

5

Gender Equality and Inclusive Development: G20's Commitment to Fostering Economic Growth

*Prof. S. N. Sharma**
*Dr. Richa Singhal***

Executive Summary

The G20, comprised of the world's most influential economies, plays a pivotal role in addressing pressing global concerns. Gender equality and inclusive development are not mere aspirations; they are fundamental elements that can shape the future of global economic prosperity. In recent years, two pivotal themes have been gaining traction within the G20's agenda: gender equality and inclusive development. These themes underscore the recognition that gender equality is not solely a matter of social justice but a catalytic force for economic progress. This chapter scrutinizes the consequences of the G20's dedication to gender equality and inclusive growth, exploring the advances, obstacles, and the profound influence they exert on economic development.

The G20 represents a formidable economic force, encompassing a substantial share of global GDP and international trade. Consequently, the policies and commitments made within this forum resonate globally. Gender equality, which extends beyond the realms of justice and morality, is intricately intertwined with economic development. The realization that empowering women is crucial for sustained economic growth has spurred the G20 to make this a central focus.

This chapter delves into the impact of the G20's commitment to gender equality and inclusive development. It examines how these commitments have evolved and reviews the significant declarations and action plans that have emanated from G20 summits. Moreover, it explores the progress made in various member states, as well as the persistent challenges that hinder the full realization of gender equality and inclusive development. By investigating the

* *Dept. of Hindi, S.P.N.K.S Government P.G. College, Dausa.*

** *Associate Professor, Dept. of EAFM, S.S. Jain Subodh PG College, Jaipur.*

outcomes of the G20's efforts, this chapter underscores the importance of mainstreaming gender considerations in economic policies and the need for a cross-cutting approach.

Key words: International Trade, Gender Equality, Inclusive Development, Global Economic Prosperity, Global GDP, G20s agenda.

Gender Equality: A Key Social Issue on the G20 Agenda

Gender equality is a central aspect of the G20's commitment to social issues. It is not only a fundamental human right but also crucial for achieving sustainable development and economic growth. The empowerment of women and the promotion of gender equality have far-reaching implications for society and the economy. Key dimensions of the G20's commitment to gender equality include:

Women's Economic Empowerment: The G20 recognizes the importance of women's economic empowerment. Women's participation in the labour force, entrepreneurship, and decision-making processes is not only a matter of equality but also essential for economic growth. The G20 promotes policies and practices that support women's economic participation, including access to education, financial services, and job opportunities.

Equal Pay and Representation: Gender-based wage gaps and underrepresentation of women in leadership positions are common challenges across the G20 countries. The G20 emphasizes the need to close these gaps, promoting equal pay for equal work and encouraging women's participation in decision-making roles.



Source: <https://co-we.com/infrastructure>

Entrepreneurship and Innovation: The G20 acknowledges the role of women in entrepreneurship and innovation. It promotes policies and initiatives that support women entrepreneurs, helping them access resources, markets, and networks that can drive economic growth and innovation.

Gender-Based Violence: Gender-based violence is a significant barrier to women's economic and social participation. The G20 addresses this issue, emphasizing the importance of preventing and responding to gender-based violence through legal and policy measures.

Education and Skills Development: Access to quality education and skills development is vital for women's economic empowerment. The G20 supports initiatives that ensure equal educational opportunities for girls and women, as well as promoting STEM education and vocational training.

Health and Well-being: Gender equality also encompasses women's health and well-being. The G20 recognizes the importance of sexual and reproductive health services, maternal health, and mental health support for women.

Inclusive Development: A Holistic Approach

Inclusive development is another crucial social issue on the G20's agenda. Inclusive development refers to policies and strategies that ensure the benefits of economic growth are shared equitably, leaving no one behind. This approach aims to reduce poverty, inequality, and social exclusion. Key dimensions of the G20's commitment to inclusive development include:

Reducing Income Inequality:

Income inequality is a significant challenge in many G20 countries. The G20 recognizes the importance of reducing income inequality through progressive tax policies, social safety nets, and fair labour practices.



