

A Perspicuous Study on Gender Inequality in India

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ABSTRACT

Gender Inequality prevails almost everywhere in India. Even in the 21st century, birth of a baby boy is celebrated with full ecstasy but contrary to it when a girl child is born the same family, aren't happy enough. Females are the prime victims of gender inequality. With the increasing desire for a son, the daughters are either killed at the time of their birth or aborted while in the mother's womb itself. Gender inequality is an oblique factor which hinders the growth of Indian culture and economy per se. The girls don't have access to better education, opportunities at different levels or even the right to freedom of speech. Since birth they are dominated by the male counterpart like their fathers, brothers and eventually after marriage their husbands. The chief objective of this paper is to scrutinize the various aspect of gender inequality in the fields of education, health, employment opportunities and economic prospects. According to 2011 Census, female literacy rate was 65.47% which is approx 16% less than that of the males. Discrimination in the employment sector also exists as the percentage share of women employed over 15 years of age is far less than that of the men. This paper focuses on plentiful tools to deal with gender inequality in India at several levels. The paper also stresses on the various initiatives taken by the GOI to eradicate gender inequality, such as, to give training and employment programme for women, universalization of women helpline, the sexual harassment of women in a workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 and National programme for education of girls at elementary level.

Key Words : Education, Gender inequality, Women entrepreneurs, Employment and literacy rate, Work participation, Government initiatives, Developmental programmes

INTRODUCTION

"It is impossible to think about the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is impossible for a bird to fly on only one wing." — Swami Vivekananda.

Any discrimination between men and women, economically, socially, physically, biologically, politically or psychologically can be termed as Gender Inequality. Since independence, gender disparity is a matter of concern in the Indian society. As Mason (1984) points out, demographers have used a variety of terms synonymously including "status of women," "female

autonomy," "patriarchy," "sex stratification system," "women's rights," and "men's situational advantage." All these terms implicitly refer to gender inequality or status of women in relation to men, assuming all the other factors constant.

The Hindus worship Goddess like Sita, Radha, Durga and Kaali, all of them women, but the same people fails to recognize the women in their family and society as even humans on first place. The male dominating society exploits and unnecessarily protects the women at every stage, by nurturing their sons to be courageous and audacious and daughters to be timid and shy. According to the United Nation Development Report (2018)¹, India

1. <https://www.in.undp.org/content/india/en/home/sustainable-development/successstories/india-ranks-130-on-2018-human-development-index.html> (30.5.2020)

ranks 130 on the gender inequality index among the 189 other countries. The percentage ratio participation of women's labour force in India with respect to men is only 29:75. A report issued by the RBI (2013), indicates that women's credit outstanding of commercial banks accounts is only 5 per cent of all the credit outstanding. A recent MasterCard Connector's Project (2015) report, points out that 58% of females in India finds difficulty in accessing job opportunities because of their gender. With the up growing roots of Science and Technology, the number of cases of female foeticides has constantly increased. The Census (2011)² depicts, Kerala with the highest sex ratio with 1084 females per 1000 male while Haryana has the lowest sex ratio with 877 women as per 1000 men.

Objectives of the study:

- To study the concept and kinds of gender inequality.
- To study the various factors of Gender Inequality
- To study the role of government initiatives to eradicate Gender Inequality in the workplace.

METHODOLOGY

The current study has deductive approach and it's carried out by explanatory method. The present study is solely based on the secondary data source, which has been collected from various books, newspapers, journals and research papers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Kinds of Gender Discrimination:

There are the several types of gender inequality present In India.

Gender Discrimination Based on Patriarchy:

Patriarchy is a system of practice to dominate and exploit the women by men under the family and society.



Fig. 1 : Kinds of Gender Discrimination

In ancient Hindu law given under MANU SMRITI³ says that “when women are child, so they are supposed to be under the custody of their father, when they get married so they are supposed to be under the custody of husband and when they are old or widow then they are under the custody of their son”. That means they don't have any kind of independency in the family. This clearly determines women are dominated by the men in every aspect of her life. She should be allowed to do work herself independently.

Employment Discrimination:

Women face inequalities in getting promotions in corporate organisations and they get lower wages than the male counterpart and women get access to lower employment opportunities than the male.

