

Editorial of the Day – 13.11.2025

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1. Qualified success – On women's turnout, Bihar Assembly election

General Studies 2 – Polity/Governance **Topic –** Powers, functions, and responsibilities of the Election Commission of India (ECI) and concerns regarding its transparency

Bihar's Electoral Gender Paradox – Analysis of Women's Voter Turnout

Introduction – The recent Assembly elections in Bihar have spotlighted a significant and complex gender dynamic in the state's electoral behavior. This analysis examines the paradox of high female voter turnout occurring despite a declining gender ratio on the electoral rolls. The trend appears to be a direct consequence of welfare-driven politics, specific demographic shifts, and critical flaws in the voter registration process, which raises serious concerns about the transparency and integrity of the electoral system.

1. The Core Electoral Paradox

Higher Female Turnout – Data from the Election Commission of India (ECI) revealed that women voters outnumbered men by a significant margin of 4.34 lakh.

Lower Female Registration – This high turnout occurred despite 42 lakh *fewer* women being registered on the electoral rolls compared to men.

Widening Registration Gap – This disparity was exacerbated after the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls.

Declining Gender Ratio – The gender ratio within the electorate (women per 1,000 men) dropped from 907 to 892, indicating a clear gender bias in the roll revision and exclusion process.

2. Systemic Flaws – Gender Bias in Voter Exclusion

Disproportionate Exclusion – The SIR process disproportionately excluded women, especially impacting the 18–29 age group.

Primary Reason for Exclusion – Analysis based on Supreme Court–mandated disclosures indicates that women were predominantly excluded under the "permanently shifted" category.

Impact of Marriage – This classification disproportionately affected women who had moved from their natal homes after marriage.

Lack of Transparency – A critical gap in transparency exists, as it remains unclear whether the ECI ensured these women were successfully re-enrolled in their new constituencies.

3. Drivers of High Female Political Participation – This high turnout, despite registration hurdles, was driven by a combination of targeted welfare politics and structural demographic factors.

Welfare Politics & Incumbency – The high female turnout is widely expected to benefit the incumbent Nitish Kumar–led government, aligning with previous voting patterns. His administration has consistently emphasized women's empowerment through targeted welfare schemes.

Key Scheme – The *Mukhyamantri Mahila Rojgar Yojana* (launched September 2025) provided direct cash transfers of ₹10,000 to women.

ECI's Stance – The ECI allowed these disbursements to continue even after the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) was enacted, classifying the payments as part of an "ongoing scheme."

Structural and Demographic Factors –

Male Out-Migration – Bihar's economy is characterized by a large-scale out-migration of male laborers working outside the state, which structurally suppresses the male voter turnout.

Incentivization – Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT) and cash-based welfare schemes likely served as a direct incentive for women to vote.

Motivation – This suggests the turnout was driven less by ideological mobilization and more by tangible welfare benefits and the state's unique structural realities.

4. Concerns for Electoral Integrity & Conclusion

ECI Accountability – The ECI's silence on why the electoral roll's gender ratio has fallen significantly below the population's census estimates remains a major concern.

Value of Participation – High voter turnout loses its democratic value if the foundational voter registration list is inaccurate, exclusionary, or non-transparent.

A Partial Victory – While Bihar's high female turnout signals growing political participation and empowerment, it simultaneously exposes deep systemic gaps in electoral roll management.

The Path Forward – True electoral democracy requires two conditions –

1. Inclusive, accurate, and gender-balanced voter registration.
2. The free and fair exercise of voting rights.

Final Assessment – Until the Election Commission ensures full transparency and rectifies the gender imbalance in its rolls, this electoral success remains only a partial victory for women's representation and overall electoral fairness.

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/qualified-success-on-womens-turnout-bihar-assembly-election/article70271956.ece>

2. Lower taxes spur buying, but jobs and incomes will have to grow

General Studies 3 – Economy

Topic – Inclusive growth and issues arising from it

The Consumption-Income Conundrum

Introduction – The Indian economy is currently navigating a complex period defined by domestic policy shifts, global uncertainties, and changing consumer behavior. Recent data indicates that a short-term boost in consumption has been achieved through lower tax burdens and improved supply-side conditions. However, the long-term sustainability of this demand revival is critically dependent on structural employment generation and meaningful growth in household incomes.

