



## Gender inequality – A Global issue

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### **Abstract:**

The practice of gender inequality is an entire observable fact. Each country of the world is experiencing it one or the other way the term “gender inequality” refers to the seeming or actual unequal treatment of individuals based on their gender. Gender inequality arises out of cultural differences in gender roles, which are socially constructed systems. While there are innate biological sex-based differences between men and women, gender inequality is a kind of social discrimination. Over the years women have made great strides in many areas with remarkable progress in sinking some gender gaps. Yet, the afflicted world in which we live is characterized by deeply unequal sharing of burden of adversities between men and women. Sprawling inequalities persist in their access to education, health care, physical and financial resources and opportunities in the political, economic and social evil. Human civilization has lost much of talent because of the lack of rights provided to eve’s daughters. Al though governments throughout the world have taken some steps for the improvement of women’s lives, inequalities still exist. Gender inequality is not natural. It is socially constructed. Construction of gender has become a curse for our society as it has led to a loss of economic, social and political opportunities to half of the world. Women are discriminated in all spheres, Political, social, cultural and economic aspects. The issue of gender inequality is one which has been publicly echoing through society for decades.



**Keywords:** - Discrimination, Political, Social, Cultural, Economic, Education and Health etc.

## **Introduction:**

Gender inequality is one of the most blazing issues that today's states face which affects both domestic politics and their international relations. Thus states are in the need to be clear that gender equality is not just a moral issue, and it shares meanings beyond that. According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2015, it would take another 118 years to fill the economic gender gap. Imagining one more future century with gender inequality would be a nightmare, since the benefits of gender equality especially in politics and economic spheres would not be enjoyed by the global states. That makes gender inequality as a concerned issue. It does not mean the globe is blind in taking necessary steps to reach gender parity. Despite the measures, gender inequality still exists even in the first world states. The scholars argue that the measures adopted by the governments are not enough since they only closed 4% of gender gap in the last ten years which is extremely slow. The main reason is that the states implement their gender equality and equity policies into one sector, and they fail to implement paralleling in all sectors in a country. Nake M. Kamarany and Catherine Robinson in their article ( The Global Problem of Gender Inequality) written to Huffington Post (11th June,2012) specifically stated what are the elements that should be taken into account when it comes to measure the gender parity. They include expectancy, basic education, health and life expectancy, equality of economic opportunities and political empowerment. Therefore, it is vital for a state to concentrate on gender equality is maintained in all elements in an equilibrate way. Gender inequality is an obstacle for economic progress and the human development because it creates crimes against women. Violence, femicide (mass killing of women), rape (war rape), honour killing, misogynistic violence, female genital mutilation, sex-selective abortion, human trafficking, and sexual exploitations are some of them. These are crimes against humanity and they create demographic imbalances. If a state undergoes such imbalances through simultaneous humanitarian crimes against women just because it failed to reduce gender parity, the state would eventually grow as a threat to global

security. To avoid such phenomenon, national and international measures are needed to be linked collaboratively (Maathumai paramthama 2016)

Gender inequality, or in other words, gender discrimination refers to unfair rights between male and female based on different gender roles which leads to unequal treatment in life. The concept: gender inequality has been widely known in human history but not until the beginning the 20th century has the transformation of gender relations become "one of the most rapid, profound social changes" (Wright & Rogers 2009)

Essays, UK. (November 2013). Characteristic of Gender Inequality Sociology Essay. Retrieved from <https://www.ukessays.com/essays/sociology/characteristic-of-gender-inequality-sociology-essay.php?cref=1>

## **Objectives of the study**

1. To know various causes of gender inequality:
2. To know how we can eliminate gender inequality:

## **Methodology**

The present paper is a descriptive analysis of “Gender inequality As a global issue” for which we have taken data from secondary source that are research articles, books, journals, periodical records and government publications.

## **What is Gender Inequality?**

Gender inequality pervades the world. In considering the dimensions of economic gender inequality, women still make less than men in the formal work sector, are more likely to live in poverty, are less likely to participate in the formal work sector, and do a larger share of work in the household sector. The dimensions of political gender inequality include women's lower representation in elected office and lower representation in political and corporate appointments.



