



Gender Inequality in Indian Society

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Abstract :

Gender inequality refers to unequal treatment or perception of individuals based on their sex. It reflects and manifests in numerous dimensions of our life. Gender inequality and resultant discrimination in varying degrees on the ground of sex are commonly witnessed, admitted and even justified in India. The reality of gender inequality in India is very complex and diversified, because it exists in every field like education, employment opportunities, income, health, cultural issues, social issues, economic issues etc. Most of the forms of discrimination against women have their roots in patriarchal system and its values. Women are dominated over by their male members in their own family. They have little power in making decisions. Education is a key tool in bringing socio – economic empowerment among women, which brings citizenry consciousness among women on their rights and duties. It promotes social, political, economical and cultural advancement of women. Educated women have proved to be no less than men in all fields.

Key words: Gender inequality, Education, Occupation, Health, Social and Culture.

INTRODUCTION :

GENDER INEQUALITY; For centuries women were discriminated and ill-treated by men. Women were considered as inferior to men and viewed as a sub-ordinate to men, ignored, neglected, confined to house hold activities and forced to be as a good mother. Gender Inequality means disparity between men and women in different social, economical & political, cultural and legal aspects. De Beauvoir (1949) says on gender inequality - “One is not born, but becomes a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society: it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between, male and eunuch, which is described as feminine. Only the mediation of someone else can establish an individual as another”. Gender inequality has been a social problem for centuries and it needs to be removed from the society. Sexism is the biggest threat to gender equality and marriage is the second major factor to gender inequality. After marriage majority of women tend to think that they are less power than men and their duty is to obey husband, in laws and look after family. Gender inequalities, and their social causes, impact India's sex ratio, women's health over their lifetimes, their educational attainment, and economic conditions. Gender inequality in India is a multifaceted issue that concerns men and women. Some argue that various gender equality indices place men at a disadvantage. However, when India's population is examined as a whole, women are at a

disadvantage in several important ways. In India, discriminatory attitudes towards either sex have existed for generations and affect the lives of both sexes. Although the constitution of India grants men and women equal rights, gender disparities remain.

Factors BEHIND GROWING GENDER INEQUALITY:

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%. India is on target to meet its Millennium Development Goal of gender parity in education by 2015. UNICEF's measure of attendance rate and Gender Equality in Education Index (GEEI) capture the quality of education. Despite some gains, India needs to triple its rate of improvement to reach GEEI score of 95% by 2015 under the Millennium Development Goals. In rural India girls continue to be less educated than boys. Recently, many studies have investigated underlying factors that contribute to greater or less educational attainment by girls in different regions of India. In examining educational disparities between boys and girls, the transition from primary to secondary education displays an increase in the disparity gap, as a greater percentage of females compared to males drop out from their educational journey after the age of twelve. Participation in post-secondary education for girls in India has changed over time. The source indicates that overall participation for girls in higher education has gone up over time, especially in recent years.

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. On health and survival measures, international standards consider the birth sex ratio implied sex-selective abortion, and gender inequality between women's and men's life expectancy and relative number of years that women live compared to men in good health by taking into account the years lost to violence, disease, malnutrition or other relevant factors. The 2011 Census birth sex ratio for its States and Union Territories of India, in 0 to 1 age group, indicated Jammu & Kashmir had birth sex ratio of 128 boys to 100 girls, Haryana of 120, Punjab of 117, and the states of Delhi and Uttarakhand to be 114. This has been attributed to increasing misuse and affordability of foetus sex-determining devices, such as ultrasound scan, the rate of female foeticide is rising sharply in India. Female infanticide (killing of girl infants) is still prevalent in some rural areas.

Occupation:

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. A 2003 study of four science and technology higher education institutions in India found that 40% of female faculty members felt some

form of gender discrimination in their respective institutions, favouring male faculty members. In addition, in terms of hiring practices, the interview committees of these institutions asked female applicants how they would balance their family with work, and why they were applying for a position rather than being a homemaker. Furthermore, discriminatory hiring practices in favour of men were pursued due to beliefs that women would be less committed to work after marriage.

Economic:

There is wage inequality between man and woman in India. A substantial number of women enter the labour market after thirties, generally after completion of their reproductive roles of child bearing and rearing. There is wage inequality between men and women in India. The largest wage gap was in manual ploughing operations in 2009, where men were paid ₹ 103 per day, while women were paid ₹ 55, a wage gap ratio of 1.87. For sowing the wage gap ratio reduced to 1.38 and for weeding 1.18. For other agriculture operations such as winnowing, threshing and transplanting, the men to female wage ratio varied from 1.16 to 1.28. For sweeping, the 2009 wages were statistically same for men and women in all states of India.

Working Hours:

Women work longer than men It is evident that women work more than men. Women are not only working in the offices, factories, institutions and industries but also they work at home. But, this is not considered as women are working more time than men. Previous studies proved that women are paid 34% less than men though they work approximately 50 minutes more time than men.

Property rights:

Women have equal rights under the law to own property and receive equal inheritance rights, but in practice, women are at a disadvantage. This is evidenced in the fact that 70% of rural land is owned by men. Laws, such as the Married Women Property Rights Act of 1974 protect women, but few seek legal redress. Although the Hindu Succession Act of 2005 provides equal inheritance rights to ancestral and jointly owned property, the law is weakly enforced, especially in Northern India.

Political:

This measure of gender inequality considers the gap between men and women in political decision making at the highest levels. From the prime minister to chief ministers of various states, Indian voters have elected women to its state legislative assemblies and national parliament in large numbers for many decades. Women turnout during India's 2014 parliamentary general elections was 65.63%, compared to 67.09% turnout for men. In 16 states of India, more women voted than men. A total of 260.6 million women exercised their right to vote in April–May 2014 elections for India's parliament. India passed 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments in 1993, which provides for 33 per cent quotas for women's representation in the local self-government institutions. These Amendments were implemented in 1993.

Social and Culture:

Patriarchy is a social system of privilege in which men are the primary authority figures, occupying roles of political leadership, moral authority, control of property, and authority over women and children. Most of India, with some exceptions, has strong patriarchal and patrilineal customs, where men hold authority over female family members and inherit family property and title. A key factor driving gender inequality is the preference for sons, as they are deemed more useful than girls. Boys are given the exclusive rights to inherit the family name and properties and they are viewed as additional status for their family. In a survey-based study of 1990s data, scholars found that sons are believed to have a higher economic utility as they can provide additional labour in agriculture. Another factor is that of religious practices, which can only be performed by males for their parents' afterlife.

SUGGESTIONS:

There is a solution of every problem. For reducing gender inequality in India, we should offer high level of education to girls and increase women empowerment. We should also give them opportunity in active politics & social activities so that social integration in Indian society can be made. Government should make policies & strategies regarding stopping the sex identification & abortions. Education plays very important role in the life of men as well as in the women's life. Education is the key weapon to remove gender inequalities in our society. Education enhances dignity and honour of women. It removes all the stereotype situations and makes them become inspiration to the coming generations. Educated women are more informed of their rights for justice. It helps them to fight for their rights and free from social evil such as child marriages, dowry and female infanticide and to get equal employment opportunities in all fields. Being citizens of a participative democratic country, the genders, women and men, has to find 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.

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