

Gender Inequality: A Comparison of India and Other SAARC Member Countries

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Abstract

This paper is a comparative analysis of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation countries, viz. India, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka with a detailed view on women participation in three significant indicators: Education, Health and Labor Force Participation. In this paper, an in-depth analysis of different dimensions is discussed on the selected significant indicators based upon the propositions and secondary data collected from variety of sources. The paper brings out gender differentials in terms of a number of development indicators and LFPR in SAARC countries. The higher percentage of females in service sectors compared to the males has been concluded from the findings.

Key words: SAARC, Gender Inequality, Education, Employment, Health

Introduction

Social inequality is defined as unequal opportunity and reward for different social positions or statuses within a group or society. Historically, men have garnered greater social power; therefore, gender inequality has systematically disadvantaged women. As per Collins, Gender inequality is complicated, moreover, by the intersection of gender with race/ ethnicity, social class, age, and sexuality. Gender



Source: World Atlas Book

inequality has adverse impact on the economic growth of the SAARC Member Countries. History also reveals that the overall wellbeing of a community or a group or a country gets affected if women are deprived of participation in social, political and economic activities.

South Asia has the worst indicators with regards to gender equality in the world, which is often attributed to particular cultural and religious practices. The general low status of women in the region starts even before birth in the form of sex selective abortion, female infanticide, sexual abuse, rape, sexual harassment, acid attacks and domestic violence.

This paper makes an attempt to compare India with other SAARC member countries (namely Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in terms of gender inequality with special reference to education, employment, political participation and health. In all SAARC countries, high rate of female mortality is commonly observed.

2 Gender Gap Ranking in SAARC Countries

As per the statistical update found available in the Human Development Index in 2018 which is given on the UNDP website at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/2018-update>, out of the 189 countries the SAARC member countries ranked as follows Sri Lanka (76), Maldives (101), India (130), Bhutan (134), Bangladesh (136), Nepal (149), Pakistan (150) and Afghanistan (168).

2.1 Gender Inequality in Selected Indicators

The Global Gender Gap Report, 2017 (World Economic Forum) index focuses not only on empowerment of women, but on the relative gap between men and women in four fundamental categories – Economic Participation and Opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival,

and political empowerment. Table-1 presents the ranking of SAARC countries.

Table 1: Global Rankings, 2016 & 2017 (World Economic Forum)

Country	Global Index Rank		Economic participation and opportunity		Educational Attainment		Health and Survival		Political Empowerment	
	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016
Bangladesh	47	72	129	135	111	114	125	93	7	7
Bhutan	124	121	103	99	123	121	137	125	134	132
India	108	87	139	136	112	113	141	142	15	9
Maldives	106	115	94	112	1	81	133	129	128	133
Nepal	111	110	110	115	116	123	116	92	80	68
Pakistan	143	143	143	143	136	135	140	124	95	90
Sri Lanka	109	100	123	124	86	82	1	1	65	57

Source: World Economic Forum.

As per the Global Gender Gap Report, 2016 and 2017 (World Economic Forum) (Table-1) Bangladesh topped the South Asian countries in terms of gender equality, by jumping to 47th rank from 72nd position in 2016, thus closing its gender gap, while India moved from 87th rank in 2016 to 108th rank in 2017 thus evidencing its increasing gender gap. Other SAARC countries have not shown remarkable difference in their ranking from 2016 to 2017. In Economic Participation and Opportunity, Bangladesh, Maldives and Nepal have shown improvement from their previous year rankings while Bhutan, India have lowered further from their 2016 rankings. In Educational Attainment, Maldives topped the list by moving from 81st position in 2016 to rank 1 in 2017. However, other countries have not shown much variation from their previous year rankings, and Pakistan remains at the lowest rank. In health and survival, almost all SAARC countries fare badly with their ranking deteriorating from their previous year rankings (except for India which has shown one rank improvement from 2016), with worst being Bangladesh losing 33 rank points. In terms of Political Empowerment, Bangladesh is best at 7th rank and Bhutan worst at 134th rank, while India is at the 15th rank.

According to a large number of studies, gender inequality impedes economic growth (Klasen, 1999; Dollar and Gatti, 1999; King and Mason, 2001). Gender inequality in education lowers the average quality of human capital and thus negatively impacts economic growth. According to Mitra, labor market inequality spills over to inequality in education, health, and political involvement (Mitra, 2010). It is an accepted academic stand that sexism is systematic and structural, and that it involves the subordination of one group as a whole by another group which enjoys power and advantage in the system (Benatar, 2012).

Despite numerous government and nongovernmental initiatives, laws that have been enacted for empowerment and protection of women from

discrimination, have not been able to make any remarkable difference in the position of women.

As stated earlier, the present paper makes an attempt to compare gender inequality existing in India with other SAARC member countries. For the purpose of analysis, secondary source is used. Data for the last 13 years (2005-2017) (the – is given in the tables, where no data is available) has been taken from Gender Data Portal of World Bank for the purpose of analysis. The focus of the analysis is laid on Indicators related to Education, Health, Labor Force Participation and Political Involvement and these have been used. The brief about the indicators that were analyzed is given in the Annexure-A.

There are many reasons to be concerned about existing gender inequalities in well-being-related dimensions such as education, health, employment, labor and politics. From a well-being and equity perspective, such gender inequalities are problematic as they lower the well-being and are a form of injustice in most conceptions of equity or justice. The detailed analyses of each dimensions of well-being are as follows-

3 Dimensions of Wellbeing

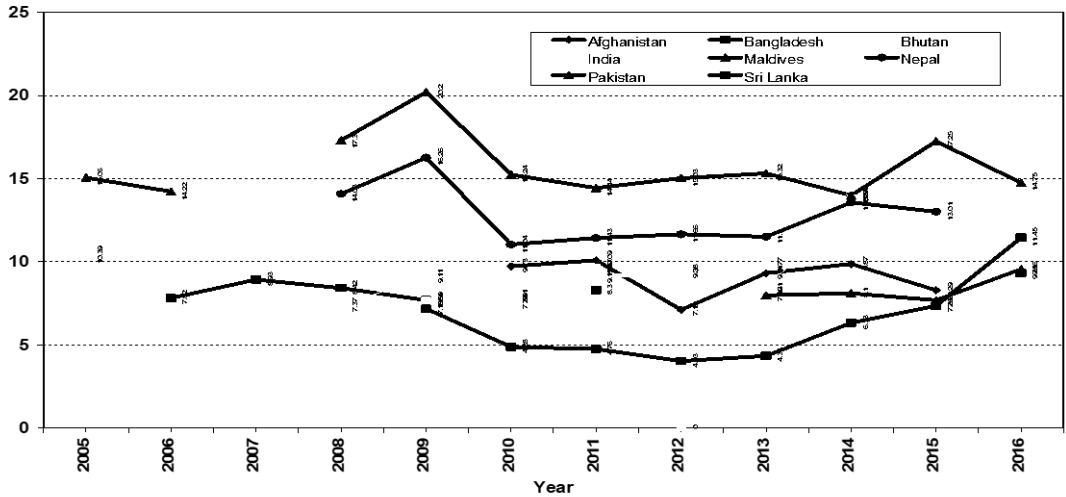
3.1 Education

The basic requirement for human development in the Society is Education; specially to improve women's status and for their empowerment. As it is clear that with increased education, employment opportunities are broadened and income levels are increased the development of an individual and the nation will also increase.

