

CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF GENDER INEQUALITY IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The term gender refers to the economic, social and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female. In most societies, being a man or a woman is not simply a matter of different biological and physical characteristics. This paper deals with importance of gender equality towards achieving the goal of women empowerment. It outlines the gender inequality scenario in India and types of inequalities between men and women. This paper sheds light on importance of gender equality and role of gender equality in women empowerment, gender concern in development and gender mainstreaming in development. This paper concludes with some interesting findings along with policy suggestions. Main objectives of the studies are to understand and analyze gender inequality in India. To study gender inequality in education, health and employment in India. To suggest cures to reduce gender inequality in India. An about an aspect some methods are essential. There are several methods to study about the earth's surface. Due to shortage of time and manpower, the method applied for the paper is Secondary Data Collection method. For the present work, data for the study have been collected from the Statistical Abstract of India and other related documents published by Census of India, and from other world reports on India. Millennium Development Goal 3 reflects the global attention to the issue of gender inequality

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and has been providing the impetus for governments to eliminate gender inequality in primary and secondary education by 2005 and in all levels by 2015 (Gender Inequality, UN). In context of above NGOs can also play an important role to eradicate Gender Inequality. Politicians should frame out policies for increasing social welfare development regarding this issue. The Campaign of our Prime Minister Mr. Narender Modi "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao" can be successful, when the mindset of Indian society will be changed towards women.

KEYWORDS: *Gender Inequality, Women Empowerment, Social Discrimination, Violence Against Women, Female Foeticide.*

Introduction:

After the World War II, in the post modernization era, one of the issues which had attracted the attention of the policy makers and social scientists was gender issues and concerns. Gender issues mean the discussion on both men and women, though women who suffer from gender inequality. From all gender issues, gender inequality is the most prevalent in India. Consideration of gender inequality is now common in Government, Non-Government organizations, and in the politics in India. The policy makers are strongly believed that a positive commitment to gender equality and equity will strengthen every area of action to reduce poverty because women can bring new energy and new sights. A lot of debates are going on women and their development since last few decades. Thus, several national and international organizations are trying to promote the advancement of women & their full participation in developmental process & trying to eliminate all forms of inequality against women. The importance of feminism has been steadily growing and gaining intellectual legitimacy. Gender equality is fundamental to the achievement of human rights and is an aspiration that benefits all of society, including girls and women. The universal advantages of gender equality have been well-documented, and several international frameworks have affirmed its centrality to human rights and sustainable development. Gender equity is

the process of being fair to women and men. To ensure fairness, strategies and measures must often be available to compensate for women's historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from otherwise operating on a level playing field. Equity leads to equality. Gender equality requires equal enjoyment by women and men of socially-valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards. Where gender inequality exists, it is generally women who are excluded or disadvantaged in relation to decision-making and access to economic and social resources. Therefore a critical aspect of promoting gender equality is the empowerment of women, with a focus on identifying and redressing power imbalances and giving women more autonomy to manage their own lives. Gender equality does not mean that men and women become the same; only that access to opportunities and life changes is neither dependent on, nor constrained by, their sex. Achieving gender equality requires women's empowerment to ensure that decision-making at private and public levels and access to resources are no longer weighted in men's favour, so that both women and men can fully participate as equal partners in productive and reproductive life.

Statement of the Problem: Gender Inequality, to a great extent, reflects the extent of socio-economic development. In recent years, we have seen that many developed countries have laid a lot of emphasis on the concept of Gender inequality. However, in order to have policy relevance, bringing out an indicator of gender inequality in India may help to draw government's attention to gender inequality and the policies needed to reduce it. We can also expect it to bring an answer to the question that whether greater gender equality would enhance growth and development. Over a period of time we have seen that achievements in India's developmental process have been significant. But still a lot of things are yet to achieve and one of the main thing is Gender equality. For more than two decades, the goal of reducing gender inequality has held a prominent place in international organizations and in national strategy statements. Millennium Development Goal 3 reflects the global attention to the issue of gender inequality and has been providing the impetus for governments to eliminate gender inequality in primary and secondary education by 2005 and in all levels by 2015 (Gender Inequality, UN).

Review of Literature:

Gender equality and Sustainable Development. This paper of U.N. highlights various role women plays all around the globe on sustainable development and how women can contribute a lot towards it. It says that linking gender equality and sustainable development is important for several reasons. First, it is a moral and ethical imperative: achieving gender equality and realizing the human rights, dignity and capabilities of diverse groups of women is a central requirement of a just and sustainable world. Second, it is critical to redress the disproportionate impact of economic, social and environmental shocks and stresses on women and girls, which undermine the enjoyment of their human rights and their vital roles in sustaining their families and communities. Third, and most significantly, it is important to build up women's agency and capabilities to create better synergies between gender equality and sustainable development outcomes. Causes, Challenges and Cures by Anne Mikkola of University of Helsinki and Carrie Miles of Center for the Economic Study of Religion at George Mason University, Institute for the Studies of Religion at Baylor University. This paper reviews economics literature on the relationship between gender equality and economic development. Stylized facts indicate that women's roles are, although restricted, in the midst of quite dramatic change, both in developing and in developed countries. Results of both empirical and theoretical research, explanatory models and studies exploring both forces that challenge and those that facilitate greater equality are presented. The literature covers issues in gender inequality and economic development as they relate to: values and religion, cultural restrictions and roles, legal and inheritance laws and practices, education of girls, resource allocation within marriage patterns, labor market access, education, fertility, gender specific market failures in finance, and power in the political decision making.

Objectives: The prime objectives of the study are as follows:

- To understand and analyze gender inequality in India.
- To study gender inequality in education, health and employment in India.
- To suggest cures to reduce gender inequality in India.

