
A Compendious Study on Gender Inequality in India

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Abstract:

Gender-based inequalities in India decipher into superior magnitude being sited on the empowerment of men than of women. In India, health and population pointers are driven by gender divergence including sex ratios at birth, infant and child mortality, and younger age wedding ceremony for women. In the houses, the non-empowerment of women results in fewer admittance in edification, employment, income, authority and liberty of association. Taking into account all these fact, India and its society has a gargantuan charge of empowering women to grant them the vital needs and to train them for a secure and prolific future. Results from the World Economic Forum specify that, India is one of the worst countries in the world in terms of gender inequality. In order to fortify women's status and to furnish her an unrestricted and egalitarian ambiance, one must deem her a human first and then they should be provided all the rights given to human being. Gender inequality is, hence, a form of inequality which is discrete from other forms of socio-economic inequalities. Gender inequality in India is a crucial reality. In contemporary times, women are performing remarkably well in different genre of activities. The paper exploits the secondary data from newspapers and various reliable organizations as the basis of analysis. The paper lays stress on assorted aspects of gender inequality existing in India. The paper also proposes some remedial measures for the upliftment of status of women in society along with the focuses on varied kind gender inequality.

Keywords: Gender inequality, Human right, Egalitarian society, Empowerment

Introduction

After World War II, in the post modernization time, one of the issues which had came into the notice of the policy makers and social scientists was gender issues and disquiet. Gender issues mean the discussion on both males and females, though women who suffer from gender inequality.

From all gender issues, gender inequality is the most rampant in India. The word ‘**gender**’ refers to the socio-economic description of man and woman - the way societies distinguish men-women and dispense social roles to them. The peculiarity flanked by genders was commenced to deal with the general propensity to feature women’s subordination to their anatomy.

Gender inequalities are replicated in the daily veracity of women’s and girls’ lives including: the lopsided number of women amid those living in poverty. In India, women are worshiped as *devi* but still destitute of basic human rights. In spite of constituting half of the population, they are considered as marginalized group and the second-class citizen. The UN positions India as a middle-income country. Gender is intimately related to the roles and behavior consigning to women and men based on their sexual differences, the families and society instigate the progression of differentiating with the birth of a child. The birth of son is celebrated while the birth of a daughter begins with pain. Boys are encouraged to be tough and outgoing but girls are brought up to be homebound and shy, these gender differences are created by our culture. India’s documentation is particularly distressing, when it comes to demonstration of women in parliament and their labor force participation.

Gender disparity in India ought to have a serious study and discussion amongst media, researchers and policy makers of nation. Many developing countries including India, have displayed gender inequality in education, employment and health. It is familiar to find girls suffering from high mortality rates. As per UNDP report, India ranks 132 out of 187 countries on gender inequality index (GII). India ranks low partly because of its skewed ratio, with only 914 females for every 1000 males, according to Indian government data. As per UNDP report, only 29% of Indian women above the age of 15 in 2011 were part of labor force, as compared to 80.7% men. In parliament, only 10.9% of law makers are women, while in Pakistan it is 21%. In India, 200 women died for every 100,000 child births and 80% of Indian women didn’t have bank account in 2014 as per UNDP report Every day 39000 girls are forced for early marriage i.e. 27 girls are married a minute.

History & Origin of Gender Inequality

The origin of gender inequality has always been the male domination. At least in India, a woman still needs the anchor of a husband and a family. Their dominating nature has led women to walk with their head down. It was all practiced from the start and is followed till date. Here, just as women’s domestic work is undervalued, so are their skills in the world of employment. Most are concentrated in the poorly-paid, low-skilled women’s sectors of the economy.

If we highlight ancient India, an Indian woman was in the position of high esteem and was pronounced by the word of maata (mother) or Devi (goddess) in the Vedas and Upanishads. Same as *Manusmriti*, woman was considered as a precious being and in the early Vedic age, girls were looked after with care. Then, practice of polygamy depreciated the position of woman and in the

medieval period, the practices of *purdha* system, dowry system, and sati system came into being. But with the passage of time, the status of woman kept on deteriorating.

The popular elucidation of Hindu mythology have very fixed views on how women should behave; things like being obedient and being a good housewife and mother. Unfortunately, these play a part in enabling sexism and violence against women in India today. If we focus on Hindu mythology, because around 80% of Indians are Hindus and even non-Hindus are impacted by it, the religions in India view women in a similar light; they are not allowed to be independent. In some ways, these attitudes are used to justify violence against women.

After the advancement of science and technology, female feticides is being practiced by large number of people. This has also led to a plunge in the female sex ratio. The Indian census 2011 state-wise shows that, Kerala represent the highest sex ratio with 1084 females per 1000 males while Haryana represents the lowest sex ratio with just 877 women per 1000 males. Then the dowry became popular, and, it was the starting period of female infanticide practices in few areas. Crime against women is increasing day by day. Domestic Violence, Rape, Sexual harassment, molestation, eve-teasing, forced prostitution, sexual-exploitation, at work places is a common affair today. So, it's an startling issue for our country. The major reasons for the gender inequality are identified as the need of a male heir for the family, huge dowry, continuous physical and financial support to girl child, poverty, domestic – violence, farming as major job for poor and the caste system.