3.2 Expenditure on Education

From the figure-A, one finds that Maldives spends much more than other SAARC member countries on education, with Nepal, India, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Pakistan, & Sri Lanka at second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth & seventh position respectively as per the expenditure on education in 2013. In comparison to 2012, during 2013, the expenditure on education found increased 8.31 points in Bhutan, 7.99 points in Pakistan, 2.19 points in Afghanistan, 0.39 points in India, 0.31 points in Sri Lanka, and 0.29 points in Maldives; while, in Nepal, the expenditure on education declined by 0.16 points, the data is found not available for the year 2016 for discussion here. In 2016, Sri Lanka & Pakistan are found to have increased expenditure on education while in Maldives it has decreased.

Figure A: Shows Government Expenditure on Education (as per cent of GDP) by SAARC Member Countries for Year 2005-2016



Source: IMF

3.3 Out of School Children

Out of school children is an important indicator to assess the situation of education in any country. A comparison of children out of primary school in the SAARC member countries is presented below:

Table 2: Number of children out of school (primary)

Year	Bangladesh		Bhutan		India		Maldives		Nepal		Pakistan		Sri Lanka	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
2005	6,257	1,667	166	159	-	-	4	5	-	-	23,177	38,605	224	220
2006	6,320	880	145	135	-	-	5	5	-	-	27,036	39,774	249	283
2007	-	-	-	-	15,345	22,385	7	5	-	-	23,497	34,089	274	324
2008	7,288	5,043	116	100	23,718	13,960	9	10	-	-	23,071	32,978	341	405
2009	8,817	1,993	92	75	36,271	18,537	6	10	-	-	21,951	31,171	515	613
2010	8,401	14	82	62	31,300	16,783	-	-	-	-	20,342	29,940	359	496
2011	-	-	76	58	36,865	16,896	-	-	159	372	23,871	32,265	334	504
2012	-	-	66	49	24,508	13,746	-	-	-	-	25,066	32,496	322	492
2013	-	-	72	56	19,627	9,350	-	-	-	-	26,849	34,361	225	393
2014	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	842	1,012	23,476	33,347	161	312
2015	-	-	85	71	-	-	7	8	410	627	23,248	33,439	-	-
2016	-	-	93	80	-	-	5	2	461	557	18,612	30,403	-	-
2017	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	600	993	-	-	-	-

Source: World Bank

Note: Data for Afghanistan is not available, M represents Male and F represents Female. Digits expressed for the counties are in hundreds.

India has been able to reduce the number of female children out of school to 935040 in 2013 from 2238462 in 2007 while number of male out of school children decreased to 428193 in 2013 from 1534514 in 2007. In case of India, we may conclude that in compare to 2007, the number of male children out of school found increased from 2007, while the number of

female children out of school is found decreased during 2013. Same trend is observed for Bangladesh, where the number of male children out of school has increased continuously from 2005 to 2010 when in comparison to female children. Bhutan has succeeded in reducing the number of Out of school children. It has been observed that the number children out of school both male and female in Bhutan found to be decreasing continuously from 2005 to 2013, and found an increasing trend during 2015 & 2016. In Nepal, number of female out of school found to be 101173 in 2014 and reduced to 55712 in 2016. In comparison to 2016, the number of female children out of school in Nepal was found slightly increased in 2017. In Pakistan, the data related to number of male & female out of school children was found fluctuating. However, the number of female out of school children has come down by about 8 lakhs in 2016 in comparison to 3860499 in 2005, which is a welcoming trend. Similarly, in the case of Srilanka the data indicates that the number of female out of school children was on raise from 21978 in 2005 to 61285 till 2009. However, the Sri Lanka has succeeded in bring down gradually the number to 31201 of out of School female children by the year 2014. The data related to out of school children with respect to Afghanistan is not found available. (Table-2)

To have better understanding of the situation of education in SAARC member countries it is pertinent to look at school enrolment. For the purpose of enrolment in primary school level is taken.

3.4 Enrolment – Primary School

Enrolment of all eligible children of school going age (India- 6 to 14 years, Bangladesh- 6 to 13 years, Srilanka-6 to 16 years, Pakistan-5 to 16 years, Bhutan- 6 to 16 years, Maldives5 to 17 years, Afghanistan- 6 to 14 and in Nepal-5 to 18 years) is an important step towards achieving 100 percent literacy. From table-3 it can be observed that enrolment of girls has gradually increased at the primary level in Afghanistan and Bangladesh during 2007 to 2011. However, the enrolment of boys has been gradually increasing at the primary level in Afghanistan during 2007 until 2012, but has been decreasing since 2014. In all the countries that are being studied, fluctuations are observed in the enrolment of both boys and girls at the primary level.

Overall, in comparison to 2005, enrolment figures, enrolment in 2016 primary level has increased in Nepal & Pakistan.

Table 3: School Enrolment - Primary (per cent Gross)

Year	Afghanistan		Bangladesh		Bhutan		India	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2005	136.16	90.41	116.37	120.96	93.06	91.45	130.21	125.14
2006	-	-	117.63	121.72	104.39	103.16	130.85	125.56

2007	111.75	76.29	101.26	103.73	102.49	102.79	128.69	123.21
2008	-	-	102.79	105.23	102.56	106.09	124.87	123.01
2009	121.47	86.15	105.38	110.15	110.35	113.25	111.19	112.57
2010	127.57	92.56	110.20	113.04	110.57	111.85	115.88	118.07
2011	129.69	96.94	126.15	125.39	100.90	103.00	107.68	110.20
2012	133.37	102.75	-	-	88.88	86.76	-	-
2013	136.98	97.83	120.68	122.05	80.99	81.33	103.37	106.87
2014	132.97	93.65	-	-	87.84	86.96	98.55	101.98
2015	130.19	89.16	112.66	112.89	-	-	100.04	103.39
2016	-	-	98.39	102.45	90.81	87.61	102.23	105.66

Table 3 (cont.): School Enrolment - Primary (per cent Gross)

Year	Maldives		Nepal		Pakistan		Sri Lanka	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2005	96.68	103.46	115.49	106.77	126.6	104.08	97.60	97.43
2006	99.71	98.53	153.61	154.40	121.63	99.73	99.22	98.33
2007	102.37	102.52	146.05	140.04	121.51	106.47	99.43	98.51
2008	95.63	97.73	127.86	131.54	124.63	110.08	-	-
2009	89.06	90.57	148.68	155.51	121.64	108.39	-	-
2010	-	-	154.54	164.83	123.04	107.66	98.76	96.6
2011	-	-	164.29	178.31	113.25	100.45	99.46	96.23
2012	-	-	153.62	162.77	113.83	101.16	101.50	99.41
2013	-	-	152.09	161.89	111.87	98.72	102.67	100.74
2014	-	-	145.80	154.89	119.82	103.53	102.12	100.43
2015	108.31	109.14	144.71	153.82	118.91	102.56	98.98	97.90
2016	104.8	111.08	138.18	145.42	127.69	111.58	98.50	97.21
2017	-	-	140.44	144.33	-	-	-	-

Source: World Bank

However, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka could not increase the enrolment numbers in 2016 in the same way as Nepal and Pakistan were able to achieve. It is further observed that among the SAARC countries Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Nepal school enrolment of girl children at the primary level has been increasing in comparison to the boy children from 2009, while in Afghanistan, Bhutan, Pakistan and Sri Lanka no such increase can be seen.

