



EXPLORE THE FACTS

The annual **Global Gender Gap Report (GGGR) or Index**, is an instrument used by the World Economic Forum (WEF) to highlight where different countries stand on gender parity in comparison to their positions in the previous year.

The Report investigates whether the countries have progressed or plummeted in terms of gender equality.

The gender score | India ranked 135 in gender parity out of 146 countries, according to the Global Gender Gap Report 2022 released by the World Economic Forum. A look at India's ranking in the four sub-indexes based on which the overall ranking was determined

India	Rank 2022*
Global gender gap index	135
Economic participation and opportunity	143
Educational attainment	107
Health and survival	146
Political empowerment	48

*out of 146 countries

It is evident from the report that the progressive walk towards a gender-just world is rather slow, despite the obvious need for it. Gender equality is not only important for moral and human reasons but also economic and developmental reasons. Any development that does not include gender justice is not fruitful, as it sidelines and marginalizes a significant section of the population. Gender justice can be seen as a key component of economic development as well. Including women and gender minorities in decisions and policy-making is crucial, as this provides a more inclusive ground for growth.

The Global Gender Report 2022, which includes the Gender Gap Index, says it will now take 132 years to reach gender parity, with the gap reducing only by four years since 2021 and the gender gap closed by 68.1%. But this does not compensate for the generational loss between 2020 and 2021 as the trends leading up to 2020 showed that the gender gap was set to close within 100 years. South Asia will take the longest to reach gender parity, which is estimated to be likely in 197 years.



Success Story

Reeta Simha

Founder & Managing Director, Aama Impex

Reeta Simha is the Founder and Managing Director of Aama Impex, established in 1983. Aama Impex is a manufacturer, retailer and exporter of Nepalese Handicrafts. Their product range includes accessories, garments, knitwear and home furnishing. Since its inception, its priority has been to employ local women to enable them to become self-sufficient and contribute to the overall development of the country.

Reeta did her graduation from LSR, Delhi University, India and her education helped her gain confidence and feel empowered. Her in-laws were very modern and progressive. Reeta's mother-in-law was the first woman photographer in Nepal who set up Colorama Labs. She was an inspiring figure in Reeta's life and always encouraged her to work. When her father-in-law was posted as Nepal's ambassador to Norway, her mother-in-law tried to coordinate with the import promotion office in Norway to facilitate exports of handwoven products from Nepal. She put Reeta in charge of coordinating and facilitating meetings in Nepal for this purpose. As Reeta got involved in this exercise interacting with weavers and understanding the manufacturing process, she realized the enormous potential of the export of woven textiles. Around the same time, she recalls visiting Tokyo for a conference where she was wearing her national dress, a Dhaka Sari. As many admired the garment, they enquired where it was made. She was embarrassed to state that it was not in fact made in Nepal.

At that point, she decided to work on promoting national handicraft products. In 1990, she opened a shop called Creation Nepal which became a huge success. With tourism booming in the country, the shop witnessed huge sales. Reeta also participated in fares promoting Nepalese handicrafts across the nation and the networking helped her to expand her clientele.

In 1990 she set up a factory in the Kaldhara district with a group of weavers. The factory had good local sales coupled with small exports. In 1994, a Japanese buyer suggested that Reeta diversifies into Pashmina silks and natural fibers as it was much in demand. This was a turning point and the manufacturing unit Aama Craft was born.

The company started getting a lot of orders as they were prompt in delivery and didn't compromise on quality- an essential prerequisite for working in the export market. From 1997 to 2000, they had huge sales, especially due to the increasing popularity of Pashmina. They were shipping about 10,000 pieces a month, coordinating with multiple factories. Post-2002, the sales started falling as many inferior quality products under the 'Pashmina' brand name started flooding the market. Buyers started getting confused about the price they were paying for the product and the quality they were receiving. Slowly, the booming market started to plummet. Thereafter, Reeta had to switch gears to focus on exclusive products which were 100% Pashmina and not pashmina silk.

She has often had to adapt her business model to changing scenarios in the market, scaling up and down from time to time and later on switching to outsourcing.

Reeta's entrepreneurial journey has not been without challenges. To begin with, access to finance was an issue. Not having land in her name, she did not have any source of finance to start her business.

Therefore, she had to go to her father-in-law to ask for the funds. He was supportive and provided her with collateral to start the business. She also finds that people in Nepal don't trust women leaders as easily as people abroad do.

Society keeps questioning their credibility as woman and labels their hard work as sheer luck.

Given the biases faced in dealing with the local market, she prefers operating in the export market. Even though her family was supportive, the one issue that has arisen in dealing with foreign buyers is that women are not expected to go out after work hours to entertain their export customers in Nepal. Apart from gender-related biases, two important challenges that she had to overcome were the lack of skilled manpower and the political instability on account of the Maoist insurgency. Due to limited income earning opportunities in Nepal, skilled people have migrated to foreign countries and it was difficult to retain talented weavers. Reeta believes that the training she received on export markets and marketing research in Finland in 1994 has stood her in good stead. Not only did this training help her build confidence but also taught her important skills such as costing and pricing and helped her gain industry knowledge. This training also helped her understand her foreign clientele better. In 2019, Reeta became the president of the Federation of Women Entrepreneurs Associations of Nepal (FWEAN) and under her leadership, women entrepreneurs are acquiring digital and financial skills, participating in capacity building and learning how to promote, package and endorse their products.

She has tried to focus on alleviating the bottlenecks she faced during her entrepreneurial journey for other women entrepreneurs.

Through FWEAN, she has also actively advocated for an entrepreneurship development fund to help women entrepreneurs, who do not have collateral, raise funds. As a result, now even commercial banks have started providing loans at low interest rates. During the Covid lockdown, they have tried to train women online through zoom meetings to provide digital and financial skills. She believes such federations have an important role to play in empowering women entrepreneurs, especially in honing their financial and technical skills. In countries such as Nepal, where many social and economic barriers exist for women, it is difficult for an individual woman to resolve problems, instead, it is easier to overcome hurdles with the support of a network.

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https://www.india.talentnomics.org/_files/ugd/121f4c_711db581a81d418994fcd995e1e0355c.pdf