The ‘Men and Women in 2017’ report⁴ released by the statistics and programme implementation ministry in May 2018 states that despite having same qualifications, Indian women get 30% less pay than men.

The Global Wage Report⁵ 2016-17 published by the International Labour Organization in 2016 had raised an alarm with the revelation that the Gender Pay Report in India, at 30%, was among the highest in the world.

India ranks 108th among 144 countries on gender equality rankings created by the World Economic Forum for its Global Gender Gap Report of 2017.⁶

2. <https://www.census2011.co.in/sexratio.php> (30.05.2020)

3. N. Patwari, Hirday, The Status Of Women As Depicted By Manu In The Manusmriti ,point no18 August 27, ‘2011

4. https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/despote-same-qualifications-indian-men-get-30-more-pay-than-women-118060500107_1.html

5. <https://www.indiaspend.com/wide-gender-pay-gap-for-similarly-qualified-indian-women-and-men-91182/>

6. World Economic Forum. 2014. “India - The Global Gender Gap Report 2015”. World Economic Forum, 10th Anniversary Edition & World Economic Forum (2017), Insight Report, The Global Gender Gap Report, Table no. 3: Global Ranking 2017, ISBN 9789144835-12-5, p.21(http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2017.pdf)

According to April 2017 report⁷ by the World Bank, there is one third gap between per capita GDP of India and China is because of fewer people working in India than China and this is due to the bigger gender gap in employment in India. The share of men at the age of 15 or above who are employed in India is 76.4% and in China it was 73.5% in 2017 and the share of women who are working in India was 29.5% and in China it was 60.4% respectively. Among South Asian peers, India in 2013 had the lowest rate of female employment after Pakistan. In last two decades preceding 2013, female labour force participation down from 34.8% to 27% in India.

Household discrimination:

There is an argument that women have the comparative advantage in the families but within the family there is inequality between men and women. Women must do the primary work like child care, child education, cooking, washing, dusting, sweeping, etc. that can be also called as personal caring work where as men are considered to do the market-oriented work. In poor families, women have higher work load as they do the primary work at home as well as they must also work outside for their livelihood, this increases their working hours more than 14 hours a day with no leave on weekends.

Ownership discrimination:

In many societies there can be an unequal right to the ownership of property. In most of the Indian society men are favoured by the traditional ownership of property. It can reduce the voice of women and make harder for them to flourish in the economic and social activities.

Survival discrimination:

Another form of gender discrimination is survival inequality. More number of boys is born than girls in the country which leads to surplus of male and deficit of female. In developing countries, there is a Male preference society which treated women badly and even they unable to intake minimum nutritional food requirements of 1600 calories per day. Gender inequality is a fact where the people get discriminated based on

their gender against the unequal workplace treatment among the colleague, low paid salary to the women employees. The problem of this study is to analysis the unequal workplace treatment and wage gap.

Significance of gender equality:

Gender equality has played a wide role to eliminate the factors which are responsible to create the gender discrimination in the workplace. It might be difficult for those who have never experienced the gender discrimination in the workplace to understand the value of having the equal right. If in the organization women is getting the equal right so it's not just about the issue of women's right, even it's about the matter of economic performance of the organization or in general, the whole country. If any organization provides the greater gender equality then it increased the economic performance of the organization, increased the national productivity and inflow of highly skilled employees for the jobs. Gender equality can be achieved in the workplace by providing the training to the employees so that employees can get the advantage of better education and it helps to eliminate the gender inequality, the organization can also provide the inclusive work environment to eliminate the unfriendliness in the workplace and encourage the women to be a leader. When men and women get the same opportunities and rights than gender equality can be achieved.

Components of gender inequality:

Several factors which affect gender inequality are as follows:

