

Accelerating Gender Focused & Evidence Based Transformative Policies for Women and Girls in Bihar



In Bihar, the political commitment to promoting women's empowerment is reflected in the increase in programming and expenditure on gender focused initiatives in the state. However, this needs to be accompanied with an increase in the generation of quality evidence for use in policy decision-making.

The third most populous state of India, Bihar has made noteworthy socio-economic progress in the last decade. Girls' education has improved (women aged 15-49 years with 10+ years of schooling improved to 23% in 2015, compared to 13% in 2005) maternal mortality is declining (from 208 in 2013 to 149 in 2018), and institutional delivery has improved to 64%. However, like the rest of India, Bihar has a falling women's work participation rate – in fact the lowest at 4.3% (PLFS 2018).

Achieving gender equality targets as envisioned in the Sustainable Development Goals in Bihar, requires objective and rigorous evidence that captures the nuances of the prevailing gender gap. Robust data and evidence can inform government, non-government and citizen action to address women and girls' empowerment.

Centre for Catalyzing Change's SAKSHAMAA (empowered woman) – Initiative for What Works, Bihar, supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, aims to strengthen the evidence base to inform policy implementation, drive evidence based prioritisation of gender issues, and provide technical support to the Government of Bihar.

STATUS OF WOMEN & GIRLS IN BIHAR

23% women have completed 10 or more years of schooling (NFHS 4, 2015-16)

43% of women aged 20-24 years are married before 18 (NFHS 4, 2015-16)

43% of women have faced spousal violence (NFHS 4, 2015-16)

41% of women have a mobile phone of their own (NFHS 4, 2015-16)

26% women have a bank account that they use (NFHS 4, 2015-16)

4.4% lowest female labour force participation rate in India (PLFS 2018)

GROUND LEVEL ISSUES ON USING EVIDENCE

- MINIMAL GRANULAR GENDER DATA
- LIMITED BIHAR-FOCUSED EVIDENCE ON WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND ADOLESCENT GIRLS' SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITIONS
- LIMITED USE OF EVIDENCE FOR INFORMING POLICY AND PROGRAMMATIC DECISIONS





VISION

Decision makers and stakeholders have ready and sustained access to high quality evidence and analytics of what works to address gender equality and empower women and girls in Bihar.

To define the scope of our work, we conducted a landscaping exercise to map existing Bihar-specific data and research on gender, with current gender-focused policies and programs initiated by the Government. This exercise revealed certain gaps, which have determined our primary focus areas:



Women's access and uptake of formal employment opportunities within the Government



Mobility patterns, transport and safety and their impact on women's economic empowerment



Financial and digital access and literacy



Mapping of women's entrepreneurship and skills programs



Testing models to equip adolescent girls with information & skills for successful school-to-work transitions



Addressing unequal gender norms that pose barriers to women's economic empowerment & leadership

OUR CURRENT INITIATIVES INCLUDE

- Safety audit of three cities – Patna, Gaya and Muzaffarpur – to identify actionable solutions to women's public safety concerns (with SafetiPin India).
- A gender assessment of urban women's mobility patterns, transport and associated costs (with The Urban Catalysts).
- Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on women grassroots leaders' personal, political and public lives (with Shiney Chakraborty, ISST).
- Evaluation of a gender based violence sensitization program for police officers (with University of Connecticut, Ifo Institute for Economic Research, Princeton University, The World Bank).
- Implementation research on school-to-work transitions among adolescent girls, and evaluation of Going to School's curriculum (with Population Council).
- Testing the impact of utilizing the JEEViKA VO (SHG Platform) to create adolescent girls' groups and provide life skills training (with Project Concern International).
- Identify the drivers to change attitudes and reduce prevalence of early marriage in 11 High Prevalence Districts of Bihar (Saswata Ghosh, IDSK).
- Study on women's access to government employment (with ADRI).
- Dowry Opinion Poll among young men and women to understand their perceptions regarding the practice of dowry and possible solutions to tackle the issue.
- Engagement with WDC on Women's Economic Empowerment; key areas include increasing participation of women in craft sector, promotion of women entrepreneurs, etc.
- Engagement with WDC's Gender Resource Centre on gender sensitisation through workshops on women in the workforce, girls' education, GBV, cyber-crime against women, prevention of child marriage, dowry, prevention of sexual harassment of women at workplace.

GENDER REPORT CARD AND DASHBOARD IN COLLABORATION WITH WOMEN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (WDC), GOVT. OF BIHAR

On August 3rd 2018, the Chief Minister of Bihar, Mr Nitish Kumar and Deputy Chief Minister, Mr Sushil Modi, released the Bihar Gender Dashboard and Gender Report Card, developed by C3. The Gender dashboard, developed in collaboration with Gramener, is a one stop platform for all data relevant to gender programming in Bihar including, demographic information, health outcomes, maternal and child nutrition, education status, water and sanitation coverage, and social empowerment, providing a range of visualizations and automated insights. The Gender Report Card serves as an accompaniment to the Dashboard. The Dashboard and Report Card are envisaged as institutionalized tools to equip officials and policymakers to measure progress and develop strategies to transform the lives of women and girls. The 2019 edition of the Gender Report Card was released on January 24th 2020 by Dy. Chief Minister Mr Sushil Modi.