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Asia Feature Gender India Welfare

Six Things to Know About Basic Income and Gender Equity: Lessons From India

The positive impact of basic income on poverty levels, women's self-respect, increased social inclusion and reduced scope for exploitation is greatly inspiring.



A lot of de



by Marion Sharples

Basic income is increasingly a topic of debate, with [Finland](#) having launched its two-year pilot a few days ago, and with upcoming pilots in [the Netherlands](#), and [Canada](#). But what does basic income mean for women, particularly in the Global South? Looking at the [Madhya Pradesh basic income pilot](#), which ran from 2011-2013, Marion Sharples investigates what the impact of basic income was on gender equity.

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The basic income [pilot](#) took place in Madhya Pradesh, India, the country [voted the worst G20 country to be a woman](#), from 2011-2013. Villages were randomly selected to take part in the pilot, and every adult and child received monthly basic income payments for 12 months. This article sets out six key lessons around gender equity learnt from the pilot, as recorded in [this report](#).

1. Basic income greatly reduced women's and girls' poverty rates

It is known that women are [disproportionately likely](#) to be in poverty – and the good news is that basic income in Madhya Pradesh helped to tackle this. The basic income transfers had a huge impact across the board in terms of nutrition, education, healthcare and sanitation – but improvements were particularly notable among women and girls. In comparison with the control villages, girls' nutritional levels in basic income villages improved hugely, as did secondary school enrolment rates and family spending on girls' education. Women receiving the basic income were also far more likely to seek medical assistance when ill.



Basic income pilot projects are being introduced in many countries around the world.

This is a vital lesson on the power of basic income and its ability to tackle poverty. These results add to the findings of [other research](#) which argues that the best way to fight poverty can simply be to give money. Further, these results challenge conditional cash transfers, schemes where people receive cash transfers or access to welfare programmes on the condition that they fulfil certain criteria. One of the most well-known schemes is [Prospera \(formerly Oportunidades\) in Mexico](#). The huge impact of basic income on poverty levels suggests that perhaps

The huge impact of basic income on poverty levels suggests that perhaps conditionalities may not actually be necessary in anti-poverty schemes

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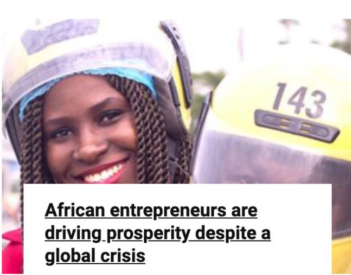


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