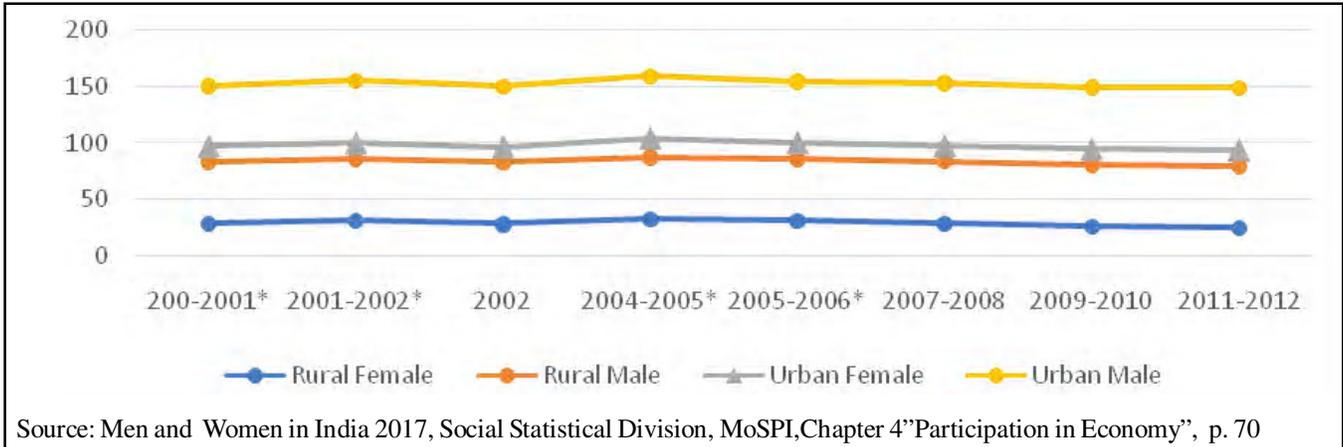
Economic factor:

Workforce participation:

Most women start working after they turn thirty and then they face many inequalities in terms of wage.

Female workforce participation rate in urban areas was much lesser than the female workforce participation rate in the rural area. According to the NSSO report, workforce participation for the urban males were 54.6% and for the females were only 14.7% as compared to the workforce participation for the rural males were 54.3% and for the females it was 24.8% in 2011-2012.

7. Kishore, Roshan (2018). "Gender Gap in Employment has put India behind China", Hindustan Times Online. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/gender-gap-in-employment-has-put-india-behind-%20china/story-Yn23tGJaN3EIAgefYPw0jP.html>



Source: Men and Women in India 2017, Social Statistical Division, MoSPI, Chapter 4 "Participation in Economy", p. 70

Fig. 2 : Trends in workforce participation ratio

This depicts huge gender discrimination between men and women.

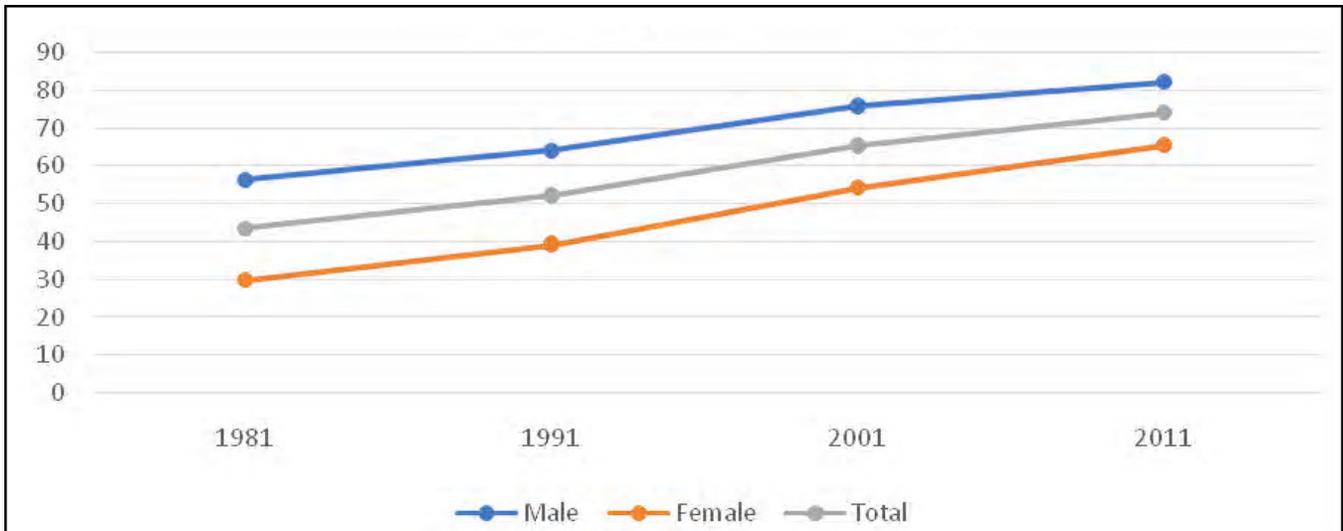
Gender inequality is also seen in accessing of credit from the institutional sources like banks etc. Due to the lack of property ownership rights, women cannot have this credit access. In the work space too, several employment inequalities are faced by the women. The females don't have the authority on the management of an organization. There are fewer chances for women to get promoted at the higher post in any organisation. Usually women employees are kept as secretaries and are paid way less than the male counterpart.