Solotaroff et al. (2007) observed that lack of female teachers is an obstacle to girls' participation and enrolment in schools in Afghanistan.

3.5 Female Teachers in Educational Institutions

One of the factors that impacts female participation in education system and enrolment at schools is availability of female teachers. Table-4 shows that the numbers of female teachers in primary educational institutions are found increasing in comparison to 2005 in Nepal (70.45 per cent more in 2017), Maldives (15.77 per cent more in 2015), Bhutan (5.31 per cent more in 2016), and Bangladesh (2.34 per cent more in 2016). The numbers of female teachers in primary educational institutions are found decreasing in India (7.67 per cent down in 2016 in comparison to 2014);

Pakistan (7.58 per cent down in 2016 in comparison to 2005); and in Sri Lanka (1.15 per cent down in 2016 in comparison to 2015). If we correlate this female teacher in primary educational institutions with girl children enrolment at the primary school, it corroborates the observations “lack of female teachers is an obstacle to girls' enrolment in the schools” Solotaroff *et al.* (2007).

Overall, in comparison to Bhutan, India has 29.71 per cent less female teachers in primary schools in 2016, while in Nepal, it is 2.76 per cent, and enrolment of girls in primary schools are increasing in comparison to boys in India in 2016. According to the available data, the name of countries in descending order in which the number of female teachers in primary educational institutions found decreasing in comparison to Bhutan in 2016, are Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Bangladesh in 2016.

Table 4: Number of Female Teachers in Primary Educational Institutions (in percentage)

Year	Bangladesh	Bhutan	India	Maldives	Nepal	Pakistan	Sri Lanka
2005	54.4	94.69	-	66.27	27.04	75.7	-
2006	53.97	92.03	-	66.68	-	75.2	-
2007	57.25	-	-	64.91	56.85	75.2	-
2008	57.41	-	-	67.08	65.7	76.8	-
2009	63.09	-	-	73.1	-	76.6	-
2010	-	-	-	77.02	72.45	76.4	-
2011	55.98	-	-	79.65	79.85	73.9	-
2012	-	-	-	75.75	92.31	74.9	-
2013	-	-	-	89.06	91.91	76.1	-
2014	-	-	77.96	85.46	93.1	74.5	-
2015	48.07	100	-	82.04	94.12	72.7	70.8
2016	52.06	100	70.29	-	97.24	68.1	69.7
2017	-	-	-	-	97.49	-	-

Source: World Bank

Note: Data for Afghanistan is not available

From the above analysis, one can say that although Bhutan government is incurring high on education, it is not able to reduce the dropout of both male and female children from primary schools and increase the enrollment of children at the primary levels.

In Nepal, with low investment in education, school enrollment of male and female children in primary school are found increasing which may lead to the conclusion that Nepal government's efforts are very focused.

4 Health

Economists and health experts have been indicating that people who live in economically poorer societies live shorter lives. But research also points to an additional factor in explaining life expectancy: a society's level of inequality. People live longer life in nations with lower levels of inequality.

Thus, gender inequality continues to have a negative impact on many health outcomes. Gender-related power imbalances contribute to excess mortality across the life cycle, and harmful gender norms affect males and females by encouraging risk-taking and limiting health-seeking behaviors.

While gender equality has made the most progress in areas such as education and labor force participation, health inequality between men and women continues to plague many societies today. While both males and females face health disparities, girls and women experience a majority of health disparities. Kawachi et al (1999) found that societies with high gender inequality are unhealthy for both men and women.

Although women around the world share many similarities in terms of the health-impacting challenges, there are also many distinct differences that arise from their varying states of socioeconomic conditions. The type of living conditions of women is largely associated with not only their own socioeconomic status but also to their nation.

In this paper, we used three measures of gender inequality in health outcomes; the life expectancy advantage of women as compared to men, infant and under 5 years' mortality rate, and the maternal mortality.

4.1 Life Expectancy at Birth

Research has shown that if men and women received similar nutrition, medical attention, and general health care, women would live longer than men (Dennerstein, L et al, 1977). According to a World Health Organization report (2009), females generally live longer than males– on an average by six to eight years. This difference is partly due to an inherent biological advantage for the female. However, it also reflects behavioral differences between men and women. This advantage continues throughout life– women tend to have lower rates of mortality at all ages, probably due to a combination of the genetic and behavioral factors.

Table-5 Life Expectancy at birth for males and females in SAARC member countries.

Table 5: Life Expectancy at Birth

Year	Afghanistan		Bangladesh		Bhutan		India	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2005	57.36	59.73	67.25	68.66	64.68	65.07	63.72	65.44
2006	57.96	60.35	67.64	69.22	65.37	65.77	64.11	65.88
2007	58.54	60.93	68.01	69.78	66.02	66.39	64.48	66.35
2008	59.09	61.49	68.36	70.36	66.60	66.96	64.84	66.83
2009	59.59	62.00	68.70	70.94	67.14	67.47	65.18	67.34
2010	60.05	62.48	69.02	71.52	67.63	67.93	65.50	67.84
2011	60.48	62.92	69.34	72.09	68.07	68.36	65.80	68.33
2012	60.89	63.35	69.66	72.62	68.48	68.78	66.08	68.78
2013	61.29	63.78	69.97	73.10	68.87	69.19	66.35	69.20

2014	61.67	64.20	70.28	73.55	69.24	69.61	66.61	69.56
2015	62.05	64.61	70.59	73.94	69.59	70.03	66.86	69.88
2016	62.41	65.02	70.89	74.29	69.93	70.46	67.09	70.17

Table 5 (Cont.): Life Expectancy at Birth

Year	Maldives		Nepal		Pakistan		Sri Lanka	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2005	73.07	75.75	64.28	66.78	62.98	64.79	70.36	77.69
2006	73.70	76.26	64.79	67.36	63.2	65.02	70.55	77.80
2007	74.21	76.63	65.26	67.90	63.43	65.27	70.66	77.83
2008	74.62	76.90	65.70	68.41	63.69	65.53	70.75	77.83
2009	74.92	77.09	66.12	68.90	63.97	65.81	70.83	77.83
2010	75.13	77.23	66.52	69.37	64.25	66.09	70.93	77.86
2011	75.30	77.36	66.90	69.83	64.53	66.38	71.06	77.93
2012	75.46	77.51	67.27	70.26	64.79	66.65	71.2	78.02
2013	75.63	77.69	67.63	70.69	65.02	66.90	71.35	78.13
2014	75.85	77.91	67.98	71.10	65.22	67.13	71.52	78.27
2015	76.11	78.18	68.32	71.49	65.38	67.33	71.71	78.44
2016	76.41	78.48	68.66	71.88	65.51	67.52	71.91	78.61

Source: World Bank

A look at life expectancy table-5 above shows women's life expectancy to be higher in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, & Sri Lanka but in India the women's life expectancy is only about 2-3 years more as compared to men. According to Waldron (1983) when social discrimination decreases, women's life expectancy increases. Data range available in this paper on life expectancy at birth for males and females in SAARC member countries reveals that in comparison to 2005, an upgradation in life expectancy at birth in all SAARC member countries varies. However, life expectancy at birth found increase in all cases. In case of a male child, it was increased 5.25, 5.05, 4.38, 3.64, 3.37, 3.34, 2.53, & 1.55 points in Bhutan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan & Sri Lanka respectively. In case of a female child, it was increased 5.63 points in Bangladesh, 5.39 points in Bhutan, 5.29 points in Afghanistan, 5.10 points in Nepal, 4.73 points in India, 2.73 points in Maldives & Pakistan, and 0.92 points in Sri Lanka. Through cross analysis of life expectancy at birth in both males and females, in comparison to male, female life expectancy shows a variation of Life Expectancy at Birth 1.99, 1.36, 0.72, 0.24, 0.2, & 0.14 points in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Bhutan, but in case of Sri Lanka and Maldives it was found reduced to 0.63 & 0.61 points respectively. This data indicates that females received more care in comparison to the male.