Types of Gender Inequality

1. Ownership inequality: In many societies the ownership of property is very unequal. Fundamental assets like house and land may be very inequitably shared. The absence of claims to property can not only reduce the voice of women, but also makes it harder for women to enter and flourish in commercial, economic and even some social activities. This type of inequality has existed in most parts of the world, though there are also local variations.

2. Natality inequality: In this type of inequality preference is given to boys over girls than many male dominated societies have, gender inequality can patent itself in the form of the parents waiting the newborn to be a boy rather than girl. There was a time when this was not more than a wish, but now with the availability of modern techniques to find out the gender of the foetus, sex selection abortion has become common in many countries and in India as well.

3. Household inequality: There are often enough, basic inequalities in gender relations within the family or the household, which can take different forms. Even in cases in which there are no overt signs of anti-female bias in, like survival or son-preference or education or even in promotion to higher executive positions, the family arrangements can be quite unequal in terms of sharing the burden of housework and child care. It is for example quite common in many societies to take it

for granted that while men will naturally work outside the home, women could do it if and only if they could combine it with various inescapable and unequally shared household duties. This is sometimes called "division of labour", though women could be forgiven for seeing it as "accumulation of labour". The reach of this inequality includes not only unequal relations within the family, but also derivatives in equalities in employment and recognition of outside world.

4. Professional or Employment inequality: In terms of employment and for promotion in work and occupation, women often face handicapped than men. A country like India may be quite egalitarian in matters of demography or basic facilities and even progress needs to be prominent to the levels of employment and occupation seems to be much more problematic for women than for men.

Factors affecting Gender Inequality

A. ECONOMIC FACTORS

1. **Labor participation:** - There is wage inequality between men and women in India. A considerable number of women enter the labor market after thirties, generally after completion of their reproductive roles of child bearing and rearing.

2. **Access to credit:** - There are large disparities between men and women in terms of access to banking services. Women frequently lack collateral for bank loans due to low levels of property ownership and micro-credit schemes have come under scrutiny for coercive lending practices.

3. **Occupational inequality:** - Women are not allowed to have combat roles in military services. Permanent commission could not be granted to female officers because they have neither been trained for command nor have been given the responsibility in India.

4. **Property Rights:** - Although women have equal rights under the law to own property and receive equal inheritance rights, yet in practice, women are at a disadvantage. The Hindu Succession Act of 2005 provides equal inheritance rights to ancestral and jointly owned property, the law is weakly enforced.

5. **Women's inequality in proper inheritance:**-Women are insignificantly deprived of their proper inheritance culturally and religiously as well. The religious constitution doesn't give women equal inheritance; there is a segregation of giving the property to women as they will not be given the property as men can have. Though Islamic constitution permits women having at least half of the property as man, society is reluctant to give the desired property to women let alone giving the equal share.

6. **Employment inequality:** - Some common inequalities that take place in the workplace are the gender-based imbalances of individuals in power and command over the management of the organization. Women are not able to move up into higher paid positions quickly as compared to men. Some organizations have more inequality than others, and the extent to which it occurs can

differ greatly. In the workplace the men usually hold the higher positions and the women often hold lower paid positions such as secretaries.

B. SOCIAL FACTORS

1. **Education:** - The female literacy rate in India is lower than the male literacy rate. According to census of India 2011, literacy rate of female is 65.46% compared to males which are 82.14%.
2. **Health:-** On health issue, the gender inequality between women's and men's life expectancy and women live compared to men in good health because of lots of violence, disease, or other relevant factors.
3. **Patriarchal Society:** - Most of India has strong patriarchal custom, where men hold authority over female family members and inherit property & title. It is the custom where inheritance passes from father to son, women move in with the husband & his family upon marriage & marriages include a bride price or dowry.
4. **Dowry:** - The dowry system in India contributes to gender inequalities by influencing the perception that girls are a burden on families. Such belief limits the resources invested by parents in their girls and limit her bargaining power within the family.
5. **Gender-based violence:** - Gender-based violence such as rape, sexual assault, insult to modesty, kidnapping, abduction, cruelty by intimate partner or relatives, importation or trafficking of girls, persecution for dowry, indecency and all other crimes are practiced on women. These crimes show the high degree of inequality in India.
6. **Women's inequality in decision making:** In India, Women have less authority than men to legal recognition and protection, as well as lower access to public knowledge and information, and less decision-making power both within and outside the home. This is also one of the reasons for inequality in gender.

C. CULTURAL FACTORS

1. **Old age support from sons:** - A key factor driving gender inequality is the preference for sons, as they are deemed more useful than girls. They are supposed to support the old age security of their parents.
2. **Patriarchal system:** - It is a common kinship system in which an individual's family membership derives from and is traced through his or her father's lineage. It generally involves the inheritance of property, names, or titles by persons related through one's male kin.
3. **Role of sons in religious rituals:** - Another factor is that of religious practices, which can only be performed by males for their parents' afterlife. Sons are often the only person entitled to performing funeral rights for their parents.