Social factor:

Gender inequality in educational attainment:

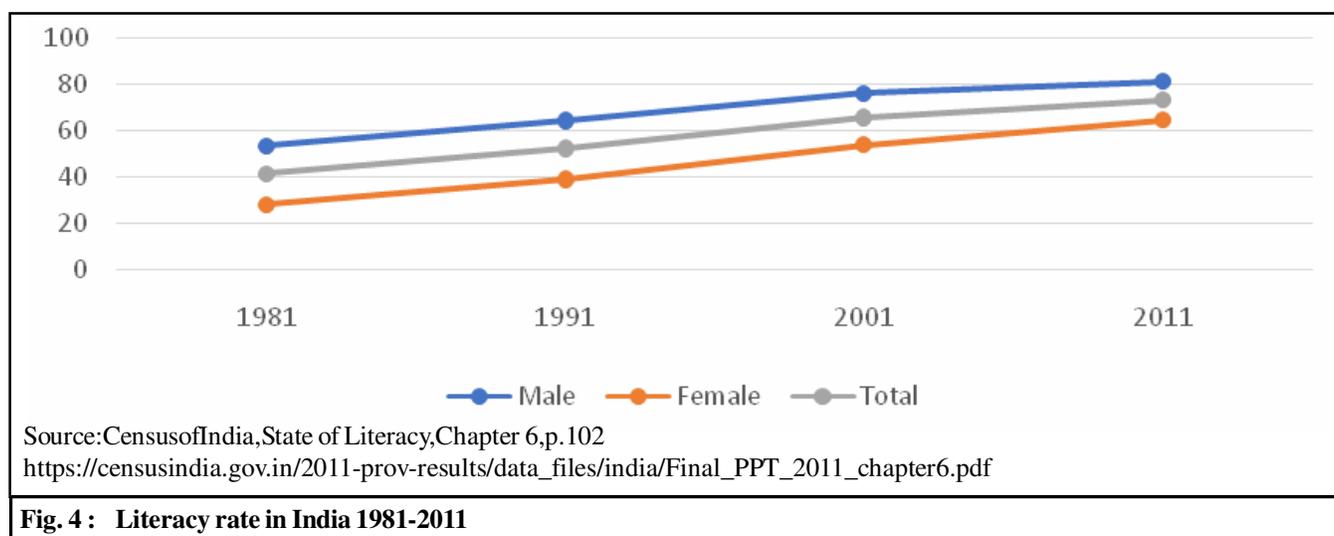
Social factors lead to educational disparity as well. According to Census 2011, women literacy rate was 65.47% whereas for males it was 82.14%.

Fig. 2 clearly indicates that the rate of gender disparity increases decade after decade and the disparity gap has been narrowing from 26.65% to 17%, but on the contrary, there's wider gap between their gender disparity rate which proves that women are at the back foot when it comes to social activities and involvements.



Source: Census of India, 2011, Chapter 3 "Literacy & education", p. 1
mospi.nic.in/sites/default/files/reports_and_publication/cso_social_statistics_division/Chapter_3_2014.pdf

Fig. 3 : Gender disparity in basic education



Literacy rate:

Literacy is the basic indicator for human development. As it is said, if a man is educated; only one person is educated, but if the women is educated; the whole family is educated. And this has a positive impact on all the developmental aspects too. Literacy rate in India has improved effortlessly from 18.32% in 1951 to 72.98% in 2011.