Methodology: Data collection - For proper understanding of a place or about an aspect some methods are essential. There are several methods to study about the earth's surface. Due to shortage of time and manpower, the method applied for the paper is Secondary Data Collection method. For the present work, data for the study have been collected from the Statistical Abstract of India and other related documents published by Census of India, and from other world reports on India. Study Area - India is a land of diversities located at an extension of 8°4'N to 37°6'N latitude and 68°7'E to 97°25'E longitude. It is land to the second highest population of the world with a female population of 48.5% within the country according to 2011 Census report, India. India is a country of varied cultures, religion, tribes, communities etc. In such diverse society, the study of status of women is very much complicated. In a developing nation like India, women's lower status is reflected not only in their work being underpaid, un-recognized, but also in their limited access to productive resources and support services such as health and education. The focus of this paper is on issues concerning gender disparities in the context of India so as to examine the nature of prevalent discrimination and biases against women.

Results and Discussion:

Role and position of Women in present India: Women, one half of the nation, are still under social bondage and have suffered greatly in Indian history. They have suffered from lack of social liberty. They have faced social evils like child marriages, polygamy, and enforced widowhood. Women still are much less educated than their male counterparts. As mothers, women represent the unfathomable depths of human sentiments. It is really impossible to describe individually the various roles women play to make the world better. The whole family revolves around the efforts of the women, so also the whole society and the nation.

Social discrimination of the girl child:

The girl child in India embodies both children and adolescents and constitutes more than a quarter of the country's population. Although the principle of gender equality and gender equity is basic to Indian thinking, girls in our country are still deprived of equal opportunities for survival and development. Unfortunately

this begins early in life rather before birth. The girl child in India is subjected to inequality, disparity and neglect. Born into indifference and reared on neglect, the girl child is caught in a web of cultural practices and prejudices that hamper her development both physically and mentally.

Infanticide and Female Foeticide:

Female foeticide and infanticide are the most hideous outcome of sex discrimination. Son preference a deep-rooted social value combined with poverty, illiteracy and low status of girls are among the few of the factors associated with the female mortality before and at birth. Female foeticide - a practice of denying birth of a female child - though prevalent in many parts of the country, remain largely invisible. The accepted reason for such a disparity is the practice of female infanticide and female foeticide in India is mainly the costs involved with the raising of a girl, and eventually providing her an appropriate marriage and dowry, was the single most important factor in allowing acceptance of the murder at birth in India. Female infanticide is leading to a serious imbalance in the sex ratio in the country.

Employment:

Gender inequality can also be seen in case of employment. Women in India are primarily responsible for child care and household responsibilities. The size and composition of female labour force are a reflection of their overall submerged socio-economic status. A majority of women are to be found in the vast rural and urban unorganized sector. According to an Estimate by the National Commission on Self-Employed women, 94% of the total female workforce operates within this highly exploited sector. Employment in this sector is characterized by low pay, long works of trade unions/organizations to facilitate the mobilization of workers and knit them into a conscious workforce.

Violence against women:

We are talking about things like development, modernization etc. but still half of the women in India are going through different kinds of violence every day. They deserve to live a normal life but gender inequality is making their life a hell. Violence against women in India is going side by side to the technological improvement in

modern world in the country. Violence to the women is of various types and can happen at any place like home, public place or office. It is the big issue related to the women which cannot be ignored as it is hindering almost one half growth of the country. Women in the Indian society have always been considered as the things of enjoyment from the ancient time. They have been victims of the humiliation, exploitation and torture by the men from the time of social organization and family life. From the origin of social life in the country various centuries came and gone, time has changed people's mind and environment a lot, however violence against women is not seems to change a little bit. According to the research it is found that violence against women begins at home in the early age especially in the rural areas by the family members, relatives, neighbors, and friends.

Wife battering:

It is the most prevalent form of domestic violence. In order to maintain their superiority and dominant position at home, men try to impose some or the other kind of violence and torture their wives. In spite of this problem being so serious, there are no substantial research findings in this area. It has been a problem which is largely unnoticed and neglected. This is because it is a widely prevalent crime but is 'too private' to be spoken of.

Sexual Harassment at the workplace: Nowadays women are getting good education and their economic independence has encouraged them to look out for jobs. They are quite successful in acquiring good jobs. However, they are not been free from torture of male-dominated society at their places of work. There are many instances in India where superiors subject them to sexual harassment.

Rape:

Rape is such a shameless crime and it is found that incidents of rape are rising in India. Rape is regarded as the beastly crime where women at that particular moment are in no position to defend her against physical assault. Delhi recorded the highest number of rape cases in the country in 2013 at 1,636, more than double the number in 2012 (706). This was followed by 391 cases in Mumbai, 192 cases in Jaipur and 171 cases in Pune in 2013. Ninety-two women were raped on an average every day in India and the national

capital with 1,636 cases recorded the highest number of such crimes among all cities last year.

Gender Inequality Index of India:

The United Nations Development Programme's GII measures the human development costs of gender inequality. A higher GII value - 0.563 in the case of India - indicates a greater disparity between men and women. India ranks 130 of 155 countries on GII. It is a composite index of the reproductive health for women (Maternal mortality rate + adolescent birth rate), their empowerment (based on the share of parliamentary seats held by them + the per cent of 25 year plus population with secondary education) and their economic status (labour force participation). India ranks 130 of 155 countries on GII. India's record is particularly distressing when it comes to representation of women in Parliament and their labour force participation.

Conclusion:

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. In context of above NGOs can also play an important role to eradicate Gender Inequality. Politicians should frame out policies for increasing social welfare development regarding this issue. The Campaign of our Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao" can be successful, when the mindset of Indian society will be changed towards women.

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