

# DEVELOPMENT IN BIHAR

## SOME POLICY PRESCRIPTIONS FROM GENDER LENS

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*After occupying one of the lowest rung of the development ladder for a long time, over the past decade, Bihar has finally outpaced most of the states in a number of development indicators. To maintain this pace of development and ensure all-round inclusive growth, socio-economic policies especially gender related policies must be placed at the core of the government planning in Bihar.*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Government of Bihar must set up a separate Department for Women and Child Development for better coordination of women's empowerment work and proper implementation of the programmes/schemes.
- Government must take strict policy measures for ending violence against women and girls (EVAWG).
- Appropriate policy measures must be taken and properly implemented for economic empowerment of women through ensuring land rights and livelihoods.

SOME INDICATORS OF ECONOMIC & SOCIAL PROGRESS IN BIHAR	BIHAR	ALL INDIA
Growth Rate of GSDP (%) during 2005-06 to 2014-15	10.5	#
Growth Rate (%) in 2014-15 [at Constant Prices]	9.4 (% of GSDP)	7.2 (% of GSDP)
Revenue Deficits (%) in 2014-15 [Deficits (+) & Surplus (-)]	-1.5 (% of GSDP)	2.9 (% of GSDP)
Gross Fiscal Deficit (GFD) in 2014-15 (in %)	2.8 (% of GSDP)	4.1 (% of GSDP)
Per Capita Expenditure on Social Services in 2014-15 (in INR)	2849	#
Decline in Poverty (in percentage points) during 2004-05 to 2011-12	20.7	15.3
Decline in Domestic Violence <sup>2</sup> (in percentage points) during 2005-06 to 2015-16/2011-12	15.8	8.4
Increase in Literacy Rate (in percentage points) during 2001 to 2011	17.9	10.9
Increase in Institutional Births (in percentage points) during 2005-06 to 2015-16	43.9	40.2

Source: Data compiled by Author from Economic Survey 2015-16, Govt. of Bihar; Economic Survey 2015-16, Govt. of India; Census of India and National Health and Family Welfare Survey (NFHS), SRS Bulletin, Dec. 2016.

# All India figures are not available in the Economic Survey of Bihar, from where the corresponding figures of Bihar has been compiled.

During the last decade, improvement in various socio-economic indicators demonstrate that Bihar is steadily moving upward in the development ladder. Presently, Bihar is one of the fastest growing<sup>1</sup> states in India. Bihar's recent growth rate is greater than the national average. Higher economic growth has been translated into higher expenditure in the social services, viz. health, education, housing, water & sanitation, social security, etc., which, in turn, led to substantial poverty reduction and improvements in various development indicators in Bihar (see Table 1). During 2005-06 to 2015-16, in Bihar, there has been a 15.8 percentage point decline in spousal violence, which is a commendable achievement and underscores how the Bihar government is focusing on all-round development. It is evident from the table 1 that during the last decade Bihar had some remarkable achievement both in economic and social sectors. Some indicators regarding economic and social progress in Bihar, as depicted in the Economic Survey 2015-16 and several other documents, are as follows:

a. During 2005-06 to 2014-15, the Gross State Domestic Product - GSDP (at constant prices) grew annually at 10.5 per cent. Although, in the immediate past (2010-11 to 2014-15) the growth rate of GSDP was slightly lower at 9.9 percent due to the slowing down of the overall national economy; even now, the growth of the Bihar economy is faster than that of the national economy. In 2014-15, (see Table: 1), growth rate of real GSDP in Bihar was 9.4 per cent, which was much higher than the national average of 7.2 percent.

b. The revenue surplus of Bihar was a substantial amount of Rs. 5848 crore in 2014-15 despite some decline compared to the Rs. 6441 crore in 2013-14. The Gross Fiscal Deficit (GFD) of the state government in 2014-15 was 2.8 percent of GSDP, which was comfortably within the limit of 3 percent of GSDP, as prescribed in the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act. In the national level, GFD was 4.1 percent of GDP in 2014-15.