Social Protection: Social protection measures, such as access to healthcare, education, and social assistance, are essential for inclusive development. The G20 supports policies that ensure all citizens have access to these basic services.

Financial Inclusion: Access to financial services, including banking and insurance, is critical for inclusive development. The G20 promotes financial inclusion initiatives to ensure that marginalized and underserved populations have access to these services.

Rural and Urban Development: Inclusive development addresses both rural and urban areas. The G20 focuses on policies that promote sustainable agricultural practices and rural development, as well as ensuring that urbanization benefits all residents.

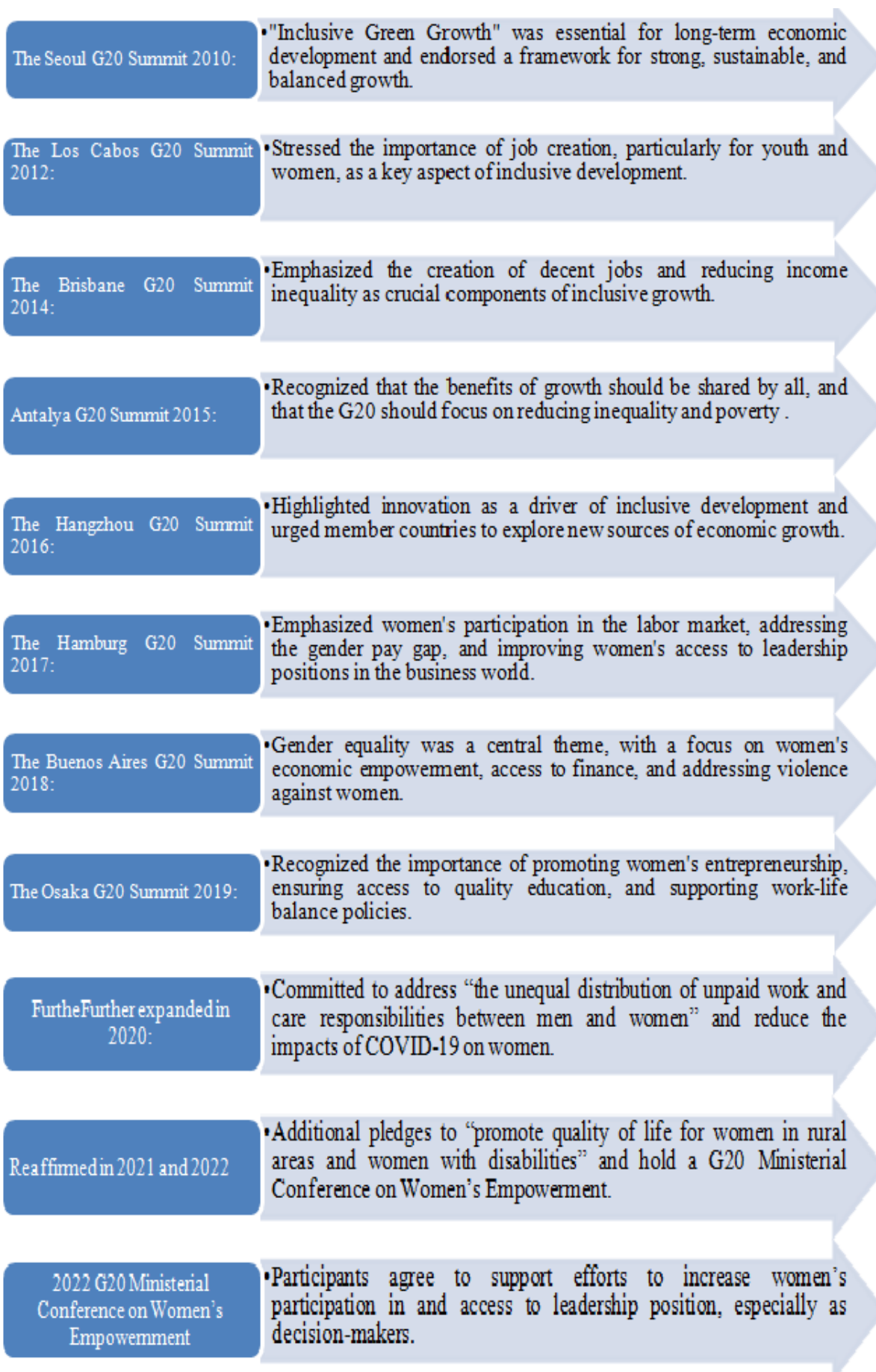
Environmental Sustainability: Inclusive development goes hand in hand with environmental sustainability. The G20 acknowledges the importance of policies that promote sustainable practices, mitigate climate change, and protect natural resources for future generations.

