

# The Impact of Economic and Human Development Factors on Discrimination Against Women

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## Abstract

Through this study, we attempt to understand the impact of standards of living, economic participation, and knowledge attainment at the basic and specialized levels on discrimination faced by women. This has been achieved by establishing a relationship between primary education attainment, secondary education attainment, and female employment with the Social Institutions & Gender Index value using econometric modeling. We collected data for 66 countries worldwide, and estimation was done using regression analysis. The results implied that these variables under consideration significantly impact discrimination against women. Economic growth, primary education completion, and women's participation in economic activity help decrease gender discrimination in nations and contribute to the upliftment of women.

**JEL Classification:** B54, C51

**Keywords:** Education, Discrimination Against Women, Female Labour Force Participation

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# 1 Introduction

In recent years of economic growth, extraordinary achievements have been made by women in almost all countries. However, this spurt in the growth of women's economic status has not been uniform, whether considered across nations or compared to the gain experienced by men within the same country. A study conducted by McKinsey & Co. evaluated 15 indicators and aggregated them to a gender parity score to calculate global progress in achieving gender equality; it was seen from the study results that in 2015, the global gender parity score was 0.60; and in 2019, it rose marginally to 0.61. (Krishnan et al 2020). Moreover, significant variation was seen in the growth patterns for different regions.

A significant part of women's empowerment that has taken place in the last few years can be attributed to education and the increasing willingness and ability of women to participate in the economy, despite the discrimination facing them. Sixty years ago, almost 50 percent of women had no formal schooling, and their average level of educational attainment was just 3.3 years. (Jakiela & Hares 2019) By 2010, only a fifth of adult women had no formal schooling, and their average attainment had increased to 7.7 years. (Jakiela & Hares 2019)

The discrimination women face translates into disadvantages in real life, such as decreased job opportunities, lower valuation of services and labor, financial freedom, and freedom of expression. Currently, only six countries worldwide pay women and men equal amounts in wages. (Schmidt 2019) Educating women will help them be aware of their rights and hence, will be able to fight against social evils such as domestic violence, dowry demand, low wages, and others. Moreover, education helps women understand concepts of equality and self-respect and help raise their economic and social status. These will also help women deal with more subtle forms of discrimination.

Educating women is not only crucial for their economic empowerment but also for economic development. Women make up nearly half of the population in these nations, and due to discrimination, cannot contribute to economic activity to their maximum potential. It is estimated that the limited educational opportunities provided to girls, and barriers to completing 12 years of education, cost countries between \$15 trillion and \$30 trillion in lost lifetime productivity and earnings. (Wodon et al 2018). An education free of harmful gender norms has direct benefits for boys, too. In many countries, standards around masculinity can fuel disengagement from school, child labor, gang violence, and recruitment into armed groups. (Jakiela & Hares 2019)

Education is one of the most important drivers for ending poverty, boosting shared prosperity, and improving health, gender equality, peace, and stability. This study attempts to understand how different educational and economic factors impact the widespread discrimination against women.

The flow of the paper is as follows: Section 1 introduces the topic and broad theme of the paper, and section 2 discusses the literature available on this theme. Following this, the theoretical framework followed in the paper is discussed in section 3. Section 4 discusses the data sources of the variables under study. The econometric model and estimation methods

are discussed in Section 5, and the analysis and interpretation of the results have been discussed in section 7. Section 8 concludes the paper and summarizes the results

## 2 Literature Review

A wide range of studies have been conducted in the thematic areas of economic development, education, and financial literacy and the impact these have on the overall well-being and development of women - as well as the social & economic benefit that comes out of the upliftment of women. Women empowerment, and hence, discrimination is multi-dimensional - and must be looked at from different angles - through this study, we address two of these angles - one is of economic empowerment, by understanding how discrimination against women varies if their participation in the economy varies. Another angle is one of social empowerment. Here, Social empowerment implies giving power or authority to an individual to improve their livelihood - that is, through educating women. (Bhatia & Singh 2019)

According to a qualitative study undertaken by Shetty and Hans in 2015, lack of education is one of the root causes of women's exploitation and negligence. In India, women are revered and deemed valuable; however, they are largely absent from the context of economic development - which can be connected to a lack of good educational opportunities provided to them, as, for a woman to have a large enough, significant impact on the economic development & institutional structure of a country, she must receive a proper education. Moreover, literacy and education can help women understand their constitutional rights and legislative provisions made to strengthen and empower them. The authors hence conclude that women's educational & economic development and their empowerment are correlated conceptually and methodologically. Thus, promoting education among women is of great importance in empowering them.

