of marriage.

The IMPACT OF NRC & CAA ON TRANSGENDER PERSONS

- Difficult/impossible to locate legacy and lineage documents, especially for those who have been disenfranchised and/or are no longer in touch with their families.
- Without a valid legacy document, ID proofs like pan card, voter ID and Aadhaar number are not enough for enrolment into the NRC.
- Even if transgender persons still have access to their birth certificates, they reflect the gender assigned at birth, which mismatches the gender on the identity documents which can be changed to reflect self-identified gender. They were excluded from the NRC due to this mismatch.

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