Social Cohesion: Inclusive development policies aim to build social cohesion by addressing issues related to discrimination, social exclusion, and cultural diversity.

The G20's Commitments and Declarations to Gender Equality and Inclusive Development and its Action Plan

The G20, as a gathering of the world's most influential economies, has recognized the importance of gender equality and inclusive development in achieving sustainable and balanced global economic growth. Over the years, the G20 has issued various declarations, action plans, and commitments aimed at advancing the social issues. These commitments encapsulate the essence of the social issues and guide member countries in their efforts. Let's explore the G20's commitment to gender equality and inclusive development and their evolution.

The G20's commitment to gender equality and inclusive development is reflected in various initiatives and agreements. Over the years, G20 members have made numerous commitments and adopted action plans to advance these social issues. The W20 is a G20 engagement group that focuses on gender equality. It brings together civil society organizations, academics, and business leaders to provide recommendations to the G20 on gender-related issues. The W20's work has influenced G20 discussions and commitments on women's economic empowerment. The G20 has convened meetings of labor and social protection ministers to discuss issues related to social inclusion, labor market policies, and social protection. These discussions have led to agreements on policies to reduce income inequality and enhance social protection. The G20 has committed to advancing financial inclusion through the Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion (GPMI). It has set targets to increase access to financial services for women and underserved populations.



Progress and Challenges

While the G20's commitment to gender equality and inclusive development is commendable. Some G20 countries have made significant strides in advancing the social issues, while others still face substantial challenges. Let's explore some of the progress and challenges in G20 member states:

Progress

- 1. Policy Initiatives:** Many G20 member states have implemented policies and initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality and inclusive development. These include measures to address gender wage gaps, increase women's representation in leadership positions, and enhance access to education and healthcare.
- 2. Legislation and Regulations:** Some countries have introduced or strengthened legislation to protect women's rights and promote gender equality. Legal frameworks addressing issues such as domestic violence, workplace discrimination, and gender-based harassment have been developed or improved in various G20 nations.
- 3. Women's Economic Empowerment:** Efforts have been made to enhance women's economic participation, including initiatives to support women entrepreneurs, provide access to financial resources, and promote equal opportunities in the workforce.
- 4. Education and Health:** Progress has been made in improving girls' access to education and healthcare services. Efforts to close gender gaps in educational attainment and healthcare outcomes have been notable in several G20 countries.

Challenges

- 1. Gender Wage Gap:** Despite progress, a gender wage gap still exists in many G20 countries, where women may earn less than men for similar work. This disparity is influenced by various factors, including occupational segregation and discrimination.
- 2. Underrepresentation in Leadership:** Women continue to be underrepresented in leadership positions in both public and private sectors. Breaking the glass ceiling remains a significant challenge in many G20 member states.

- 3. Work-Life Balance:** Balancing work and family responsibilities remains a challenge for many women, with issues such as inadequate parental leave, affordable childcare, and societal expectations impacting women's career progression.
- 4. Violence and Discrimination:** Gender-based violence and discrimination persist in some G20 nations, affecting women's safety, well-being, and overall quality of life.
- 5. Access to Education and Healthcare:** While progress has been made, challenges related to access to quality education and healthcare services persist, particularly in certain regions or among specific demographic groups.
- 6. Cultural and Societal Norms:** Deep-seated cultural and societal norms may hinder progress towards gender equality. Overcoming these ingrained attitudes and promoting cultural shifts is an ongoing challenge.