According to a report published by OECD in 2011, the economic empowerment of women is defined by their capacity to contribute towards the growth processes in a way that recognizes the value of their contributions and makes a fair distribution of their wealth to enhance the access of economic resources. The decision and ability of women to participate in the labor force is the outcome of various economic and social factors that interact at both the household and societal levels (Banerjee 2019). Women are likely to engage in unpaid care work, as dictated by societal norms and traditions. Unpaid care work limits the agency, mobility, and time of the women to interact with economic systems, as time spent on one activity would evidently reduce the time they can spend on any other. These constraints eventually lead to women not being able to participate in economic activity & have a limited hold on household resources - which skews the power dynamics that already exist in households.

Economically empowering women is vital both to apprehend women's rights and to achieve broader development goals such as economic growth, poverty reduction, and social welfare. A sustainable and equitable social structure comprises social and economic empowerment, financial literacy, and financial freedom of women to access the formal financial system (Siddik 2017). Economic empowerment is also defined as when women have both the ability to succeed and advance economically and the power to make and act on financial decisions

(Golla 2016) hence, we conclude that financial literacy is a large aspect of women's economic empowerment and overall well-being.

A paper published in 2020 by Ferdous et al talks specifically of the impact of financial literacy on the decision-making and economic empowerment of rural women. The paper discusses the various measures of women's economic empowerment: decision-making power, control over income & expenditure, leadership in the community, control over time allocation & financial well-being. These variables are then expressed as consequences of financial literacy. It is seen from the results of the paper that financial literacy has a significant impact on women's economic empowerment among the rural poor in Sri Lanka - as the financial literacy of women increases by one unit, Women's Economic Empowerment increases by 0.362 units.

Gender gaps favoring males - in education, health, personal autonomy, and more-are systematically larger in poor countries than in rich countries. (Jayachandran 2015) According to an article by Oxfam, 75 percent of women in developing regions are in the informal economy - where they are less likely to have employment contracts, legal rights or social protection, and are often not paid enough to escape poverty. 600 million are in the most insecure and precarious forms of work.

According to Kabeer, (2012) not only does women's access to employment and education opportunities reduce the likelihood of household poverty but resources in women's hands have a range of positive outcomes for human capital and capabilities within the household. According to an article by Oxfam, despite some important progress to change this in recent years, in no country have women achieved economic equality with men, and women are still more likely than men to live in poverty. While economic growth on its own is not always sufficient to promote gender equality, the outcomes of economic growth appear to be far more positive when it is accompanied by an expansion in women's employment and education.

### **3 Empirical Framework**

Through this study, we attempt to understand the differential impacts of economic advancement and development of men and women on the discrimination faced by women. Women empowerment, and hence, discrimination is multidimensional - and must be looked at from different angles - through this study, we address two of these angles - one is of economic empowerment, by understanding how discrimination against women varies if their participation in the economy varies. Another angle is one of social empowerment. Here, Social empowerment implies giving power or authority to an individual to improve their livelihood - that is, through educating women.

The analysis takes account of the following variables as the measures for different stages of economic and social empowerment: Economic Growth, Primary and Secondary Education Completion - measured by the secondary school enrollment ratio and tertiary school enrollment ratio, respectively, and the overall female economic participation measured by the female labor force participation.

We have taken these variables into account as they represent different levels of development in

women - if a woman has completed primary education, she represents minimal development of knowledge and signifies a lower understanding of discrimination. If she has completed secondary education, she has some, but not very high knowledge and hence a relatively higher understanding of discrimination. Hence, through this - we can understand how social empowerment through education impacts the discrimination faced by women at different stages. For the purpose of this study, we assume that women's participation in the economy represents the highest development of women; that is - economic empowerment - as women's employment and income-generating capacity enable financial independence in women and help them uplift themselves. (Lim 2002)

The GDP per capita is considered a proxy to analyze the country's growth and economic standards of living. Literature suggests that an increase in income levels, both across nations and within one country, reduces the discrimination faced by women. (Cingano 2014) Gender inequality is strongly associated with income inequality over time and across countries of all income groups. An increase in various measures of gender inequality is related to an increase in net income inequality by almost 10 points. (International Monetary Fund 2021)