4.2 Maternal Deaths

It is often argued that number of maternal deaths, generally measured through Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) is a reflection of gender inequality.

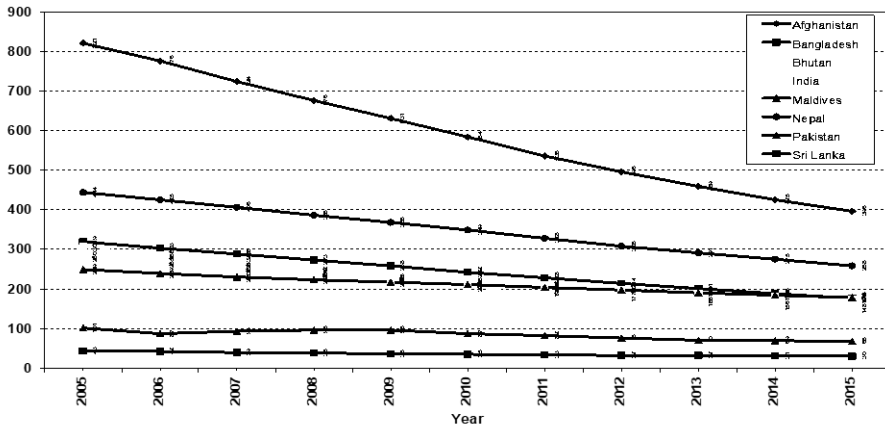
Bhalotra and Gomes (2014) argue that as MMR is a woman specific condition, public policy attention directed at MMR, and, accordingly, differences in life expectancy between women and men across countries are a reflection of differences in gender inequality across countries.

Table 6: Number of Maternal Deaths

Year	Afghanistan	Bangladesh	Bhutan	India	Maldives	Nepal	Pakistan	Sri Lanka
2005	821	319	308	280	101	444	249	43
2006	776	303	285	265	87	425	239	42
2007	724	288	263	250	93	406	230	39
2008	676	273	242	237	96	386	223	38
2009	631	258	221	225	96	368	217	36
2010	584	242	204	215	87	349	211	35
2011	536	228	190	206	82	328	204	33
2012	496	214	177	197	76	308	197	32
2013	459	201	166	189	70	291	190	32
2014	425	188	156	181	69	275	184	31
2015	396	176	148	174	68	258	178	30

Source: World Bank

Figure B: Number of Maternal Death's



Source: Table 6

Table-6 and Figure-B, shows that overall there was around 52 per cent improvement found in maternal deaths in Afghanistan and Bhutan from 2005 to 2015. In other SAARC member countries, it was 45 per cent in Bangladesh, 42 per cent in Nepal, 38 per cent in India, 33 per cent in Maldives, 30 per cent in Sri Lanka, and 29 per cent in Pakistan in 2015 in comparison to 2005. However, fluctuating trend was observed over years in Maldives. In comparison to Pakistan, India achieved 9 per cent more improvement in maternal deaths over one decade in 2015.

Bhalotra and Gomes (2014) in their study found that maternal mortality rates and female life expectancy advantage are significantly co-related to deferent measures gender prejudice in society over and above income

differences across societies, shows that income by itself is insufficient in explaining cross country differences in gender unequal health outcomes.

5 Labor Force Participation

As per ILO, last few decades have seen an increase in women's labor force participation across the globe. However, most of it is aimed at increasing women's employment but not necessarily improvement in quality of employment. Thus, the gender equality at work is still a distant dream for many countries of the world.

For LFP we conducted a cross-comparison of SAARC member countries on following indicators: Labor Force Participation rate, wage and salaried workers, employment in agriculture, industry and services and self-employment.

5.1 Labor Force Participation Rate

Labor force Participation rate (LFP) is the ratio of labor force (employed and unemployed but seeking work) to the population of respective age cohort. It is therefore, a key determinant of the currently active population or an indicator of the magnitude of the supply of labor in the economy and a crucial component of long term economic growth.

**Table 7: Labor force participation rate of male & female
(per cent of male & female population ages 15+)**

Year	Afghanistan		Bangladesh		Bhutan		India	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2005	87.10	16.11	86.17	28.03	75.39	65.37	83.09	36.78
2006	87.00	15.65	85.95	28.11	75.48	66.19	82.57	35.03
2007	86.89	15.22	85.38	28.57	75.55	66.74	82.06	33.33
2008	86.78	14.88	84.80	29.04	75.59	67.02	81.55	31.69
2009	86.66	14.69	84.21	29.52	75.63	67.11	81.04	30.10
2010	86.54	14.71	83.60	30.00	74.32	64.56	80.53	28.56
2011	86.53	15.26	82.99	30.47	72.83	62.27	80.04	27.67
2012	86.54	15.99	82.37	30.94	67.31	63.50	79.54	26.81
2013	86.57	16.86	81.74	31.42	72.82	58.19	79.41	26.96
2014	86.63	17.79	81.10	31.91	72.42	54.93	79.26	27.12
2015	86.71	18.72	80.46	32.40	74.13	57.76	79.09	27.27
2016	86.72	19.42	79.81	32.89	74.17	57.57	78.88	27.45
2017	86.71	19.47	79.81	33.04	74.28	58.03	78.84	27.21

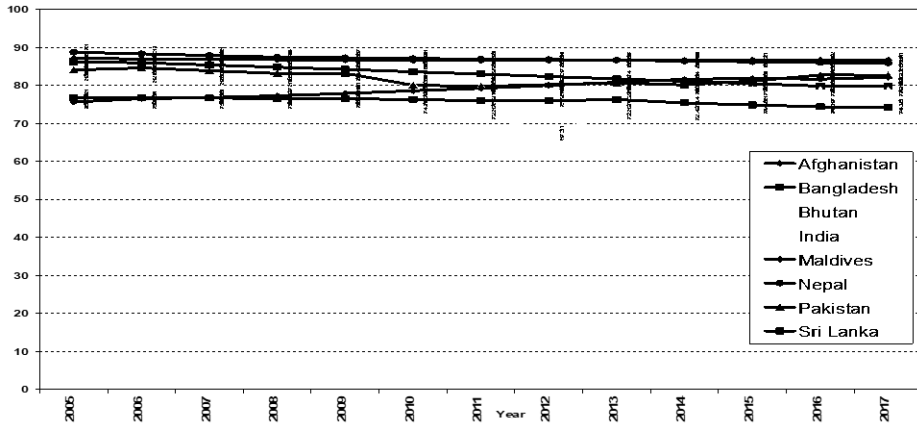
**Table 7 (Cont.): Labor force participation rate of male & female
(per cent of male & female population ages 15+)**

