NR34 / Measuring Gender Equity for Policy Action in Global South

Topic : Research

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GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

This panel aims to advance the scientific understanding of gender equity policy interventions through rigorous empirical analysis, with three primary objectives i.e., to evaluate the causal impact of large-scale government schemes and legal reforms on women's empowerment outcomes in India and comparable contexts; to develop and validate methodologically robust measures of complex social constructs such as agency, empowerment, and social norms within diverse cultural contexts; and to generate actionable, evidence-based insights that can inform policy design, implementation, and scaling strategies for gender-focused public administration interventions.

The panel invites contributions addressing the following research questions:
1) What is the causal impact of flagship policies on measurable outcomes including women's labor force participation, economic agency, political participation, health outcomes, and exposure to gender-based violence?
2) How can researchers develop contextually valid and reliable quantitative measures of multidimensional concepts like empowerment, agency, and gender norms that are applicable across India's diverse socio-cultural landscape? What innovative methodological approaches can strengthen causal inference in gender policy research?
3) How do policy impacts vary across intersectional identities? What mechanisms explain differential treatment effects across social groups?
4) How do macro-level disruptions, including climate shocks, economic crises, pandemics, and technological transformations quantitatively affect gender gaps in economic participation, education, health, and safety?
5) What empirical evidence exists regarding the cost-effectiveness, scalability, and implementation fidelity of successful gender interventions? What administrative and governance factors facilitate or hinder effective program delivery?

Overall, this panel makes significant scientific contributions to public policy and administration research. First, it addresses the methodological challenge of establishing causality in complex social interventions, contributing to the broader literature on impact evaluation and program assessment. Second, by focusing on India's rich data ecosystem (NFHS, NSS, CMIE, administrative data), the panel tries to show how large-scale datasets can be leveraged for rigorous policy analysis. Third, the panel's emphasis on intersectionality advances theoretical understanding of how social stratification systems interact with policy interventions. Finally, findings generated through this panel have high external validity for other developing economies implementing similar gender equity initiatives, thereby contributing to comparative public administration scholarship and evidence-based policymaking globally.

CALL FOR PAPERS

This panel welcomes empirical and methodological research papers that advance evidence-based understanding of gender equity policies and programs, particularly in India and comparable Global South contexts. We seek rigorous quantitative and mixed-methods research that bridges academic scholarship with practical policy insights.

We particularly encourage submissions in the following categories:

1. Papers employing experimental or quasi-experimental designs (randomized controlled trials, difference-in-differences, regression discontinuity, synthetic control methods, instrumental variables) to assess the causal effects of government schemes, legal reforms, or civil society interventions on women's empowerment outcomes. Outcomes of interest (not limited to) include labor force participation, entrepreneurship, political engagement, educational attainment, health and nutrition, asset ownership, decision-making autonomy, and exposure to gender-based violence.

2. Research utilizing national surveys (NFHS, NSS, IHDS, PLFS) or administrative data to examine trends,

patterns, and determinants of gender inequalities. Papers employing advanced statistical techniques, spatial analysis, or machine learning approaches to uncover policy-relevant insights are especially welcome.

3. Papers developing or validating scales and indices for measuring complex constructs such as agency, empowerment, social norms, or gender-based violence within the Indian context. Methodological contributions addressing measurement challenges in diverse cultural settings are valued.

4. Studies combining quantitative rigor with qualitative depth to understand mechanisms, implementation processes, or contextual factors that influence program effectiveness. Papers examining the "how" and "why" behind quantitative findings are encouraged.

5. Research examining how policy impacts vary across states, regions, or social groups (caste, class, religion, urban-rural). Papers analyzing intersectionality in policy outcomes contribute valuable insights for targeted program design.

6. Studies examining cost-effectiveness, scalability, administrative challenges, street-level bureaucracy, or governance factors affecting program delivery and fidelity.

Submission Guidelines

Prospective authors should submit an abstract (250-300 words) that clearly states: (1) research question and objectives; (2) theoretical framework or conceptual approach; (3) data sources and analytical methods; (4) key findings or expected contributions; and (5) policy implications. Papers at various stages of completion are welcome, including work-in-progress, though completed papers are preferred.

We particularly encourage submissions from early-career researchers, practitioners working at the policy-research interface, and scholars from interdisciplinary backgrounds including public policy, economics, sociology, gender studies, development studies, and public administration.