c. During the period 2010-11 to 2014-15, growth in per capita expenditure on social services was nearly twofold, as it increased from Rs. 1479 to Rs. 2849 (see chart 1), and the growth in per capita expenditure on economic services was also 1.7 times (from Rs. 768 to Rs. 1298). The per capita capital outlay increased 1.8 times from Rs. 902 to Rs. 1631 during the same period.

d. Between 2004-05 and 2011-12, the poverty ratio declined by 20.7 percentage points for Bihar, as against 15.3 percentage points for all-India average.

e. As per the Census, the increase in literacy rate in Bihar was 17.9 percentage points between 2001 and 2011, compared to 10.9 percentage points for the entire country.

f. There has been a big jump in institutional birth from 19.9 per cent in NFHS-3 to 63.8 percent in NFHS-4.

g. From the perspective of gender, Bihar has also scripted great achievements in the last 10 years. Bihar, which had the highest prevalence (59.0 per cent) of spousal violence in NFHS-3 survey (2005-06), has reduced this by 15.8 percentage point as per the NFHS-4 survey (see details

in Table 2), whereas in the national level this decline was only 8.4 percentage points.

The proximate causes behind this apparent success were placing some economic and social objectives at the core of the government policies. Although, in several areas, Bihar's performance is better than the Indian economy as a whole, the fact is that, the state still lags behind in terms of national average of several other indicators as well as compared to some better performing states. For instance, infant mortality rate (IMR) in Bihar was 42 compared to the national average of 37 in 2015. Further, during 2011-13, maternal mortality ratio (MMR) of Bihar was much higher at 208 per 100000 live births compared to national average of 167. During the same period, the corresponding figures of IMR and MMR of Kerala were only 12 and 61. Therefore, the momentum of growth has got to be sustained for many more years if the gap between Bihar and the better performing states are to be wiped out completely. At the same time, it is imperative to take initiative to reduce gender gap; as bringing gender equality and gender empowerment is often considered as a key factor to improve overall human development and promoting inclusive growth.

#### KEY FACTORS BEHIND THE COMMENDABLE PERFORMANCE IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC FRONT:

A number of factors could be attributable to Bihar's remarkable performance during the last decade. In this period, several economic and social objectives were placed at the centre of government policies of Bihar. Some of the key factors in economic and social sphere has been depicted in the Economic Survey, 2015-16 of Bihar as follows.

**JEEVIKA:** For poverty alleviation, JEEVIKA is an initiative of the government of Bihar, which was started in 2007-08 with the initial support of World Bank. Under the overall framework of National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), the Bihar Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society (BRLPS) is functioning and implementing the JEEVIKA scheme. In this scheme, by the end of September, 2015, 47 lakh poor households were mobilised into 4.40 lakh Self-Help Groups (SHGs); and out of these SHGs, 60 percent were federated into 21,529 Village Organizations (VO).

It is reported in the Economic Survey 2015-16 that till date, 1.49 lakh SHGs have been linked with banks, and they were able to obtain a total loan of Rs. 809.49 crore in 2015-16. Women in Bihar are now running commercial organizations like producer companies contributing to increase in agricultural productivity and realization of better prices of their produce. This institutional platform of empowered women is now being scaled up by the government of Bihar and it definitely has had some impact on reducing domestic violence, which is reflected in declining trend of violence against women in Bihar.

**MGNREGS:** It has become a powerful instrument for inclusive growth in rural areas through its impact on livelihood security and social protection. As regards the number of job cards issued, it was 131.22 lakh in a single year, i.e., in 2014-15. To the advantage of the women workers, their share in total employment has been above 25 percent in all the years; and in 2014-15, this share was as high as 37.3 percent.