Year	Maldives		Nepal		Pakistan		Sri Lanka	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2005	75.65	50.40	88.73	79.91	84.06	19.34	76.68	36.94
2006	76.51	53.09	88.31	79.61	84.61	20.92	76.70	36.88
2007	76.80	52.33	87.88	79.29	83.86	21.10	76.68	36.78
2008	77.27	51.60	87.44	78.96	83.16	21.56	76.59	36.66

2009	77.89	50.87	87.27	79.28	83.17	22.82	76.45	36.53
2010	78.62	50.12	87.08	79.63	80.05	21.74	76.32	34.76
2011	79.25	49.38	86.95	80.23	79.75	22.09	75.91	34.57
2012	80.00	48.62	86.81	80.85	80.21	22.35	75.95	32.89
2013	80.81	47.83	86.64	81.43	80.67	22.62	76.29	35.69
2014	81.64	47.00	86.44	81.91	80.13	22.96	75.40	34.76
2015	81.81	44.47	86.20	82.28	81.16	23.92	74.86	34.92
2016	81.68	42.38	85.99	82.77	82.75	24.73	74.37	35.19
2017	82.13	42.88	85.86	82.73	82.70	24.93	74.13	35.05

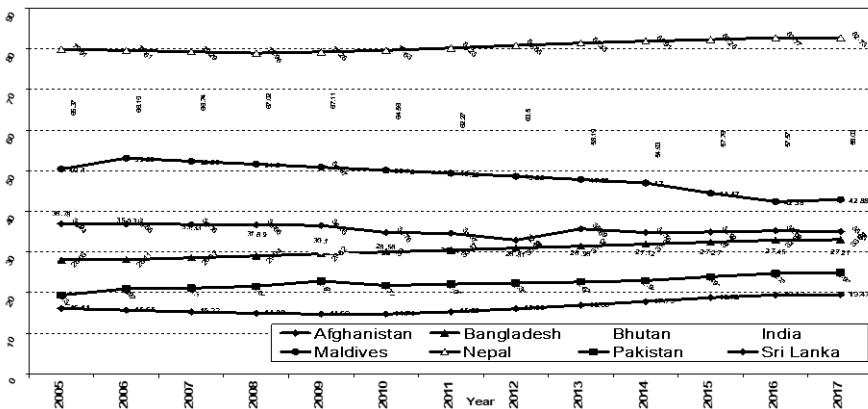
Source: From World Bank

Figure C: Labor Force participation rate, Male (% of male population ages 51+)



Source: Table 7

Figure C: Labor Force participation rate, Male (% of male population ages 51+)



Source: Table 7

Figure-C, Figure-D and Table-7, shows that male labor force participation rate is highest while females are lowest in all SAARC member countries.

If we compare between 2005 and 2017, in 2017, female labor force participation rate enhanced 5.59 points in Pakistan, 5.01 points in Bangladesh, 3.36 points in Afghanistan, & 2.82 points in Nepal when compared to 2005; while India decreased by 9.57 points, Maldives by 7.52

points, Bhutan by 7.34 points, and Sri Lanka by 1.89 points found decreased in female labor force participation rate.

Similarly, in comparison to 2005, male labor force participation rate enhanced 6.48 points in Maldives in 2017; rest of the SAARC member countries found decreased in male labor force participation rate by 6.36 points in Bangladesh, 4.25 points in India, 2.87 points in Nepal, 2.55 points in Sri Lanka, 1.36 points in Pakistan, 1.11 points in Bhutan, and 0.39 points in Afghanistan.

If economic growth was the only criterion for labor force participation, then there should not be disparity among LFPR of males and females. However, there is a wide disparity in LFPR of males and females reflecting that there are number of other social factors other than the economic ones that may affect participation of women in the labor force.

5.2 Sector-Wise Employment

Table-8 gives sector wise employment details for males and females in SAARC member countries.

Table 8: Sector-Wise Employment (per cent of Male and Female Employment)

Year	Afghanistan						Pakistan					
	Agriculture		Industry		Services		Agriculture		Industry		Services	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2005	70.20	81.41	6.54	6.76	23.30	11.83	38.16	67.35	21.39	15.02	40.46	17.64
2006	69.10	80.38	6.69	6.84	24.20	12.78	37.66	69.09	22.04	14.88	40.31	16.03
2007	67.90	78.93	7.05	7.38	25.00	13.69	37.01	72.72	22.92	12.48	40.07	14.79
2008	65.80	76.83	6.88	7.49	27.30	15.68	37.52	75.31	22.01	12.03	40.47	12.66
2009	65.40	78.16	6.19	5.55	28.40	16.29	36.93	75.52	22.43	11.08	40.64	13.40
2010	62.80	75.63	6.20	5.53	31.00	18.83	35.43	74.08	23.99	11.52	40.58	14.41
2011	61.10	73.53	6.44	5.98	32.50	20.49	35.28	74.45	24.51	11.43	40.21	14.12
2012	59.90	72.84	6.42	5.53	33.70	21.63	33.55	74.02	25.72	11.76	40.73	14.22
2013	59.60	72.66	6.51	5.44	33.90	21.90	33.47	75.15	26.06	11.14	40.47	13.71
2014	59.70	72.61	6.67	5.49	33.70	21.91	33.76	73.19	25.59	12.96	40.65	13.85
2015	59.00	72.41	6.93	5.66	34.10	21.93	32.55	72.07	26.61	14.52	40.84	13.42
2016	59.10	72.62	6.98	5.56	33.90	21.82	33.79	73.06	26.19	14.16	40.02	12.78
2017	59.90	73.71	6.93	5.52	33.20	20.76	33.49	72.81	26.33	14.37	40.18	12.82

Table 8: (Conti.): Sector-wise Employment (per cent of Male and Female Employment)

Year	Bangladesh						Bhutan					
	Agriculture		Industry		Services		Agriculture		Industry		Services	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2005	42.00	68.21	15.10	12.49	42.90	19.30	62.83	80.25	6.09	3.12	31.07	16.63
2006	41.90	68.19	15.10	12.50	42.90	19.31	55.89	72.05	8.99	5.62	35.13	22.33
2007	42.20	68.35	15.90	12.37	42.00	19.28	61.51	75.69	5.90	6.42	32.60	17.89
2008	42.00	67.82	16.80	12.46	41.20	19.72	61.99	74.84	4.71	8.07	33.31	17.09
2009	41.60	66.95	18.00	12.74	40.30	20.31	60.27	72.29	3.98	9.76	35.75	17.95
2010	40.90	65.53	19.20	13.05	39.80	21.43	54.98	65.94	6.55	6.73	38.46	27.33

2011	42.80	63.73	18.70	15.13	38.50	21.14	54.37	68.32	9.61	8.63	36.02	23.05
2012	42.90	59.52	18.90	18.57	38.30	21.92	50.89	76.36	9.88	7.10	39.22	16.54
2013	42.00	53.44	19.70	23.80	38.30	22.76	49.68	66.31	11.42	10.28	38.90	23.41
2014	38.90	59.44	20.50	19.22	40.60	21.34	50.17	66.88	12.36	8.39	37.47	24.73
2015	34.70	63.45	22.20	15.90	43.10	20.65	52.49	66.42	9.92	9.26	37.59	24.32
2016	32.90	62.13	22.70	16.23	44.40	21.64	51.13	65.39	9.93	9.04	38.94	25.58
2017	30.60	60.46	23.00	16.32	46.40	23.22	51.17	65.30	10.08	9.25	38.75	25.46