It's important to note that progress and challenges vary across G20 member states, as each country has its unique social, economic, and cultural context. Additionally, developments in gender equality and inclusive development are dynamic, and new initiatives may have been introduced or new challenges may have emerged since my last update.

The Way Forward

Advancing the agenda of gender equality and inclusive development within the G20 requires a multi-faceted approach involving policy reforms, institutional changes, and societal initiatives. Here are several key steps that can be taken to further advance this agenda:

1. Policy Reforms and Legal Frameworks

- Strengthen and enforce laws against gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence.
- Implement and reinforce policies that ensure equal pay for equal work.
- Develop and implement family-friendly policies, including parental leave and flexible work arrangements, to support work-life balance.

2. Women's Economic Empowerment

- Promote women's entrepreneurship through targeted financial support, training, and mentorship programs.
- Encourage gender-responsive budgeting to allocate resources effectively for women's economic empowerment.

- Increase women's access to credit, markets, and resources, particularly in sectors where they are underrepresented.

3. Education and Skills Development

- Eliminate barriers to girls' education and ensure equal access to quality education.
- Implement programs that encourage girls and women to pursue STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields.
- Develop vocational training programs that empower women with the skills needed for diverse economic sectors.

4. Healthcare Access

- Ensure affordable and accessible healthcare services, including reproductive healthcare.
- Implement measures to address maternal mortality rates and improve overall women's health outcomes.
- Raise awareness about women's health issues and reduce stigmas related to reproductive health.

5. Leadership and Political Representation

- Encourage political parties to promote and support women candidates.
- Implement quotas or other affirmative action measures to increase women's representation in political and corporate leadership positions.
- Create mentorship and sponsorship programs to support women in their career progression.

6. Addressing Cultural and Societal Norms

- Conduct public awareness campaigns to challenge gender stereotypes and promote cultural change.
- Engage men and boys in the conversation to foster broader societal support for gender equality.
- Encourage media to portray diverse and positive images of women, challenging traditional gender roles.

7. Data Collection and Monitoring

- Improve data collection methods to capture gender-specific information across various sectors.
- Regularly monitor and evaluate the impact of policies and initiatives on gender equality.
- Use data-driven insights to inform evidence-based policymaking.

8. International Cooperation

- Foster collaboration between G20 nations to share best practices and strategies for advancing gender equality.
- Support initiatives that address gender disparities globally, particularly in developing countries.
- Integrate gender perspectives into international development agendas and cooperation frameworks.

9. Corporate Engagement

- Encourage businesses to adopt and implement gender-inclusive policies and practices.
- Promote transparency regarding gender pay gaps and representation in leadership positions.
- Recognize and celebrate companies that demonstrate a commitment to gender equality.

10. Capacity Building and Training

- Invest in training programs to build awareness and capacity among policymakers, businesses, and civil society organizations.
- Foster a culture of inclusivity through diversity training and workshops.
- Develop training programs for law enforcement and judicial officials to handle cases of gender-based violence and discrimination effectively.

By implementing these steps, the G20 nations can contribute significantly to advancing the agenda of gender equality and inclusive development, fostering not only social justice but also positively impacting economic development and sustainable growth.

Inclusive development, as promoted by the G20, has a significant impact on economic development

Inclusive development, a central tenet of the G20's agenda, emerges as a catalyst for fostering holistic economic growth that extends its benefits across all strata of society. This paradigm recognizes that sustainable economic development transcends traditional metrics, encompassing social, environmental, and human factors. The G20's commitment to inclusive development is grounded in the belief that a fair and inclusive economy is not only morally imperative but also strategically sound for long-term economic prosperity.