Fig. 3 shows that in 1981 there was a huge gender inequality. Only 28.5% women were literate in that decade. But this rate has gradually increased in 2011, it was 64.63% higher than the male counterparts. The Parents are of the mind set that there will be no returns in investing in the girl's education. In some parts of the nation, even if the girl is educated, she isn't allowed to do the job, rather they are put into the marriage and then again, they are restricted from doing any kind of work. If in some cases the women are working, they aren't allowed to spend their salary the way they want. In fact, such working women are prohibited in supporting their parents as well.

States with the worst female literacy rate in India:

According to 2011 census there are 5 states which have the worst female literacy rate in India. Those are Bihar (51.2%), Rajasthan (52.1%), Jharkhand (55.4%), J&K (56.4%), and Uttar Pradesh (57.2%). In the above mentioned states the female literacy rate didn't even crossed 60%.

Female infanticide:

The survey conducted by Thomson Reuters' in 2017

Trust law Women, a hub of legal information and legal support for women's rights states that, India is the fourth dangerous country for the women in the world. High rate of female infanticide and foeticides prevailing in India. The Uttar Pradesh government has launched a scheme called Mukhbir Yojana to check the female foeticide case and to arrest them.

Dowry:

Dowry system creates gender inequality in the Indian society. Indians think that girls are burden on family as they have to splurge on their marriage that's why they don't invest on the girl's education excessively. The Indian criminal laws were comprehensively amended to include dowry as a punishable offence. Section 304B was added to the Indian Penal Code, 1860 ("IPC"), which made dowry death a specific offence punishable with a minimum sentence of imprisonment for 7 years and a maximum imprisonment for life.

Women inequality in decision making:

This is one of the important factors of gender inequality. Women don't have the decision-making power with them. They have less authority for the legal recognition and access to the public knowledge.

Gender based violence:

Gender based violence such as trafficking of girls, kidnapping, abduction, rape, sexual assault, deliberate intimate relations, etc. are some of the major forms of gender inequality which tend the girls/women to be more protective for themselves.

Political Factor:

According to the constitution of India, both men and women are equally treated and have the equal rights, but unfortunately, there is a legal and political biasness which prevent to access gender equality in our nation. That is the main reason of gender inequality.

Table 1, provides the information of women in the central council of ministries. Representation of women in the central council of ministers is still less. Analysis from the available data is that, in 1990s there was no women cabinet minister in India and only one state's women minister. In the central council of minister there were only 12% of women who were elected in 2017. Women have a lower representation in the political appointment too. There was huge gender discrimination in the political constituents as well.

Tools to tackle the gender discrimination :**Changes at the District level mechanism:**

There should be administrative agency at the district level to check and review the inequality against women. If there would be any discriminatory happenings in the society they would have the provisions of complaining. The district level mechanism is headed by the district magistrate. There should be at least one cell at the district level for ensuring the better registration and progress of investigation of crime against the gender inequality.

Changes at the State level mechanism:

Like district level mechanism, there should be a state level mechanism as well which would work for the betterment of women. There should be special entry for those cases which needs to take prompt actions.

Law of tort:

There is a law of tort which is one of the most under utilized areas of the law, which focuses on the injustice against gender inequality. The tort that are directly applicable are: Assault, Unlawful imprisonment, Tort of harassment, Tort of medical pre-natal test

There must be a severe punishment under this tort law.

Family law:

Another is the family law. There can be punishment under the Domestic Violence Act, 2005 and Dowry Prohibition Act, 1987. This can be filed for the domestic violence or any other family dispute.

Government initiatives to eradicate the gender discrimination:**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. Rs. 150 crore has been spent on this scheme.

Sukanya Samridhi 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 21 years. It is

Year	No of Ministers		No of Women Ministers		%Women in the Central Council of Ministers
	Cabinet minister	Minister of state	Cabinet minister	Minister of state	
1990	17	17	0	1	5.1%
2002	32	41	2	6	11.0%
2011	32	41	2	6	10.5%
2017	27	48	6	3	12.0%

Source: Lok Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi

also tax free.

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.

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.

Conclusion and Suggestion:

India needs to eradicate the gender inequality. They should provide higher education facilities to every woman and they should provide the opportunities politically and socially as well so that they could get recognition in the society and empower themselves. Woman and man are the two wheels of the carriage of life & both of them is incomplete without each other. Government, public sector, NGOs and society need to come together and join hands to eliminate the gender differences. This can be eradicated only when the people will change their mind set 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 and 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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