Table 8: (Conti.): Sector-wise Employment (per cent of Male and Female Employment)

Year	India						Nepal					
	Agriculture		Industry		Services		Agriculture		Industry		Services	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2005	49.90	70.70	20.90	13.83	29.20	15.48	68.00	84.40	4.71	4.77	27.30	10.84
2006	48.80	69.45	21.90	14.63	29.30	15.92	67.20	84.80	5.34	4.96	27.40	10.23
2007	48.00	68.64	22.70	15.14	29.30	16.22	66.10	85.18	6.63	5.26	27.30	9.56
2008	47.70	68.17	22.80	15.12	29.60	16.71	63.40	84.87	9.35	5.99	27.30	9.15
2009	47.20	67.48	23.40	15.45	29.50	17.06	63.70	85.14	9.03	5.74	27.30	9.12
2010	46.50	66.75	23.80	15.68	29.70	17.57	64.20	85.23	9.16	5.82	26.70	8.95
2011	44.30	62.88	25.30	17.61	30.40	19.52	64.50	85.38	9.13	5.78	26.40	8.84
2012	43.00	59.70	26.10	18.96	30.90	21.34	63.20	84.81	9.16	5.85	27.70	9.34
2013	42.60	59.58	25.60	18.19	31.90	22.23	62.30	84.23	9.43	6.06	28.30	9.71
2014	41.30	58.73	25.80	18.14	32.90	23.14	61.20	83.57	9.68	6.26	29.20	10.17
2015	40.10	57.74	25.80	18.01	34.20	24.26	60.50	83.32	9.65	6.28	29.90	10.40
2016	39.10	56.92	25.70	17.70	35.30	25.38	60.20	83.35	9.52	6.19	30.30	10.46
2017	38.40	56.36	25.80	17.70	35.90	25.94	59.70	82.83	9.88	6.47	30.40	10.69

Table 8 (Conti.): Sector-wise Employment (per cent of Male and Female Employment)

Year	Maldives						Sri Lanka					
	Agriculture		Industry		Services		Agriculture		Industry		Services	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2005	17.81	8.53	20.69	35.38	61.50	56.08	31.97	37.75	26.48	29.00	41.55	33.25
2006	14.57	7.51	20.70	33.35	64.73	59.14	32.29	38.16	26.13	28.19	41.58	33.65
2007	12.74	5.46	17.36	25.99	69.91	68.55	32.07	37.42	25.83	27.47	42.10	35.11
2008	14.23	5.39	18.19	23.21	67.58	71.39	32.75	38.64	25.48	25.91	41.77	35.46
2009	16.70	5.82	16.19	20.40	67.11	73.79	31.77	36.98	25.87	25.79	42.36	37.23
2010	19.40	6.27	15.30	17.76	65.30	75.97	31.44	38.19	24.73	25.23	43.83	36.58
2011	16.47	4.99	17.73	19.92	65.79	75.09	30.89	37.63	24.00	24.42	45.12	37.95
2012	14.52	4.23	19.52	22.15	65.95	73.63	29.69	33.84	26.09	26.03	44.22	40.13
2013	12.39	3.45	20.14	22.34	67.47	74.21	27.99	33.31	26.47	25.53	45.53	41.16
2014	10.32	2.78	22.88	23.33	66.80	73.90	26.86	31.83	26.49	26.43	46.65	41.74
2015	9.99	2.71	25.05	24.26	64.95	73.04	26.46	31.41	25.68	25.25	47.87	43.34
2016	9.52	2.52	25.18	23.95	65.31	73.54	25.86	30.82	25.75	24.86	48.39	44.32
2017	9.33	2.44	25.13	23.88	65.54	73.68	25.13	29.72	25.97	25.03	48.90	45.26

Source: World Bank

Employment of male and females in the industry are observed to be increasing in all SAARC member's countries in 2017 when in comparison to 2005 other than Sri Lanka, and females in Afghanistan and Maldives. India got fourth rank in male employment 25.75 per cent with enhancement of

4.89 points, while stood in second position for female employment 17.70 per cent with enhancement of 3.87 points. India achieved a significant growth in female employment 28.00 per cent in the industry sector in 2017 in comparison to 2005, while growth in male employment in industry sector was 23.42 per cent. As opposite to India, other SAARC member countries such as Pakistan, Maldives, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka have less growth in male and female employment in the industry sector. Overall, in all SAARC member countries since 2005, Pakistan is at first rank in male employment 26.33 per cent in 2017 in the Industry sector with 4.94 points enhancement, while Afghanistan is at the 8th rank in employment 6.93 per cent with 0.39 points enhancement. Sri Lanka has the first rank in female employment 25.03 per cent with a decline of 3.97 points, while with 5.52 per cent employment, Afghanistan reached rank eight after a decline of 1.24 points. In the present scenario, in compare to male, the employment opportunities in the industry sector for females, is declining in India.

The employment in the service sector of male and female as compared to the position in the year 2005, in 2017, is found increasing in all SAARC member countries other than Sri Lanka, and female employment in Nepal. In service sector employment, India got sixth rank in male employment 35.90 per cent with enhancement of 6.68 points, while received third rank for female employment 25.94 per cent with enhancement of 10.46 points in comparison to other SAARC member countries. Contrary to India, many, other SAARC countries like Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, Maldives, and Pakistan have less growth in service sector employment for both male and female, and Bhutan has shown less growth in service sector employment for female. Thus, employment opportunities in service sector for males is declining and increasing for females in India. When in comparison to 2005, in 2017, Maldives got first rank with 65.54 per cent employment for male with an enhancement of 4.04 points (9.92 points in Afghanistan) & with 73.68 per cent employment for female with an enhancement of 17.60 points (maximum), while Nepal reached at eight (last) rank with 30.40 per cent employment for males with an enhancement of 3.07 points (-0.28 points in Pakistan) and with 10.69 per cent employment for females with a decline of 0.15 points (-4.82 points in Pakistan) in service sector, amongst SAARC member countries.

A look at the data for Maldives shows that the service sector is dominated by females, as more than 73 percent are employed by services, women of Sri Lanka dominate the industry sector with 25.03 percent employment, and women are in higher numbers in agriculture sector with 82.83 percent employment in 2017 in Nepal. One interesting observation is

that in India, Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh the percentage of females in Agriculture is much higher as compared to males. In Maldives, women are higher in the service sector employment than men.

5.3 Wage and Salaried Workers

Table-9 presents a picture about male/ female Wage and salaried workers (per cent of male/ female employment) of SAARC member countries during 2005 to 2017.