**TABLE 2: TRENDS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FROM NFHS-3 (2005-06) AND NFHS-4 (2015-16) SURVEYS**

	NFHS3 (2005-06)	NFHS 4 (2015-2016)	TREND
STATE	EVER-MARRIED WOMEN WHO HAVE EVER EXPERIENCED VIOLENCE (%)	EVER-MARRIED WOMEN WHO HAVE EVER EXPERIENCED SPOUSAL VIOLENCE (%)	PERCENTAGE POINT CHANGE DURING NFHS - 3 & NFHS-4 (%)
	A	B	C=B-A
Sikkim	16.3	2.6	-13.7
Himachal Pradesh	6.2	5.9	-0.3
Jammu & Kashmir	12.6	9.4	-3.2
Uttarakhand	27.8	12.7	-15.1
Nagaland	15.2	12.7	-2.5
Goa	16.8	12.9	-3.9
Kerala	16.4	14.3	-2.1
Mizoram	22.1	17.0	-5.1
Karnataka	20.0	20.5	0.5
Punjab	25.4	20.5	-4.9
Maharashtra	30.7	21.4	-9.3
Assam	39.4	24.5	-14.9
Rajasthan	46.3	25.1	-21.2
Trilpura	44.1	27.9	-16.2
Meghalaya	12.8	28.7	15.9
Gujarat	27.6	30.2	2.6
Arunachal Pradesh	38.8	30.6	-8.2
Haryana	27.3	32.0	4.7
West Bengal	40.1	32.8	-7.3
Madhya Pradesh	45.7	33.0	-12.7
Jharkhand	36.9	34.0	-2.9
Odisha	38.4	35.2	-3.2
Uttar Pradesh	42.4	36.7	-5.7
Chhattisgarh	29.9	36.7	6.8
Tamil Nadu	41.9	40.6	-1.3
Telangana	NA	43.0	NA
Andhra Pradesh	35.2	43.2	8.0
Bihar	59.0	43.2	-15.8
Manipur	43.8	53.1	9.3
India	37.2	28.8	-8.4

Source: Compiled & Calculated by Author from NFHS-3 & NFHS-4.

**Both JEEVIKA and MGNREGS contributed substantially to reduce poverty in the last decade<sup>3</sup>.**

- The state government's concern for social development is amply reflected in the increased allocation for this sector. During the last five years, Per Capita Development Expenditure (PCDE) in Bihar has grown annually by 29.6 percent, compared to a much lower growth rate of 17.8 percent for all states average.

- The concerted efforts of the state government through ensuring round the clock delivery services in all PHCs had

paid rich dividends in bringing down the IMR considerably in Bihar. The number of institutional deliveries in Bihar has increased rapidly in the recent years, growing annually at 24.2 percent.

- The average number of patients visiting government hospitals per month was 4675 in 2010, which has increased to 9871 in 2014. This more than two-fold increase is due to better infrastructure facilities, larger human resources, and proper monitoring of the health institutions.

- The expenditure on economic services, creates additional productive capacity in the economy. Agriculture and allied activities, irrigation and flood control, energy and power, industry and minerals and transport together accounted for nearly 68 percent of the total expenditure on economic services in 2014-15, considering both revenue and capital accounts. About 51 percent of the total expenditure on economic services was made on capital account in 2014-15 (44 percent in 2013-14). The capital outlay in respect of economic services increased substantially from INR 7728 crore (2010-11) to INR 14,728 crore (2015-16). It had increased steadily during the last few years and was nearly 81 percent of the total capital outlay of INR 18,150 crore in 2014-15. Out of the total capital outlay on economic services, energy and power had taken the largest share (INR 7948 crore), followed by transport (INR 5194 crore) and agriculture and allied activities (INR 3615 crore) in 2014-15.

It has already been mentioned that for an inclusive growth, achieving gender equality and women's empowerment are one of the key factors. Although over the years, along with other socio-economic indicators, there has been substantial improvement in gender related indicators (some of these are discussed above), still there is a lot of scope for further improvement. Against this backdrop and drawing on existing research and policy debates, Oxfam India recommends to intervene, among others, in the following areas for removing gender gaps and economic empowerment of women in Bihar.