Social gender inequality has numerous dimensions, some of which are less favorable to men while others are less favorable to women: men are more prone to violence, imprisonment, and disability, while women are more likely to be the victims of domestic violence and sexual assault; in some countries men have lower educational attainment than women, while the pattern is reversed in other countries. Demographic gender inequality includes the fact that men live shorter lives on average than do women (65 years for men, 69 years for women—CIA 2010), but there is also concern that many women are never given the chance to be born, and in the younger generations men now outnumber women, by large numbers in China and India in particular (with gender ratios respectively of 113 men and 117 men per hundred women in the under-15 age range—CIA 2010). While many of the costs of gender inequality are ultimately born by particular individuals, they can also be calculated at a society, or even worldwide level. If individuals of different genders are not given equal opportunity to develop their potential, then societies forego the increased level of output and ultimately wellbeing that would derive from their higher productivity. If societies do not invest equally in educating and training men and women, do not give them equal opportunities to engage in more productive forms of work, and do not give them equal opportunities to advance to more productive positions over time, then the societies do not harness the full potential of their members (Jacobsen joycep 2011).The issue of gender and development offers articles from wide range of voice in international development research, policy and practices, and offers a gendered perspective on the question of inequality As Naila Kabear states in her article that gender inequality is ‘structured into the organization of social relations in a society as fundamentally as class in capitalist societies, race in apartheid south Africa and caste India. Women’s location at the intersection between production and reproduction, between making a living and caring for the family, makes the organization of gender relations central to the nexus between economy growth and human development, and hence central to the development agenda(Kabear naila seweatman caroline 2015).

### **The global problems of gender inequality**

Egregious gender inequality still exists globally despite of substantial national and international measures that have been taken towards gender equality. Only four out of over 135



nations have achieved gender equality including Costa Rica, Cuba, Sweden, and Norway. Yemen was scored the lowest across all dimensions. Measures of gender equality include access to basic education, health and life expectancy, equality of economic opportunity, and political empowerment. Although there have been evident progresses, many alarming issues regarding gender discrimination still prevail today; therefore, total gender equality must be made a global priority as a fundamental step in both human development and economic progress.

The degree and causes of gender inequality vary throughout the world. Noticeable crimes against women consist of violence, feticide (murder of women), and rape (war rape). Honor killing, one such offense, is when a female member of a family is killed for the perception of having brought dishonor to the family. It has become a massive issue in countries such as Pakistan and the Muslim Middle East, and is on the rise. In July 2009, two Saudi Arabian sisters, 21 and 19 years old, were killed by their brother in the presence of their father under the rubric of defending the family's honor. Other instances of illegality include the over 3,000 women in Guatemala who have been murdered over the past seven years on account of cases involving misogynistic violence, the estimated 130 million girls who were genitally mutilated in Africa and Yemen, and the approximate 5,000 women in India who suffer female infanticide each year (bride burning) due to insufficient dowry payment — money given to the husband by bride's family. These actions are not only unlawful violence against women, but also towards the whole of humanity.

Sex-selective abortion is yet another major disaster of gender inequality as it fuels human trafficking, demographic imbalance, and sexual exploitation. India and China, the two most populated nations on Earth, both informally maintain this practice of preference for male child birth over female. Females are undervalued in Chinese society, and under ONE CHILD POLICY, families opt for boys over girls. In China, with approximately 32 million more boys than girls under the age of 20, females are widely viewed as weaker, more expensive, and less intelligent than men. This gender imbalance has caused a ratio of 126 boys to 100 girls among the 1-4 age groups. Similarly, in India the birth of a boy is welcomed while that of a girl is



viewed as a burden. Undoubtedly, sex-selection is a violation of the right to life and has distorted the natural sex ratios of 50/50 in countries in which it is practiced.

National and international measures are at work but they are not sufficient to minimize and eliminate gender inequality. For instance, the Society of Defending Women's Rights in Saudi Arabia is designed to empower women and protect their rights. In India, the Prevention of Immoral Traffic, the Dowry Prevention Act and the Sati Act aim to prevent widow burning. Indeed, China and India are both fighting feticide and infanticide. By providing financial assistance to families with girls, India is not only encouraging female education, but also supplying parents with financial aid for their daughter's dowry. Meanwhile, China has taken strides to limit the abuse of modern technology by outlawing the use of ultrasound or gender detection methods. Moreover, they have granted parents who have a female child another chance at birthing a son in the hopes that families will not abandon, abort, or murder their female infant.