Table 9: Wage and salaried workers (per cent of male/female employment)

Year	Afghanistan		Bangladesh		Bhutan		India	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2005	25.65	23.52	42.06	15.57	39.55	20.04	14.86	10.16
2006	26.28	24.2	42.82	16.08	40.63	20.97	15.69	10.9
2007	27.48	25.02	43.63	16.67	34.94	13.99	16.58	11.64
2008	27.99	25.64	44.27	17.16	35.24	13.99	16.66	11.79
2009	30.32	27.55	45.27	18.01	36.02	14.24	17.12	11.94
2010	31.87	29.37	45.87	18.45	38.1	23.01	17.97	12.53
2011	32.42	29.93	40.28	24.76	39.85	16.75	19.78	16.66
2012	33.74	30.92	40.89	25.4	43.52	15.27	20.02	16.83
2013	33.96	31.42	41.64	26.25	39.1	15.92	20.46	17.1
2014	33.74	31.26	42.33	27.01	39.51	15.98	20.85	17.29
2015	33.34	30.78	42.97	27.67	36.73	15.86	21.35	17.61
2016	33.18	30.58	43.83	28.64	36.92	15.65	21.86	18.03
2017	33.1	30.5	44.01	28.84	36.88	15.63	21.9	18.06

Table 9 (Cont.): Wage and salaried workers (per cent of male/female employment)

Year	Maldives		Nepal		Pakistan		Sri Lanka	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2005	71.28	52.45	25.47	7.87	39.24	31.21	59.79	58.19
2006	71.47	48.28	25.76	7.98	40.04	25.67	56.02	54.76
2007	76.74	56.41	26.02	8.06	40.61	24.61	57.17	55.1
2008	77.61	58.78	26.57	8.22	39.51	22.14	56.72	54.71
2009	77.25	59.29	27.51	8.69	40.7	20.77	59.02	54.84
2010	77.47	57.98	28.06	8.91	40.75	20.89	56.09	54.28
2011	77.95	59.33	28.46	9.11	41.22	21.64	55.76	53.14
2012	78.01	60.38	28.84	9.22	43.7	24.93	56.58	56.06
2013	78.13	59.33	29.41	9.5	43.85	24.95	56.63	53.97
2014	78.35	60.12	30.12	9.79	43.5	26.98	57.31	54.73
2015	78.28	61.65	30.41	9.96	43.51	25.3	57.64	55.13
2016	78.32	61.86	30.45	10.04	42.84	24.78	57.91	55.49
2017	78.42	62.00	30.51	10.07	42.81	24.75	57.97	55.55

Source: World Bank

A comparison between SAARC member countries shows that more than 62 percent of females in Maldives are wage and salaried workers as compared to around 78 percent males. India presents different picture with growth 47.37 percent of its males and 77.75 percent of females are in wages

employment in 2017 in comparison to 2005. India, Afghanistan, Nepal, Maldives, and Bangladesh have seen an increase in their wage and salaried workers since 2005 for both males & females. However, the number of such workers increased in the case of female employment in India. Sri Lanka and Bhutan have seen a decline in their wage and salaried workers since 2005 for both males and females. However, Pakistan experienced a decline in female and increase in the male wage and salaried workers since 2005. Bangladesh got first rank with maximum increase (13.27 points) since 2005 with regard to female workers, while Afghanistan got first rank with regard to male worker with a maximum increase (7.45 points) in comparison to 2005.

5.4 Self-Employment

Table 10: Self-Employment (per cent)

Year	Afghanistan		Bangladesh		Bhutan		India	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2005	74.35	76.48	57.94	84.43	60.45	79.96	85.14	89.84
2006	73.72	75.8	57.18	83.92	59.37	79.03	84.31	89.1
2007	72.52	74.98	56.37	83.33	65.06	86.01	83.42	88.36
2008	72.01	74.36	55.73	82.84	64.76	86.01	83.35	88.21
2009	69.68	72.45	54.73	81.99	63.98	85.76	82.88	88.07
2010	68.13	70.63	54.13	81.55	61.9	76.99	82.03	87.47
2011	67.58	70.07	59.72	75.24	60.15	83.25	80.22	83.34
2012	66.26	69.08	59.11	74.6	56.48	84.73	79.97	83.17
2013	66.04	68.58	58.36	73.75	60.9	84.08	79.54	82.9
2014	66.26	68.74	57.67	72.99	60.49	84.02	79.14	82.71
2015	66.66	69.22	57.03	72.33	63.27	84.14	78.65	82.39
2016	66.82	69.42	56.17	71.36	63.08	84.35	78.14	81.97
2017	66.9	69.5	55.99	71.16	63.12	84.37	78.1	81.94

Table 10 (Cont.): Self-Employment (per cent)

Year	Maldives		Nepal		Pakistan		Sri Lanka	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2005	28.72	47.55	74.54	92.13	60.76	68.79	40.21	41.81
2006	28.53	51.72	74.24	92.02	59.96	74.32	43.98	45.24
2007	23.26	43.59	73.98	91.94	59.39	75.39	42.83	44.9
2008	22.39	41.22	73.43	91.78	60.49	77.86	43.28	45.29
2009	22.75	40.71	72.49	91.31	59.3	79.23	40.98	45.16
2010	22.52	42.02	71.94	91.09	59.25	79.11	43.91	45.72
2011	22.05	40.67	71.54	90.89	58.78	78.36	44.24	46.86
2012	21.99	39.62	71.16	90.78	56.3	75.07	43.42	43.94
2013	21.87	40.67	70.59	90.5	56.15	75.05	43.38	46.03
2014	21.65	39.88	69.88	90.21	56.5	73.02	42.69	45.27
2015	21.72	38.35	69.59	90.04	56.49	74.7	42.36	44.87
2016	21.68	38.14	69.55	89.96	57.16	75.22	42.09	44.51
2017	21.58	38	69.49	89.93	57.19	75.25	42.03	44.45

Source: World Bank

Table-10 presents interesting facts about self-employment. About 89.93 percent of females in Nepal were self-employed in 2017 as compared to Maldives with only 38.00 percent. With respect to male employment, Bhutan has the highest percentage 63.12 of males engaged in self-employment in 2017 as compared to only 21.58 percent in Maldives. It is worth noting that a large number of self-employed workers run petty, unregistered enterprises/businesses, thus providing low addition to the GDP. Self-employed males decreased in 2017 in comparison to 2005 in Afghanistan (7.45 points), Maldives (7.14 points), India (7.04 points), Nepal (5.05 points), Pakistan (3.57 points), and Bangladesh (1.95 points); while it was enhanced in the case of Bhutan (0.04 points) and Sri Lanka (0.03 points). Number of self-employed female found decreased in 2017 in comparison to 2005 in Bangladesh (13.27 points), Maldives (9.55 points), India (7.9 points), Afghanistan (6.98 points), and Nepal (2.2 points); and this number has increased in the case of Pakistan (6.46 points), Bhutan (4.41 points), and Sri Lanka (2.64 points). If we observe only the scenario in India, the number of self-employed females found to have increased (0.01 point more) for males in 2017 since 2016.

In developing world, women continue to form a large majority of the world's working poor, earn less income, and are more often engaged in the informal sector of the economy. This affects their long-term unemployment as compared to men. Women often have less access to productive resources, education, and skills development and labor market opportunities than men, in many societies. Furthermore, women continue to undertake most of the unpaid care work, which has become an increasing challenge in their efforts to engage in productive work, both in subsistence agriculture and the market economy.

Duncombe and Marsden (1995) argue that women are subjected to 'triple shifts' this involves paid labor, domestic labor and emotional labor. The emotional labor refers to the care and attentiveness of the family unit, i.e. the social role of the woman being a wife and a mother towards the husband and children. According to Barren and Norris (1976), women are employed in unstable employment that is based on short term contracts, lower pay and entail unskilled work with fewer prospects, they are therefore more likely to be made redundant and thus suffer from a decline in the labor market (cited in *Sociology an Interactive Approach*, 1997).

Few theories emphasize that women's disadvantaged position in the labor market is caused by, and is a reflection of patriarchy as well as the subordinate position of women in society and in the family. In other words, the role of gender stereotypes held by employers and societies at large

affect differential occupational attainment of men and women. These theories predict that women gravitate towards occupations that are most consistent with their "female" characteristics e.g. caring and nurturing (Anker 1998).

