![World Savvy logo]

THE WOMEN'S WALL: INDIA AND GENDER EQUALITY

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL #5
Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

POSSIBLE ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How can movements like the Women's movement in India break through oppressive institutions?
- How can cultural, linguistic, geographical, religious, political and/or social factors shape gender equality?
- How can unknowns—like climate change, future technology, different jobs and economies—be created to support gender equality?
- What future measures—such as education, policies, and technology—might help improve gender equality?
- How can a person's identity or identities empower them or not?
- How can a person's gender and/or gender expression be supported and included by a group?

BACKGROUND

On New Year's Day, 2019 between 3.5 and 5 million women stood side by side along a national India highway for 385 miles. This massive protest was organized to raise awareness for gender equality and to protest a religious ban that prevented women of menstruating age from entering one of the country's sacred Hindu temples- Sabarimala Temple. The Indian Supreme Court ruled that this ban was unconstitutional but political, religious and community leaders are still enforcing the ban. The Indian government has largely ignored the issue. The women who were part of India's largest demonstration for gender equality stood up against the patriarchal structures that make life for women in India unbearable.

The year before, The Thomson Reuters Foundation ranked India as the #1 most dangerous country for women. The poll showed that India ranks the worst place for women in terms of the risks of sexual violence and harassment, of danger from cultural, tribal and traditional practices and of human trafficking including forced labor, sex slavery, and domestic servitude. What does this mean for people who live in India?

India has been considered the largest democracy in the world. After recovering from major sectarian issues caused by colonialism, the country was thoughtful about building a nation that was inclusive. One of India's innovations was to create states around linguistic similarities. However, India is still grappling with how to provide an inclusive society across many intersecting identities including religious minorities, genders, ethnicities, races, and classes. Additionally, India's infamous caste system- a social hierarchy based on birth and an individual's parents' caste- adds another layer of exclusion across society.

With such a large population representing billions of people with all kinds of identities, India's leaders are choosing to support the rights of some identities over others. India's leaders are even going so far as to promote or forgive violence against women, religious minorities, queer Indians and many others. With the recent reelection of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, many fear that India has become a Hindu Nationalist state and democracy and equality for all who live in India are no longer a priority.

RESOURCES

Personal Stories
- How One Woman Found the Courage to Say No to Domestic Abuse (NPR)
- India's Women Warrior's (25:45) (Al Jazeera)
- Meet India's Female "Seed Guardians" Pioneering Organic Gardening (The Guardian)
- #TheForgottenStories (Dalit Women Fight!)
- The Indian Women Who Took on a Multinational and Won (BBC)
- From Untouchable to Organic: Dalit Women Sow Change in India (Al Jazeera)
- Female Police Squads Tackle Street Harassment in India (News Deeply)

Articles
- Most Dangerous Countries for Women 2022 (World Population Review)
- Modi's Long Silence as Women in India Are Attacked (The New York Times)
- India: Intimations of and Ending: The Rise of Modi and the Hindu far right (The Nation)
- Only six countries in the world give women and men equal legal work rights (The Guardian)
- Indian Parliament Bans Instant Divorce for Muslims (The Atlantic)
- How Many and Which Women Own Land in India? Inter-gender and Intra-gender Gaps (Taylor and Francis Online)
- Why Indian Workplaces are Losing Women (The Wire)
- Why Indian Women are Out of Work (Times of India)
- India's Consumer Caste System (The Diplomat)
- Climate Change is Brutal for Everyone, but Worse for Women (Wired)

Data & Maps
- Which Are The World's 10 Most Dangerous Countries for Women? (Reuters)
- Facts about women's rights (Womankind)
- Attitudes to sexual and gender minorities around the world (ILGA)
- Women in the Labor Force: India (Catalyst)
- Data on Women in Asia and the Pacific (UN Women)
- Infographic: Why gender equality matters to achieving all 17 SDGs (UN Women)
- Infographic: Gender equality – Where are we today? (UN Women)
- Economic Inequality Across Gender Diversity (Inequality.org)
- Infographic: Challenges and Solutions (UN Environment)
- Infographic: Empowering Rural Women (UN Environment)
- Infographic: Spotlight on SDG #5 (UN Women)

Videos and Audio
- The Rights of Women in India (vs. the Rest of the World) (5:36) (Vitamin Stree)
- Live Visuals of Women's Reactions to Women's Wall in Kerala (8:28) (India Today)
- #StopTransBill2019- Why is it important? (3:44) (Vitamin Stree)
- India: Women Struggle to Find Work (2:34) (CNN)
- Gender Equality (3:03) (WorldFish)
- Shifting Ground (UN Women)

Helpful Links
- UN Women: Asia and the Pacific
- CARE India
- Equality Now
- Orchid Project
- Share and Care Foundation
- Twitter Account for Dalit Women Fight!