We consider the secondary educational attainment of women as an indicator of their completion of primary schooling. Primary education years are, in general, the foremost level of formal education provided to children in their formative years. During this period, children learn at a faster rate than at any other time in their lives, developing basic cognitive and socio-emotional skills that are fundamental for their future achievements in school and later on as an adult. (OECD Early Learning Matters 2018). Children of all genders may pick up on traits and subconscious biases that lay the base for their future conscious and subconscious behaviors. As the brain develops significantly during a child's early years, it is at its highest levels of plasticity than at any other point in our lifetime. As a result, during this period, children are especially sensitive to external stimuli - and are more likely to pick up different attitudes and behaviors from their surroundings. (OECD Early Learning Matters 2018). Hence, understanding the relationship between women's primary education attainment and discrimination faced by them allows us to evaluate the effect of schooling on children's behavior and gives us an idea of the behaviors primary education and schooling instill in these children.

Moreover, primary schooling does not focus much on specialization and skill development; hence, we can draw a contrast between discrimination at levels of primary education and advanced levels of education. It has been observed that countries with high levels of education among men rarely have substantial gender gaps. (Jakiela & Hares 2019). We believe that primary education attainment must be negatively correlated with discrimination against women, however, the extent of its impact should be lower than the impact of higher education.

To measure the secondary education attainment of women, we use the tertiary school enrollment ratio of women. Secondary education enables children to develop a better understanding of the world, as well as better understand their rights. Modern economies and their labor markets need people with sophisticated knowledge, skills, and competencies that

cannot be developed only through primary or low-quality secondary schooling (Sahlberg, 2007), hence, secondary schooling is not only important to develop cognitive thinking and specialized skills, but it also plays a large role in future growth prospects of women. Hence, we believe that secondary education would create a significant positive impact on the discrimination faced by women, that is, an increase in women completing secondary education would imply a decrease in the discrimination faced by them. Enabling women to participate in the economy allows them to improve their sense of self-assurance and helps them learn new skills - this, in turn, increases their share of household resources and gives them more power and financial independence. Moreover, as more women participate in the economy, they gain larger ownership of economic resources and assets, which ultimately helps them gain access to and control over productive resources, access to work, control over their own time, lives, and bodies; and increased voice, agency and meaningful participation in economic decision-making at all levels.

Hence, we believe that women's economic empowerment can lower the discrimination against them significantly. Labor force participation is an important marker of women's participation in economic life - and is constrained by social norms, insecurity, and lack of access to capital or resources. (Jakiela & Hares 2019).

## 4 Data and Methodology

The paper uses country-wide data figures for the year 2019 for 66 countries compiled from OECD and World Bank datasets. The dependent variable under consideration is the nations' Social institutions and gender index calculated by OECD, a proxy variable used to quantify the discrimination against women. The independent variables used in the study are GDP per capita, female secondary school enrollment, female tertiary school enrollment, and female labor force participation for the year 2019.

To quantify the discrimination against women, we use the Social Institutions, and Gender Index (SIGI) developed for nations worldwide by the OECD Development Centre (SIGI Methodological Background Paper 2014). SIGI quantifies discriminatory social institutions - which include unequal inheritance rights, child marriage, violence against women, and unequal land and property rights.

The Index takes values between 0 and 100, wherein a lower value signifies lower discrimination and a higher value signifies higher discrimination. Discrimination in social institutions includes formal and informal laws, attitudes, and practices that restrict women's access to rights, justice, and empowerment opportunities. This index is calculated based on qualitative and quantitative data provided on the discrimination faced by women in every country. The index considers the following forms of discrimination: discrimination in the family, restricted physical integrity, restricted access to productive and financial resources, and restricted civil liberty. (SIGI Methodological Background Paper 2014) As SIGI quantifies the level of discriminatory social institutions in each nation, we thereby use it as a quantitative measure for systemic discrimination faced by women in each nation.

We consider the secondary educational attainment of women as an indicator of their com-

pletion of primary schooling, and to measure the secondary education attainment of women, we use the tertiary school enrollment ratio of women. For the purpose of this study, we assume that the number of women enrolled in secondary education is exactly equal to the number of women who completed primary education - that is, no women have dropped out after completion of primary education. We take a similar assumption with women enrolled in tertiary education - that is, no women have dropped out of school post the completion of their secondary education. These assumptions allow us to take secondary and tertiary enrollment ratios as a proxy for completion of primary and secondary education, respectively.