#### A. SETTING UP OF DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

The Union Government, in the year 1985-86, set up the Ministry of Women and Child Development realising the importance and scale of operation of programmes/schemes related to women and children. During the Eighth Plan (1992-97) empowerment of women was recognised

and accepted as a distinct strategy for the first time. Later, Women Component Plan (during 1997-2002) for overall economic, social and cultural empowerment of women and Gender Budgeting (since 2005-06) were introduced for better monitoring and implementation of women related schemes. Following the centre, like few other states, Government of Bihar is also doing a gender budgeting<sup>4</sup> exercise, since 2008-09. The following table shows the resources earmarked exclusively for the women.

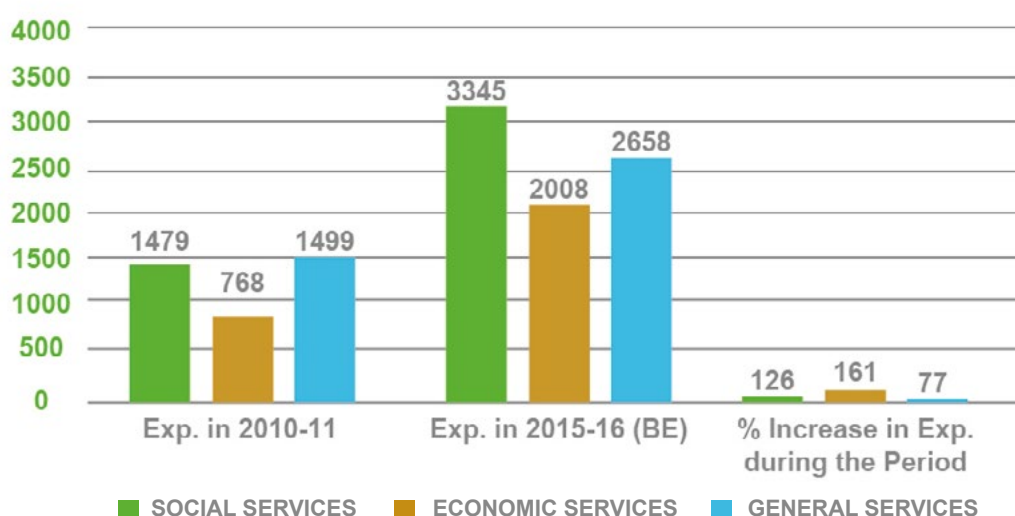
Introduction of Gender Budgeting is a good initiative from the Government of Bihar. At the same time, it should be noted that at present, there are a large number of programmes/ schemes for the welfare of women and children run by the central and state governments. Many of these programmes/schemes cannot be segregated exclusively for women and children as welfare of women and children are intertwined. Over the years, the scale of operation of these programmes is also expanding which is reflected in the increasing size of annual budget.

**For better coordination of women's empowerment work and proper implementation of the programmes/schemes in a more focused way, it is recommended that a separate department for Women and Child Development should be set up by the Government of Bihar.**

#### B. ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (EVAWG):

Among the larger states, Bihar, which had the highest prevalence (59.0 per cent) of spousal violence in NFHS-3 survey (2005-06), has reduced this substantially during the last 10 years and in 2015-16 as per the NFHS-4 survey, this figure stood at 43.2 percent. This implies a 15.8 percentage point decline in spousal violence. This achievement is commendable. But, in 2015-16, still 43.2 percent of ever-married women in the age group of 15-49 years face some form of spousal violence, that is,

Chart 1: Per Capita Exp. on Social and Economic & General Services (INR)