At its core, inclusive development seeks to dismantle barriers to access, ensuring that marginalized groups, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, or socio-

economic background, have equitable opportunities for education, employment, and economic participation. By breaking down these barriers, nations can harness the full spectrum of their human capital, driving innovation, productivity, and overall economic competitiveness.

One of the key impacts of inclusive development on economic progress lies in its potential to mitigate income inequality. By redistributing the fruits of economic growth more equitably, inclusive development addresses disparities in wealth and access to resources. This reduction in inequality not only fosters social cohesion but also creates a more stable economic environment. A society with diminished wealth gaps tends to experience lower levels of social unrest, promoting a conducive atmosphere for sustained economic development.

Furthermore, inclusive development contributes to the expansion of the middle class, thereby creating a broader consumer base. As a larger portion of the population gains increased purchasing power, demand for goods and services rises, propelling market growth. This expanded market, in turn, provides fertile ground for business expansion, entrepreneurship, and investment, all essential components of a thriving economy.

Inclusive development also recognizes the interdependence of economic and social factors. Investments in education, healthcare, and skills development, key components of inclusive strategies, result in a healthier, more skilled workforce. A populace equipped with the tools to contribute meaningfully to economic activities enhances overall productivity and adaptability, making the nation more resilient to global economic fluctuations.

Moreover, the G20's promotion of inclusive financial systems ensures that a wider segment of the population has access to banking and financial services. This inclusion allows individuals, especially those in traditionally underserved communities, to participate more fully in economic activities, breaking the cycle of poverty and contributing to overall economic growth.

In summary, the G20's emphasis on inclusive development is a strategic imperative that acknowledges the symbiotic relationship between social equity and economic advancement. By championing policies that dismantle barriers, reduce inequality, and invest in human capital, G20 member states pave the way for not only a fairer society but also a more vibrant, resilient, and sustainable economy. Inclusive development, as envisioned by the G20, emerges as a blueprint for a future where economic progress is not only robust but also enriching for all.

Conclusion

The G20's commitment to social issues, including gender equality and inclusive development, reflects an understanding of the interconnected nature of economic, social, and environmental challenges. These issues are not merely social or moral concerns; they are essential for sustainable and inclusive economic growth. The G20's role in promoting gender equality and inclusive development is a testament to its evolving mandate, recognizing that social issues are integral to achieving global prosperity.

While the G20 has made significant commitments and progress in these areas, continued efforts are required to ensure that these commitments translate into concrete policies and actions at the national level. It is imperative for G20 members to collaborate, share best practices, and hold each other accountable for their commitments. Gender equality and inclusive development are not only moral imperatives but also critical drivers of sustainable economic growth and social well-being, and the G20's commitment to these issues is a step in the right direction.

References

- [1] Duflo, E. (2012). Women's Empowerment and Economic Development. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 50(4), 1051-1079.
- [2] Kabeer, N. (2005). Gender equality and women's empowerment: A critical analysis of the third Millennium Development Goal 1. *Gender & Development*, 13(1), 13-24.
- [3] Sen, A. (2001). The many faces of gender inequality. *New Republic*, 226(11), 35-39.
- [4] Walby, S. (2015). Gender and the financial crisis. *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, 28(2), 97-114.
- [5] Agénor, P. R., Canuto, O., & Jelenic, M. (2012). Avoiding middle-income growth traps. *Finance & Development*, 49(3), 10.
- [6] Klasen, S., & Lamanna, F. (2009). The impact of gender inequality in education and employment on economic growth: New evidence for a panel of countries. *Feminist Economics*, 15(3), 91-132.
- [7] Online Resources:
- [8] United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2019). Gender and Sustainable Development Goals. [Online] Available at: <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-5-gender-equality.html>
- [9] World Economic Forum. (2021). The Global Gender Gap Report 2021. [Online] Available at: <https://www.weforum.org/reports/gender-gap-2021-report-100-years-pay-equality>
- [10] International Labour Organization (ILO). (2021). Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Picture. [Online] Available at: https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_693315/lang--en/index.htm