From an economic viewpoint, gender discrimination is also a major impediment to growth as it prevents countries from reaching their maximum productivity potential. Although women constitute 40% of the global work force, there are still many who are unpaid family workers in the informal sector. Those who do work are generally paid much below that of male workers, despite being equally capable and skilled. Furthermore, their status and promotion is limited to middle or below ranks, they are laid off pre-retirement age more frequently than men, they have limited educational opportunity, and they typically run smaller farms and less profitable enterprises. Due to these obvious restrictions, many countries experience loss of productivity that amounts to 25% due to gender discrimination. According to one study, Japan's GDP will gain by 15% if employment gender discrimination is adjusted. Unfortunately, the historical influence of Confucianism in Japan has led to male superiority over female through domestic abuse, emotional violence, sex exploitation, unfair treatment in career, and an inferior social status. Gender discrimination is costly to nations across the globe and forces women to suffer the severe emotional and economic repercussions. Beyond the economic costs, gender inequality also has severe individual and societal losses for a nation. While the female sex

constitutes slightly more than 50% of the population, only 14 of the total 200 governments, or 7%, are headed by women. An adjustment of this inequitable representation will go a long way to correct global gender inequality. To further promote gender equality, there need be increased education for women, improvements in public health, more child care facilities, and availing women equal voice in cultural, social, economic and political spheres of public life. Without equal representation of women's voice in policy-making and institutions, decisions are often more advantageous for men and therefore inefficient to the nation as a whole. The evidence of gender discrimination is rooted in history, tradition and culture. Gender inequality is a highly debilitating stigma and leads to detriments of women's psychology of their worth and dignity to themselves and to society (By Nike M. Kamrany, Catherine Robinson2010).

### **Characteristics of Gender Inequality**

Gender inequality, in relation to other forms of inequality such as class, caste, or race, has some distinct characteristics. These special characteristics points out that gender inequality stems from distinctions, whether empirically grounded or socially constructed.

Bina Agrawal has identified three specific characteristics of gender inequality:

1. Gender inequality dwells not only outside the household but also centrally within it;
2. gender inequality stems not only from pre-existing differences in economic endowments (wealth, income, etc.) between women and men, but also from pre-existing gendered social norms and social perceptions, i.e., the inequalities are also ideologically embedded; and
3. Gender inequalities not only pre-exist in the noted forms, but they can also arise from newly defined rules and procedures that structure the functioning of the governance institution itself. For instance, the rules that guide the governance of CPR (Common Pool Resources) institutions can explicitly or implicitly exclude particular sections of the community, such as women, from its decision-making bodies, or its benefits.

### **Indicators of Gender Inequality**



Understanding the indicators of gender inequality is a vital step in addressing gender related problems and issues; they explain where, why and how gender inequality arises. These measuring indicators are of great importance, because what is measured is more likely to be prioritized and evidence gathered against indicators can help to identify which gender issues should be taken more seriously. Indicators can be used for advocacy and can help make the case for action by highlighting key issues, backed up with statistics and other evidences.

Several indicators have been developed by many organizations like UNDP (Thorsten nilges2011). (United Nations Development Programme), OECD (United Nations economic and social council 2008). (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), World Economic Forum, etc. The UNDP has developed two distinct indicators viz., the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM). The OECD has developed Gender Institutions and Development (GID) database. The World Economic Forum has developed Gender Gap Index (GGI) (Lopez claros, A and zahidi, s.2011) and similarly the MDGs (United Nations 2006) (Millennium Developmental Goals) speak of measuring indicators of gender inequality. World (world economic forum's global gender gap report 2016)' Thus, many indicators are being used to measure gender inequality from time to time. These international and regional gender indices are useful because they allow for cross-national comparisons of gender inequality, and they condense complex data into clear messages about the extent of gender inequality that prevails worldwide.

## **Different Facets of Gender Inequality**

Gender inequality has many distinct and dissimilar faces. Amarty Sen (2001) has opined that —gender inequality exists in most of part of the world, from Japan to Morocco, from Uzbekistan to United States. Yet inequality between men and women is not everywhere the same. It can take many different forms. Gender inequality is not one homogeneous phenomenon,



but a collection of different and interlinked problems further, he has identified seven types of gender inequalities viz;

1. Mortality inequality,
2. Natality inequality,
3. Basic facility inequality,
4. Special opportunity inequality,
5. Professional inequality,
6. Ownership inequality and
7. Household inequality.

Thus, different facets of gender inequality colour our life from the day we are born until the day we die. These different forms of gender inequalities impose adversities not only on the lives of women and girls, but also on men and boys.