Source: Economic Survey 2015-16, Govt. of Bihar

**TABLE 3: GENDER BUDGET IN BIHAR: TOTAL RESOURCES EARMARKED FOR WOMEN**

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16 (BE)
<b>Outlay for women INR (Crore)</b>	<b>6088</b>	<b>7836</b>	<b>9748</b>	<b>12578</b>	<b>11359</b>
<b>Share (%) Of Outlay For Women In The State Budge Of Bihar</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>12.1</b>	<b>13.3</b>	<b>9.4</b>
<b>Outlay for Women as Percent (%) of GSDP</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>2.4</b>

Source: Reproduced from the Economic Survey 2015-16, Govt. Of Bihar

absolute level of domestic violence is very high. Further, 4.8 percent of women (15-49 years age group) experiences violence during pregnancy. As per the Bihar State Women Development Corporation records, number of registered cases has been increased to 4016 in 2014-15 from 3488 cases in 2013-14, that is, there has been a 15 percent increase in cases registered<sup>5</sup> against domestic violence. However, it is a positive sign that about 82 percent of all those registered cases were disposed of in 2014-15. Women Helpline are now functional in all 38 districts of Bihar under Mukhya Mantri Nari Shakti Yojana to provide free psychological and legal aid to the victims of domestic violence. An amount of INR 44.45 lakh has been spent for running Women Helpline in 2014-15. In 2015-16, allocation for Women Helpline has increased substantially to INR 2 crore. Given the overall scenario, it is recommended that:

a. Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA) must be implemented. The government of Bihar should put in place dedicated staff backed by adequate infrastructure and quality services for effective implementation of the law. As the Center is not allocating any resources for implementing PWDVA, state should ensure the resources for implementing the law.

b. The State governments should monitor and document cases of domestic violence periodically.

c. More state specific initiatives must be taken to address the root causes of domestic violence by removing social norms that lead to a high level of violence.

### C. ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN THROUGH ENSURING LAND RIGHTS AND LIVELIHOODS :

Women have always played a crucial role in India's agricultural production. Their role in agriculture is getting more importance in recent decades as the present trend shows that men are shifting to better paid non-farm activities. As per the latest NSSO employment survey (68<sup>th</sup> Round), 75 percent of the full-time female rural workforce is in the agricultural sector, against 59 percent for men<sup>6</sup>. But, in contrast to their engagement in agriculture, 12.79 percent of women have operational land ownership<sup>7</sup>. Even where women do have some access to land, they either do not have proper titles, also known as 'pattas', or own it along with male family members<sup>8</sup>. And this only means that invariably it's the men who control and make decisions (regarding sale of land etc.) the land.

Land ownership of women in Bihar is a little higher at 14.06<sup>9</sup>, compared to the national scenario of 12.79 per cent of women. However, it should be noted that there are differences in actual land rights to women and operational land ownership<sup>10</sup>. Actual figures of land rights to women is much lower (reflected in census) than the agricultural census (2011) shows. A recent study<sup>11</sup> in Bihar, done by Landesa and Oxfam in 24 villages of Madhepura and Supaul districts, also demonstrates that. As per this study, only 7 per cent women have land rights in two districts in Bihar. The study also found that when a woman becomes a widow, very often she is dispossessed of her property. The study also found a stark contrast of actual practice to Hindu Succession Act (2005), which makes women equally entitled to land as men. On top of it, there is acute lack of awareness about HSA. Another study<sup>12</sup> (2012) conducted by UNWOMEN and Landesa in Bihar and Andhra Pradesh reveals that only 12 per cent of women have or believe that they will inherit land from their parents. Bihar adopted the HSA after 2005 when at national-level it was enacted in 2005; however, only 22 per cent of the Hindu families those who were surveyed in Bihar reported awareness of this law.

Even when it comes to agricultural wages, the gender disparity is glaring. Statistics for 2011 from the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) state that women farm labourers earn only around INR 69 daily while the men get INR 102. India had among the worst levels of gender wage disparity, that is, men earning more than women in similar jobs, with the gap exceeding 30 per cent as per the Global Wage Report 2016-17 released by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). It clearly indicates that women are undervalued in society despite their efforts and success in agricultural production that may be equal, or even better than their male counterparts.