1. The Short-Term Consumption Boost

Tax Rationalization – Government efforts to rationalize indirect taxes, particularly GST rate cuts and targeted reductions in import duties, have been central. This has lowered the cost of goods in key sectors like electronics, automobiles, and FMCG, spurring consumer buying.

Supply-Side Improvements – A reduction in logistics bottlenecks has improved the flow of goods, contributing to a better supply environment.

Rural Sentiment – A good monsoon combined with increased procurement support prices (MSPs) has strengthened rural sentiment and purchasing power.

Industrial Performance – Industrial production data shows consistent growth in manufacturing, supported by robust performance in capital goods, construction materials, and food processing.

Collective Impact – These factors have combined to drive moderate growth in domestic consumption during the first half of the year.

2. External Sector – Resilience Amidst Risks

Modest Export Growth – India's merchandise exports have grown at a modest pace, demonstrating resilience despite significant global headwinds.

Temporary Surge – A temporary surge in shipments was observed as exporters front-loaded demand to advanced economies, particularly the US, before anticipated tariff increases took effect.

Persistent Risks – Significant risks cloud the export prospects, including –

1. Prolonged geopolitical uncertainties.
2. Weak global economic growth.
3. Ongoing supply chain realignments.

Capital Flow Volatility – Capital flows are expected to remain volatile due to the ongoing monetary tightening by central banks globally.

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Key Strengths – The external position is supported by steady remittances and robust services exports, though the risk of global financial fragilities remains.

3. The Services Sector – A Key Stabilizer

Consistent Expansion – India's services sector continues to act as a major stabilizer for the economy, with consistent expansion seen in IT, business services, travel, financial services, and communication.

Role of GCCs – Global Capability Centers (GCCs) have been significantly scaling up their operations in India.

Impact of GCCs – This trend is boosting high-skilled employment opportunities and increasing foreign investment inflows.

Domestic Demand Link – Despite strong service exports, domestic-facing services (e.g., retail, housing, hospitality) require deeper support. Their growth is contingent on employment-led income growth across the wider economy.

4. Government Spending and the Fiscal Dilemma

Counter-Cyclical Role – Government expenditure, particularly capital expenditure (Capex), has played a vital counter-cyclical role.

Infrastructure Focus – Capex has been focused on core drivers of economic activity, such as transport infrastructure, energy corridors, and digital connectivity.

Fiscal Concerns – Concerns about future fiscal consolidation are rising.

Widening Deficit – This is primarily due to a widening revenue deficit, which stems from lower-than-expected tax collections (a consequence of the tax-cutting stimulus).

The Tax Paradox – While lowering taxes stimulates short-term consumption, it can reduce long-term fiscal flexibility unless it is offset by –

1. Higher overall economic growth.
2. Improved tax compliance.
3. An expanded tax base.

5. Employment – The Critical Missing Link

Income over Tax Cuts – The central challenge is that lower taxes alone cannot sustain long-term consumption; household earnings must rise.

The Employment Gap – Employment generation has failed to keep pace with the expanding working-age population.

Slow Sectoral Recovery – Key labour-absorbing sectors, such as textiles, construction, and MSMEs, have been slow to fully recover post-pandemic.

Aggravating Factors – The employment scenario is further complicated by rising automation trends and the global economic slowdown.

Requirements for Durable Growth – To ensure durable consumption growth, the economy urgently needs –

1. Higher-quality job creation, especially in manufacturing and formal services.
2. Greater female labour force participation (FLFP).
3. Skilling and reskilling initiatives aligned with emerging industries.
4. Policy incentives for labour-intensive sectors.

6. Way Forward and Conclusion – Lower taxes and improved supply conditions have provided essential short-term momentum to consumption. However, this momentum cannot be sustained over the medium term without strong employment creation and a corresponding rise in household incomes. The Indian economy's next phase of growth will depend less on tax stimuli and more on generating stable, productive, and broad-based income opportunities for its population. Ensuring this transition is the most crucial task for achieving durable, inclusive, and resilient economic growth.

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/lower-taxes-spur-buying-jobs-incomes-grow-10361932/#~:~:>

[text=While%20impetuses%20like%20a%20lower,household%20income%20in%20urban%20areas.](#)