### **Economic Facets of Gender Inequality**

The studies relating to women, families, or gender were regarded as sociological—not economic—topics. To support this notion, the discipline of economics has historically neglected subjects that particularly affect women, such as unpaid household labor, intra-family economic relations, labor market discrimination, and the social and emotional dimensions of occupations involving human relations and care. When it was realized that ‘the opportunity cost of excluding women from economy is too expensive to any society’, study of gender inequality became the subject matter of economics. Women’s experiences in paid employment and in families only began to be discussed within economics in the 1970s, and even then extremely reductionist approaches predominated.<sup>10</sup> Economists, from all over the world, have studied the economic side of gender inequality by using various measuring indicators such as, education, employment, income, wage gap, economic participation, ownership right, control over assets, work participation rate, etc.

Over the time, the picture has changed to a considerable extent. The role of women in economic development is universally recognized. Various studies are available which throw light



on the role of women in economic development. According to Human Development Report (1993): —Women are the world’s largest excluded group. Even though they make up half the adult population and, often contribute much more than their share to society, inside and outside the home, they are frequently excluded from position of power. Women participate inadequately in employment, and in some industrial countries, women’s earning are less than half those of men. Indeed, for decades, life has changed very little for 500 million rural women in the developing countries (Human Development report 1993).

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: —In the developing world, women grow up to 80 per cent of all food produced, but rarely hold the title to the land they cultivate. Worldwide, they constitute one third of the wage-labour force. Much of their work, however, is unpaid, among a wide range of other activities. Women also dominate the informal sector of the economy - and this work is not usually reflected in economic statistics. If global calculations of the gross domestic product included household work, the amount would increase by 25 per cent and would be generally greater than that of men (United nations, the worlds women 1995).

According to Gender Equality and the Millennium Development Goals (2003): —Gender inequality, which remains pervasive worldwide, tends to lower the productivity of labour and the efficiency of labour allocation in households and the economy, intensifying the unequal distribution of resources. It also contributes to the non-monetary aspects of poverty – lack of security, opportunity and empowerment – that lower the quality of life for both men and women. While women and girls bear the largest and most direct costs of these inequalities, the costs cut broadly across society, ultimately hindering development and poverty reduction (gender equality and the millennium development goals, 2011).

In almost every social category women form a subset that is often disadvantaged, discriminated against and marginalized in most spheres of life as compared to men within the same category? Such marginalization and subordination is reflected in wide male-female disparities in virtually all aspects of economic well-being, at every scale from the local to international. The characteristics making for lower status for women are universal; they are shared by the developed and more particularly, developing countries.



## **Ways to Eliminate Inequality**

1. Changing the mindset of the people by making them aware about female rights and their contributions and value in the society.
2. Educating women to push them from the custody of their guardians so that they can become independent and fearless.
3. Making women aware about the endless possibilities of starting their own business to make a living and securing their future.

## **Conclusion**

In no region of the developing world, women are equal to men in educational, social, and economic spheres. The present study clearly witnesses the shadow of gender inequality. Majority of the employment opportunities are being enjoyed by men irrespective of their community, caste and category. This differential distribution in educational system makes teaching as a gender specific occupation, especially in higher education. Teaching is the profession where educational qualification, command over subject, commitment toward profession and teaching skill should be valued than gender, but unfortunately these values are ignored in practice. The targeted respondents in the present study are equal in terms of education and earning capacity. Obviously, the present study does not find gender inequality in education and income at the root level. But inequality between men and women in several aspects like improving educational qualifications, chance of earning additional income, ownership of assets, economic liberty, saving and investment trends, etc. can be observed to a considerable extent. The existence of gender inequality among the so called equals questions the notion. Education improves the socioeconomic status of women as education is believed to be an important avenue for bringing about social change and gaining entrance into prestigious occupations. If you were to walk down the street of the United States today and ask people what they thought of gender equality, you would get a resoundingly positive response. Walk down the street of Burkina Faso and ask the



same question, and your answers will be rather mixed. Women struggle to get an education, healthcare, and a voice in politics. Their struggle harkens to that of women in the United States pre-1960s. Women were not united, and they had not yet made major bounds towards equality. However, women could afford to concern themselves with their own equality in the US at the time because their selves and their children were guaranteed to be fed, clothed, and have a roof over their heads. Women in Burkina, like many Western African nations, have to work every day to feed themselves and their children. Once these issues are resolved, perhaps then things will change in Burkina Faso as they have in the United States. From all the discussing above, gender inequality is obviously an urgent problem in the world. Despite the fact that its volume much decreases, it still exists and make a lot of people suffer its consequences every day. And there are many reasons leading to gender discrimination which cannot be solved easily. However, with education and progressive thoughts of people, there are also reasons to trust in the future of gender inequality being stopped. Then, hopefully, people can live in fairness no matter what gender they are.

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