The description of the data on the dependent and independent variables has been given in the following table:

**Table 1: Description of the Data Sources**

Data	Units	Variable	Classification	Year	Source
Social Institutions & Gender Index	N/A	SIGI	Dependent Variable	2019	OECD
GDP Per Capita	Dollars	gdppc	Independent Variable	2019	World Bank
Female Secondary School Enrollment Ratio	Percent	fsenrsec	Independent Variable	2019	World Bank
Female Tertiary Education Enrollment Ratio	Percent	fsenrter	Independent Variable	2019	World Bank
Female Labor Force Participation	Percent	flfpr	Independent Variable	2019	World Bank

*Source:* Authors' descriptions.

The descriptive statistics for the data have been summarized as follows:

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics**

Variable	Minimum	1st Quartile	Median	Mean	3rd Quartile	Maximum
SIGI	8.10	15.97	21.80	23.96	28.38	58.70
gdppc	786.9	4427.6	14292.3	22428.9	41910.5	85334.5
flfpr	14.59	45.60	54.65	52.46	58.22	83.89
fsenrsec	32.02	88.72	101.98	98.40	111.04	165.74
fsenrter	2.453	38.23	73.842	67.22	98.04	150.05

*Source:* Authors' calculations.

To understand the impact of these economic and social empowerment factors, we hypothesize that economic development, women's primary and secondary educational attainment & their participation in the economy will lower the discrimination faced by them - that is, an increase in the value of these variables will decrease the value of the Social Institutions & Gender Index (signifying lower discrimination).

Hence, the estimated regression equation takes the following form:

$$sigi = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \log(gdppc) + \beta_2 flfpr + \beta_3 fsenrsec + \beta_4 fsenrter + u_i \quad (1)$$

## 5 Econometric Model

The study measures the impact of economic development factors on the discrimination faced by women. The independent variables undertaken in the study are the GDP per capita, the secondary and tertiary school enrollment ratio of women, and the female labor force participation. These variables quantify the economic standards of living, educational attainment of women, and women's participation in the economy respectively. The statistical analysis has been done using regression analysis.

The decision regarding the most appropriate econometric model has been made after performing the following diagnostic tests: The Breusch Pagan test (for heteroskedasticity), and Ramsey's RESET test (for functional form). The Variance Inflation factors for the variables (to check multicollinearity) have also been calculated. The description and the results of these tests have been provided in the appendix to this paper. The functional form has also been decided based on the various scatter plots showing the relationship between the dependent variables and the independent variable given in the appendix.

As seen from scatter plots, the GDP per capita shows an approximately logarithmic relationship with the values of the Social Institutions and Gender Index. The other variables considered in the study - namely, female labor force participation, female secondary school enrollment ratio, and female tertiary school enrollment ratio show an approximately linear relationship.

The econometric model used in this paper takes the form of a lin-log model as follows:

$$\text{sigi} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \log(\text{gdppc}) + \beta_2 \text{flfpr} + \beta_3 \text{senrsec} + \beta_4 \text{senrter} + u_i$$

**Table 3: Description of the Variables under Study**

Conceptual Variable	Measurable Variable	Variable	Description
Discrimination Against Women	Social Institutions & Gender Index	sigi	The Social Institutions & Gender Index is a cross-country measure of discrimination against women. It takes values between 0 and 100 - the higher the value, the more discrimination women face in the given country.
Standards of Living	GDP Per Capita	gdppc	GDP per capita is the gross domestic product divided by the midyear population of a nation.
Women's Economic Participation	Female Labor Force Participation	ffpr	Labor force participation rate is the proportion of the female population aged 15 and older that is economically active: all people who supply labor for the production of goods and services during a specified period.
Basic Educational Attainment of women	Female Gross Enrollment Ratio (Secondary)	fsenrsec	The gross enrollment ratio is the ratio of total enrollment, regardless of age, to the age group population that officially corresponds to the level of education shown. In this study, this variable is used to represent the proportion of women who have completed primary education (and hence, have enrolled in secondary education).
Secondary Educational Attainment of women	Female Gross Enrollment Ratio (Tertiary)	fsenrter	The gross enrollment ratio is the ratio of total enrollment, regardless of age, to the age group population that officially corresponds to the level of education shown. In this study, this variable is used to represent the proportion of women who have completed secondary education.