6 Political Participation

Political participation means not only right to vote but also with respect to Political consciousness, participation in decision making running for public offices. Women in most of the countries do not enjoy equal rights in political processes. Women face lot of challenges in participating in political life in their respective countries. Women's participation in political processes is much higher in India when compared to some of the advanced countries like Germany, France and United Kingdom.

The table given below presents the political participation of Women in SAARC member countries.

Table 11: Proportion of Seats held by Women in National Parliaments (per cent)

Year	Afghanistan	Bangladesh	Bhutan	India	Maldives	Nepal	Pakistan	Sri Lanka
2005	27.3	14.8	9.3	8.3	12	5.9	21.3	4.9
2006	27.3	15.1	2.7	8.3	12	5.9	21.3	4.9
2007	27.7	-	2.7	9.1	12	17.3	21.1	5.8
2008	27.7	6.3	8.5	9.1	12	33.2	22.5	5.8
2009	27.3	18.6	8.5	10.8	6.5	33.2	22.2	5.8
2010	27.7	18.6	8.5	10.8	6.5	33.2	22.2	5.3
2011	27.7	19.7	8.5	11	6.5	33.2	22.5	5.8
2012	27.7	19.7	8.5	11	6.5	33.2	22.5	5.8
2013	27.7	19.7	6.4	11	6.5	33.2	20.7	5.8
2014	27.7	19.8	8.5	11.4	5.9	29.5	20.7	5.8
2015	27.7	20	8.5	12	5.9	29.5	20.6	4.9
2016	27.7	20	8.5	12	5.9	29.6	20.6	5.8
2017	27.7	20.3	8.5	11.8	5.9	29.6	20.6	5.8

Source: World Bank

The table-11 shows that India has around 12 percent women representation in national parliament while Nepal has around 30 percent in 2017. If we compare proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments in 2017 and 2005, we observe an increase in the number of seats of women in Nepal (23.7 points), Bangladesh (5.5 points), India (3.5 points), Sri Lanka (0.9 points), and in Afghanistan (0.4 points). The participation has declined in Maldives (6.1 points), Bhutan (0.8 points), and in Pakistan (0.7 points). However, in comparison to 2013, Nepal declined by 3.6 points, Maldives by 0.6 points, and Pakistan by 0.1 points in 2017; while in India it has increased by (0.8 points), in Bangladesh by (0.6 points), and in Bhutan by (2.1 points).

Women's participation and access to formal political power structures vary across countries. Many scholars have tried to explain lack of women participation in politics.

Feminist theorists also challenged the notion of abstract individual in liberal theory and maintain it is not a gender-neutral category. However, beyond these specificities of national and local contexts, there is a generic issue of women's political participation that relates to the wider context of national and international politics, liberal democracy and development. The common pattern of women's political exclusion stems from (a) social and political discourses (b) political structures and institutions (c) the socio-cultural and functional constraints that put limits on women's individual and collective agency.

7 Conclusion

Gender equality (GE) is a critical component for societal and economic progress. Gender equality can promote economic performance through education, health and labor force participation. Gender Equality in education increases human capital which in turn increases labor force participation of women.

India could reduce female school dropout rates and increase enrollment rates. Indian government could fight successfully antipathy against female children and could increase female life expectancy at birth and reduce maternal mortality, though it is less in comparison to Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, and Afghanistan.

All SAARC countries except Afghanistan and Maldives experienced a growth in female employment in Industry. India could achieve a remarkable growth in female employment in 2017 in compare to 2005 in service sector. In compare to 2005, India could reduce gender inequality 2017 in service sector but could not reduce inequality in Industry sector.

The number of female wage and salaried workers has increased in India (7.9 points from 2005 to 2017) and reduced number (7.9 points from 2005 to 2017) of self-employed Indian females.

With respect to women empowerment when compared to Nepal and Bangladesh, India is lagging behind with regard to women representation in national parliament even after achieve 3.5 points increase between 2005-2017 in women's participation in national Parliament.

As such there is no country in the world with perfect gender equality; all countries suffer some loss of human development due to gender inequality which shows traditional society impact. However, the SAARC countries are striving their best to meet the millennium development goals which they have vowed to achieve. India being a large country with huge

population size its achievements looks meager when compared to other SAARC countries that are small in geographically and demographically. However, India needs to pull up its efforts to bring about Gender Equality in education health and labour force participation because education inequality affects the average quality of human capital and reduces growth (Klasen 1999).

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Annexure-A

Definitions of Indicators Used

1. Government Expenditure on Education: General government expenditure on education (current, capital, and transfers) is expressed as a percentage of GDP. It includes expenditure funded by transfers from international sources to government. General government usually refers to local, regional and central governments.
2. Children out of school, primary, (Number in Lakhs): Children out of school are the number of primary-school-age children not enrolled in primary or secondary school.
3. School Enrolment in Primary (per cent): Gross enrollment ratio is the ratio of total enrollment, regardless of age, to the population of the age group that officially corresponds to the level of education shown. Primary education provides children with basic reading, writing, and mathematics skills along with an elementary understanding of such subjects as history, geography, natural science, social science, art, and music.
4. School Enrolment in Secondary (per cent): Gross enrollment ratio is the ratio of total enrollment, regardless of age, to the population of the age group that officially corresponds to the level of education shown. Secondary education

completes the provision of basic education that began at the primary level, and aims at laying the foundations for lifelong learning and human development, by offering more subject- or skill-oriented instruction using more specialized teachers.

5. Female Teachers in Educational Institutions: Share of female academic staff in education.
6. Maternal death refers to the death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and site of the pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management but not from accidental or incidental causes.
7. Employment is defined as persons of working age who were engaged in any activity to produce goods or provide services for pay or profit, whether at work during the reference period or not at work due to temporary absence from a job, or to working-time arrangement. The agriculture sector consists of activities in agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing, in accordance with division 1 (ISIC 2) or categories A-B (ISIC 3) or category A (ISIC 4). The industry sector consists of mining and quarrying, manufacturing, construction, and public utilities (electricity, gas, and water), in accordance with divisions 2-5 (ISIC 2) or categories C-F (ISIC 3) or categories B-F (ISIC 4). The services sector consists of wholesale and retail trade and restaurants and hotels; transport, storage, and communications; financing, insurance, real estate, and business services; and community, social, and personal services, in accordance with divisions 6-9 (ISIC 2) or categories G-Q (ISIC 3) or categories G-U (ISIC 4).
8. Labour force participation rate is the proportion of the population ages 15 and older that is economically active: all people who supply Labour for the production of goods and services during a specified period.
9. Wage and salaried workers (employees) are those workers who hold the type of jobs defined as "paid employment jobs," where the incumbents hold explicit (written or oral) or implicit employment contracts that give them a basic remuneration that is not directly dependent upon the revenue of the unit for which they work.
10. Self-employed workers are those workers who, working on their own account or with one or a few partners or in cooperative, hold the type of jobs defined as a "self-employment jobs." i.e. jobs where the remuneration is directly dependent upon the profits derived from the goods and services produced. Self-employed workers include four sub-categories of employers, own-account workers, members of producers' cooperatives, and contributing family workers.
11. Women in parliaments are the percentage of parliamentary seats in a single or lower chamber held by women.