

REVIEW

World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development

The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
/ The World Bank. 426p. ISBN 978-0-8213-8825

By **Ramya Rajagopalan**
(icsf@icsf.net),
Consultant, ICSF

While women in recent times have made certain gains in the realms of rights, education, health, and access to jobs and livelihoods, gaps remain in many areas. The worst disparity is the rate at which girls and women die relative to men in developing countries. Excess female deaths account for an estimated 3.9 mn women each year in low- and middle-income countries. This year's "World Development Report (WDR) 2012: Gender Equality and Development" argues that closing these gaps is a core development objective in its own right. Greater gender equality can enhance productivity, improve development outcomes for the next generation, and make institutions more representative.

The WDR 2012 has nine chapters in three parts. Part I takes stock of gender equality, while Part II asks: What has driven progress? What impedes it?. Part III addresses the role and potential for public action.

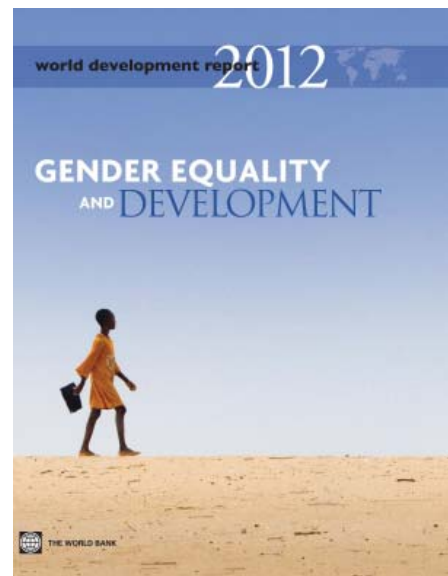
The report focuses largely on inequalities affecting women, dwelling upon those that are likely to be reproduced and passed on to the next generation. It draws on a large and growing body of quantitative gender research, complemented by new analysis, particularly on time use, domestic violence, mortality risks, and inputs into agriculture and entrepreneurship.

According to the report, gender equality matters for two reasons—the ability to live the life of one's own choosing and be spared from absolute deprivation is a basic human right and should be equal for everyone, independent of whether one is male or female; and secondly, greater gender equality contributes to economic efficiency

and the achievement of other key development outcomes. Gender equality also leads to greater control over household resources by women, which can enhance countries' growth prospects by changing spending patterns in ways that benefit children. Empowering women as economic, political and social actors can also change policy choices and make institutions more representative of a range of voices.

The analysis focuses on the role of economic growth, households, markets, and institutions in determining gender differences in education and health, agency and access to economic opportunities. The report focuses on four priority areas for domestic policy: (i) reducing excess female mortality and closing education gaps where they remain; (ii) improving access to economic opportunities for women; (iii) increasing women's voice and agency in the household and in society; and (iv) limiting the reproduction of gender inequality across generations.

The complete report can be downloaded from <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDR2012/Resources/7778105-1299699968583/7786210-1315936222006/Complete-Report.pdf>



PUBLISHED BY
Chandrika Sharma for
International Collective
in Support of Fishworkers
27 College Road
Chennai 600 006
India
Tel: (91) 44 2827 5303
Fax: (91) 44 2825 4457
E-mail: icsf@icsf.net
Web site: www.icsf.net

EDITED BY
Nilanjana Biswas
ILLUSTRATIONS BY
Sandesh
(sandeshcartoonist@gmail.com)
DESIGNED BY
P. Sivasakthivel
PRINTED AT
Nagaraj & Company Pvt. Ltd.,
Chennai

Writers and potential contributors to YEMAYA, please note that write-ups should be brief, about 500 words. They could deal with issues that are of direct relevance to women and men of fishing communities. They could also focus on recent research or on meetings and workshops that have raised gender issues in fisheries. Also welcome are life stories of women and men of fishing communities working towards a sustainable

fishery or for a recognition of their work within the fishery. Please also include a one-line biographical note on the writer.

Please do send us comments and suggestions to make the newsletter more relevant. We look forward to hearing from you and to receiving regular write-ups for the newsletter.