*Source:* Authors' descriptions.

## 6 Results & Analysis

**Table 4: Results of the Regression**

Independent Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	T-statistic
Intercept	81.34499***	8.90775	9.132
log(Gdppc)	-3.20609*	1.24777	-2.569
ffpr	-0.27077***	0.07159	-3.782
fsenrsec	-0.11848*	0.05600	-2.116
fsenrter	-0.02321	0.04899	-0.474
R <sup>2</sup>	0.6115		
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.586		

*Source:* Authors' calculations.

*Significance Codes:* 0 '\*\*\*' 0.001 '\*\*' 0.01 '\*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

In this section, we discuss the results of the regression. We see that a change in the dependent variable can be attributed to changes in all independent variables considered in the study except the gross enrollment ratio of women in tertiary education. Hence, variations in Female Labor Force Participation, GDP per capita and Female Secondary School Enrollment Ratio can cause variations in the Social Institutions & Gender Index. From the adjusted R squared value, we see that the independent variables can predict the variation in the dependent variable to the extent of approximately 59%. From the sign of the coefficients, we see that GDP per capita, female labor force participation, and primary education attainment negatively correlate with SIGI. This implies a negative relationship between these variables.

A unit percentage increase (relative change) in the GDP per capita of a country enables an absolute decrease of 0.032 units in the Social Institutions & Gender Index. This is evident as a higher per capita GDP has historically been observed to lower gender discrimination. A higher GDP per capita implies a higher level of economic development and well-being in a country. Hence, it also means more increased access to financial resources and overall higher standards of living. The benefits of increasing GDP will impact all sections of society positively, hence, furthering economic development. Moreover, a higher GDP per capita could arise from increased participation in economic activity by women, who make up 50% of the population and can help improve the total output of countries.

A unit increase in the secondary school enrollment ratio will lower the Social Institutions & Gender Index by a value of 0.118. This result is supported by older literature which shows that an increase in education level reduces the discrimination faced by women in society. It is evident that countries with higher education levels exhibit lower gender discrimination; hence, primary education attainment positively influences the attitudes and biases of male and female children. Moreover, Girls who receive an education are less likely to marry young and more likely to lead healthy, productive lives. They earn higher incomes, participate in the decisions that most affect them, and build better futures for themselves and their families. ("Girls' Education" 2022) A unit increase in the percentage of women participating

in the labor force will lower the gender discrimination index by 0.27 units. This result does not come as a surprise, as women who work will be able to be more in control of their finances, gain financial independence as well as will hold a larger share of their household incomes, which will make them less dependent on the men of their family, and hence, less vulnerable to exploitation. Moreover, women participating in economic activity implies that labor markets are also becoming more accessible to women - which is also an indicator of women's empowerment. Interestingly, this coefficient is higher than the school enrollment ratio, implying that participating in the economy will lower discrimination against women to a larger extent as compared to completing primary education.

Hence, we can see from the significant results that increasing women's education and participation in the economy prove significant in empowering them. We also see from the results that labor force participation is a more impactful solution to the upliftment of women and lowering the discrimination faced by them in society.

## 7 Conclusion

This study attempted to understand the impact of standards of living, economic participation, and knowledge attainment at the primary and specialized levels on discrimination faced by women. These were characterized as human development and economic factors, which would potentially translate into women's economic and social empowerment. As seen from the results of our study, it is evident that these factors play a significant role in understanding and battling gender differences and discrimination. However, these are not stand-alone measures.

Education is often quoted as a solution to the problem of gender disparity; however, it is not stand alone. To fully solve the problem of gender disparity, the education imparted to children must be done so in such a way that it does not translate to gender biases as they grow up. Educating and economically empowering women will help women understand the discrimination against them; however, alongside this empowerment, we must also break down and eradicate discriminatory social structures through education and unlearning.

