Gender Segregation and ICT: An Indo-British Comparison

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ABSTRACT
Gender segregation in science, engineering, construction, technology (SECT) is a persistent feature, both in India and the UK. Although culturally the two countries differ, under-representation of women in SECT is widespread and a cause for general apprehension, and in recent years, this has gained recognition in the study of gender, work, and family. In this paper, the authors discuss findings of a comparative study undertaken between India and Britain in the ICT sector. Using 27 interviews with ICT professionals in the two countries, the authors discuss views on ICT education, recruitment, and employment practices, work-life balance, changing gender relations, opportunities for progression, and retention in the two countries. The authors take into consideration women’s role in power and politics and how the “public” and “private” patriarchy shapes women’s position in the labour market, with an essential backdrop of “patrifocality” in the Indian context.

Keywords: GEM, Gender, Gender and Technology, ICT, Segregation

INTRODUCTION
In the UK, historically, science, engineering and technology did not rank very highly as an occupation and there are several explanations. In the mid 1960s, scientists and engineers were ranked below dentists, university lecturers, company directors, solicitors and only just above primary-school teachers, unlike in India where an engineering degree undoubtedly enhances social status and increases chances of employability. More recently, India’s IT industry has been growing at a very fast pace with the adoption of economic liberalization policies and emerging as the ‘most watched test of global capitalism’. Information communication technology (ICT) driven growth and development in India has been observed to have skipped the middle stages of traditional economic development models and ‘leapfrogged’ to technology driven stages of economic development. Yet, a gendered occupational structure in science, engineering, construction and technology (SECT) is very much predominant, like the UK. A gendered occupational structure is often assumed to exist due to social inequality and gender equality is measured by the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM). It is generally assumed or implied that greater empowerment of women would reduce gender segregation. But, there are exceptions; in countries where the degree of women’s empowerment is greater, the level of gender segregation is also greater. Interestingly, Sweden with a higher GEM also

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year a woman became a Presiding officer of Parliament or one of its houses for the first time</th>
<th>Women in ministerial positions in 2011</th>
<th>Seats held by women (% of total)</th>
<th>Female legislators, senior officials and managers (% of total)</th>
<th>Female professional and technical workers (% of total)</th>
<th>Female to male earned income ratio (2010)</th>
<th>Year women received the right to vote and stand for election</th>
<th>HDI index</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>1935 and 1950</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>1918 and 1928</td>
<td>0.497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>1935, 1945, 1950</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>15 and 0.77</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>1918, 1928</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. GEM measure for India and UK
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www.igi-global.com/article/politics-watching-visuality-new-media/63031?camid=4v1a

Exploring the Concept of the “Social Media Campaign”
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