In summary, it is well evident that one of the crucial factors that contribute to the poor economic status and lack of financial independence of rural women is the absence of their ownership of immovable assets like land. Lack of ownership prevents the women from getting formal credit increasing the cost of farm activities. On the other hand, numerous research studies, viz., Agarwal (2003), Agarwal (1994)<sup>13</sup> among others, have demonstrated that women with financial independence, or those who possess assets like land, face less gender violence, both within the home and outside. Further, various research studies found that economic empowerment of women have additional positives towards women's empowerment and gender inequality through declining sex ratio, reduced

IMR and MMR etc.

Against the above background and drawing upon numerous other research studies, Oxfam India strongly advocates for the following policy changes:

a. The Bihar Government should raise awareness and facilitate implementation of Hindu Succession Act (HSA) 2005, so that women get their fair share from ancestral property.

b. The state government should create some incentive structure in case of property being bought in women's name only or a single male ownership being converted to joint ownership of husband and wife.

c. Here, the government of Bihar can follow the Gujarat model. The Government of Gujarat announced Nari Gaurav Niti-2006, which had suggested that woman be totally exempt from paying transfer fees and stamp duties if the property or land is bought in her name solely. The policy further suggests a special provision in the existing laws to ensure that any property bought after marriage must be bought in the joint names of a husband and wife.

At the State level, initiative should be taken aimed at collecting sex-disaggregated data on women's land ownership of all kinds of land to inform appropriate policy making.

#### Footnotes:

1 In the Financial Year 2014-15, Bihar has emerged as the fastest growing state in terms of gross state domestic product (GSDP).

2 It takes into account, Physical and/or Sexual Violence. Compiled from NFHS Fact Sheets 2015-16.

3 Economic Survey 2015-16, Government of Bihar.

4 Gender budgeting is an exercise to produce a separate statement in the budget where all the programmes/ schemes specifically earmarked for the women are listed with respective allocations.

5 Reproduced the data from Economic Survey 2015-16 of Bihar. It should be noted, the decadal trend in domestic violence is declining both Bihar as well as the national level as per the NFHS Survey. However, number of cases registered against domestic violence has increased in Bihar as per the latest NCRB data.

6 Government of India (2012) 'Key Indicators of Employment and Unemployment 2011-2012', Press Note, Delhi: PBI, at: <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=96641> (last accessed on 6.06.2017).

7 All India Report on Agricultural Census 2010-11, Govt. of India 2015

8 [http://southasia.oneworld.net/news/realities-of-the-landless-women-farmers-in-india#.WCG4\\_Wp95qN](http://southasia.oneworld.net/news/realities-of-the-landless-women-farmers-in-india#.WCG4_Wp95qN) (last accessed on 6.06.2017)

9 All India Report on Agricultural Census 2010-11, Govt. of India 2015

10 Women's land ownership figures in the agriculture census provides information about operational holding of 'female-headed households'. Therefore, it may miss out information on land distributed to women in joint pattas given as part of land distribution. Further, it should be noted that operational holders may not be the land owners particularly in case of non-land record states where

data is collected through sampling.

11 <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/patna/Only-7-women-own-land-in-Bihar/articleshow/45609016.cms> (last accessed on 6.06.2017)

12 Landesa and UN Women (2012) 'Challenges and Barriers to Women's Entitlement to Land in India', India: UN Women.

13 Agarwal, B. (2003) "Gender & land Rights Revisited: Exploring New Prospects via the State, Family & Market", Journal of Agrarian Change, Vol. 3, Nos. 1 & 2, January & April, 2003.

- (1994) "Gender and Command Over Property: A Critical Gap in Economic Analysis and Policy in South Asia", World Development, Vol. 22, No. 10.