4. **Son Preference:** - Boys are given the exclusive rights to inherit the family name and properties and they are viewed as additional status for their family. Moreover, the prospect of parents „losing“ daughters to the husband’s family and expensive dowry of daughters further discourages parents from having daughters. There is a strong belief that daughter is a liability.

D. LEGAL & POLITICAL FACTORS

According to the Constitution of India, both men and women are equal in the eyes of the laws and hence they have equal rights. But, unfortunately, legal & political bias has prevented the law to attain the success of equality in gender. This is another reason for inequality in gender.

Remedial Measures for Gender Inequality

1. Strategies for progression of women should be higher literacy, more formal education, and greater employment opportunity. In education, it needs to be reducing primary and secondary dropout of female child.
2. The list of legislations as well as types of discriminations or inequalities may go on but the real change will only come when the attitude of men will change; when the male species of human beings would start treating women as equal and not subordinate or weaker to them. In fact not only men but women also need to change their mindset as through cultural taming they have also become part of the same exploitative system of patriarchy and are playing a supportive role in furthering men’s agenda of dominating women.
3. In job opportunities there shall be reservation or expenditure or provision of services or special provisions. In governance, all rights and all legal measures should be available for women’s protection and support. Human rights education , know how to take control of their circumstance, help to achieve their own goals, helping themselves, enhancing their quality of life and motivating for lobbying or advocacy are also enablers for their advancement. Collaborators such as NGO, INGOs, and NPOs, SHGs, and CBOs, policy makers, local leaders, information disseminators, health care providers, teachers and family members should help in the social advancement of women.
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Government’s Initiatives to Exterminate Gender Inequality

A. SUKANYA SAMRIDDHI YOJANA: It has been started by our HONOURABLE PRIME MINISTER MR NARENDRA MODI on JAN 2015. It has been started by the GOI to not only save the girl child but also to provide them the financial stability for their education or their wedding

expense. The family having a girl child of less than 10 years of age can get the benefit of this scheme. A parent of girl child must open the account in the bank at the name of their daughter. They can invest the money monthly or yearly with 8.4% P.A of interest rate and maturity period is 21years. It is also tax free.

B. MATERNITY BENEFIT PROGRAMME: It was previously known by INDIRA GANDHI MATRITVA SAHYOG YOJANA (IGMSY). It was started in 2016 and implemented by the MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT. This scheme provides cash incentives to the pregnant and lactating mother of the age of 19 or more and it gives them the wage compensation and the condition for safe delivery and better nutrition. This scheme is implemented to cover the 650 districts of the country in 2017.

C. BETI BACHAO BETI PADHAO: There is a Campaign ‘BETI BACHAO BETI PADHAO’ started by our Prime Minister MR. NARENDRA MODI on 22 JAN 2015 in Panipat (Haryana). It aims to make the nation stronger with the strength of women. In past, women had faced so much and still in this era women are not educated, girls are not going to school and there is huge dropout ratio of girls at secondary education and higher education. So as to eradicate these problems, a flagship programme has been initiated by the GOI to educate them and to empower the women to fix the lacking number of girl child ratio and to provide them the opportunities so that they could attain their better tomorrow and parents should have better financial stability so that they won’t treat the daughters as burden. Rs150 crore has been spent on this scheme.

D. MAHILA E- HAAT: It has been introduced in March 2016.It provides the web-based marketing platform all over the country. Women can list their products free of cost without any mediator and sell their products directly to the buyers which are manufactured by them. It also provides various other kinds of opportunities to the women entrepreneurs, NGOs, and self-help group to empower them.

Conclusion

India must take tangible steps to reduce the gender inequality. As unrelenting gender inequalities continue, there is need to alter the concepts and strategies for promoting women’s dignity and rights. There is need for new kinds of institutions, incorporating new norms and rules that support equal and just relations between women and men. Man and woman are like two wheels of a carriage. The life of one without the other is imperfect. The only fool proof method to stop gender inequality is to bring about change in the mind sets of people. This problem can’t be solved by few but everyone must join hands to eradicate this inequality. India needs to deactivate the gender inequality. The need of the day is the trends where girls are able, to not only to break out of the culturally determined patterns of employment but also to offer advice about career possibilities that look beyond the traditional list of jobs. It is astounding that, in spite of so many laws, women still continue to live under stress and strain. To ensure equality of status for our women we still have miles to go. The efforts of both women and men would be able to found solutions to the problem of gender inequality and would take us all towards our cherished dream of a truly modern

society in both thought and action and political inequalities between men and women in India. Various international gender inequality indices rank India differently on each of these factors, as well as on a composite basis, and these indices are controversial. India needs to deactivate the gender inequality. This can be eradicated only when the people will change their mindset and would provide equal opportunities to both men and women. And together they serve and lend their services to all the sectors equally. Gender discrimination has been reduced gradually through BETI BACHAO BETI PADHAO scheme. The current need of the hour is to plan a way out to execute & implement all the running schemes in the same manner and bring our mothers, our sisters, our daughters, our wives, and our female friends on the same level like our men and give them the life of glory and recognition. Let's make India free from every kind of inequality and discrimination by empowering our women.

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