As discussed above, we also saw that female labor force participation - that is, women's participation in economic activity plays a significant role in empowering them - however, an important consideration is that women's economic participation should also be accompanied by an increase in financial literacy and an increase in their participation in formal financial institutions. Additionally, an increase in economic activity does not necessarily imply a decrease in the time spent undergoing unpaid care work. According to statistics reported by the International Labor Organization (ILO), women in Asia spend nearly 4.1 times the time spent by men in unpaid care work and subsequently work more hours in a day than men, even if they are involved in some form of economic activity. Women's unpaid work subsidizes the cost of care that sustains families, supports economies, and often fills in for the lack of social services. Yet, it is rarely recognized as "work." ILO Data from 64 countries in 2018, which represents two-thirds of the world's working age population shows that 16.4 billion hours per day are spent in unpaid care work - the equivalent to 2 billion people working

eight hours per day with no remuneration. Moreover, women perform approximately 76% of this unpaid care work.

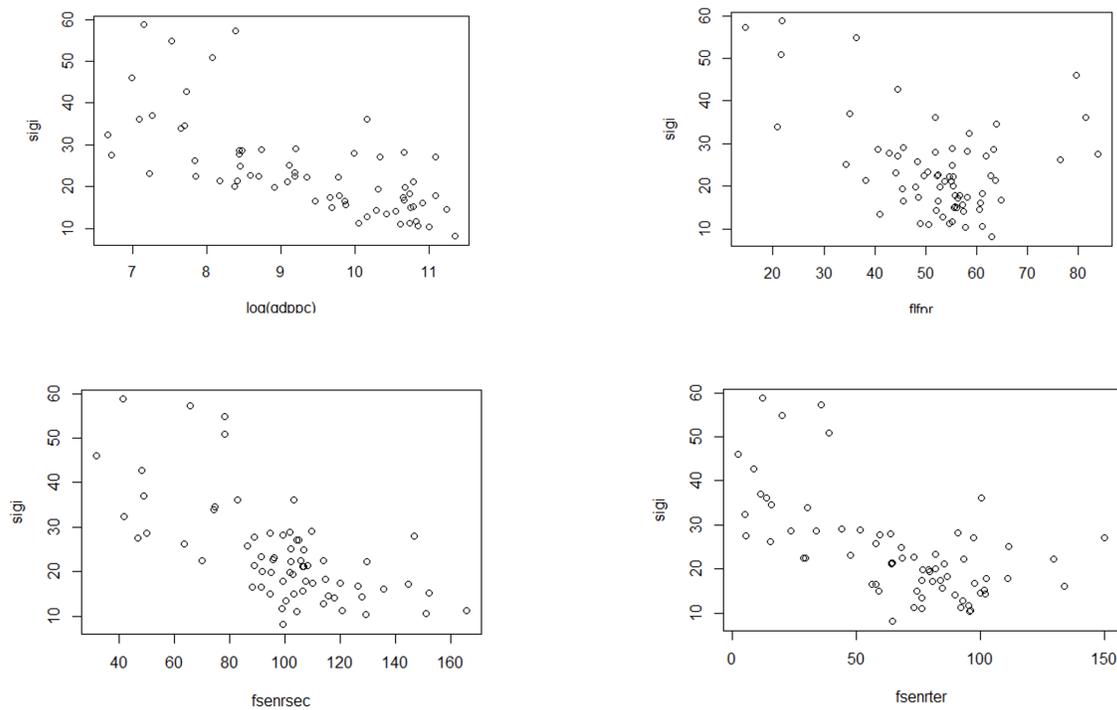
According to an article by UN Women, Unpaid care and domestic work are valued to be 10 and 39 percent of the Gross Domestic Product. They can contribute more to the economy than the manufacturing, commerce, or transportation sectors - and with the onset of climate change, women's unpaid work in farming & gathering is growing even more without receiving the valuation & monetary compensation that must be provided for work. This is a significant reason women everywhere are unable to achieve financial independence and are forced to depend on the men of their family - and often face discrimination and, in extreme cases - abuse.

It is evident that women who are not employed in economic activity or do not receive any form of education face large amounts of discrimination, however; to truly eradicate discrimination against women, only encouraging economic participation and education, while ignoring the systemic discriminatory social structures is not the way to go. While these surely help combat discrimination in some ways, these are not standalone measures, rather, tools that can be used to combat this problem.

## A Appendix

### A.1 Scatter Plots of Social Institutions & Gender Index with Explanatory Variables

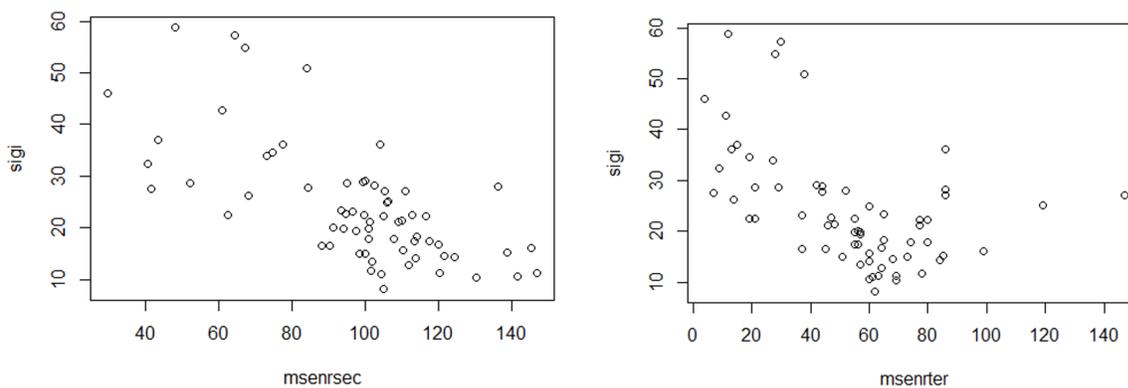
Figure 1: Social Institutions & Gender Index with Explanatory Variables



*Source:* Authors' calculations.

### A.2 Scatter Plots of Social Institutions & Gender Index with Male Variables

Figure 2: Social Institutions & Gender Index with Male Variables



*Source:* Authors' calculations.

### A.3 Diagnostic Tests

#### A.3.1 Variance Inflation Factors for testing Multicollinearity

(Calculates variance-inflation and generalized variance-inflation factors (VIFs and GVIFs) for linear, generalized linear, and other regression models.)

(small VIF values indicate low correlation among variables under ideal conditions  $VIF < 3$ . However it is acceptable if it is less than 10 .)

**Table 5: VIF Test for Multicollinearity**

Variable	$\log(gdppc)$	ffpr	fsearsec	fseartr
VIF	3.381204	1.034869	2.784153	3.468135

*Source:* Authors' calculations.

#### A.3.2 Breusch-Pagan test for testing heteroskedasticity

(p-value  $< 0.05$  to assume homoscedasticity)

(The Breusch-Pagan test fits a linear regression model to the residuals of a linear regression model (by default the same explanatory variables are taken as in the main regression model) and rejects if too much of the variance is explained by the additional explanatory variables.

Under null hypothesis the test statistic of the Breusch-Pagan test follows a chi-squared distribution with parameter (the number of regressors without the constant in the model) degrees of freedom.)

**Studentized Breusch-Pagan test:**  $BP = 12.492$ ,  $df = 4$ , **p-value** = 0.01404

#### A.3.3 Ramsay's RESET test for functional form:

(The RESET test is a popular diagnostic for correctness of functional form. The basic assumption is that under the alternative the model can be written in the form  $y = X\beta + Z\gamma$ .  $Z$  is generated by taking powers either from the fitted response, the regressor variables, or the first principal component of  $X$ . A standard F-Test is then applied to determine whether these additional variables have significant influence. The test statistic under  $H_0$  follows an F distribution with parameter degrees of freedom.)

**RESET** = 4.7023,  $df_1 = 2$ ,  $df_2 = 59$ , **p-value** = 0.01274

Hence, at 1% Significance level, this model does not have a specification error.

### A.4 About the SIGI

The OECD Development Centre's Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) is a cross-country measure of discrimination against women in social institutions (formal and informal laws, social norms, and practices) across 180 countries.

The four dimensions included in the SIGI: The SIGI covers four dimensions of discriminatory social institutions, spanning major socio-economic areas that affect women's lives: Discrimination in the family, Restricted physical integrity; Restricted access to productive and financial resources; and Restricted civil liberties.

The SIGI's variables quantify discriminatory social institutions such as unequal inheritance rights, child marriage, violence against women, and unequal land and property rights. Through its 180 country profiles, country classifications, unique database, and its innovative simulator, the SIGI provides a solid evidence base to effectively address the discriminatory social institutions that hold back progress on gender equality and women's empowerment and allow policymakers to scope out reform options and assess their likely effects on gender equality in social institutions.

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