



GENDER EQUALITY AND INEQUALITY IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT:

The article discusses the gender equality and inequality in India broadly defined. India is a well-known nation renowned for its historic geographical features, cultural legacy, customs, and culture. It is also well-known as a male chauvinistic nation. In India, women are prioritized over men, but in both the home and in society, they face discrimination. The gender gap persists in India despite rapid economic growth and a plethora of government initiatives to promote gender equality. Gender inequality puts future generations' chances at risk in addition to limiting women's access to resources and opportunities. An analysis of the issue of gender inequality in India has been attempted in this article. In this process, the article discusses on gender equality and inequality and suggests policy and step measures to increase gender equality in India.

Keywords: *Gender Equality and Inequality in India.*

INTRODUCTION:

Gender equality refers to the equal consideration, valuation, and favouring of the distinct behaviors, needs, and goals of men and women. This does not mean that men and women should be equal; Rather, it means that men and women will have the same rights, responsibilities and opportunities regardless of their sex at birth. The primary objective of gender equality policy is to grant equal authority to men and women to influence society and their personal lives. The government is striving towards six sub-goals, the first of which is an equitable distribution of power and influence among the sexes.

Gender equality, sometimes referred to as sexual equality or equality of the sexes, is the state in which all people have equal access to resources and opportunities, including the ability to participate in the economy and make decisions. It also refers to the equal value that all people place on the various needs, desires, and behaviors that exist for each gender.

Gender equality is the objective; gender neutrality and gender equity are attitudes and methods that contribute to the achievement of the aim. While it is not the final aim in and of itself, gender parity a measure of the gender balance in a particular circumstance can help achieve gender equality. Gender equality is more than equal representation; it is strongly tied to women's rights, and frequently necessitates legislative reforms. The idea of genders other than women and men, or gender identities outside of the gender binary, has not been included by the global movement for gender equality as of 2017.

Globally ending violence against women and girls, such as femicide, sex trafficking, sexual assault during conflict, and other forms of oppression, is also necessary to achieve gender equality.

THE AIM OF THE ARTICLE:

The aim of this paper is to highlight the Status of women empowerment in India. This research paper is also written for those who do not have a detailed knowledge of the Status of women empowerment in India.

WHAT IS GENDER EQUALITY?:

Gender equality is achieved when women and men have equal rights and opportunities in all areas of society, including economic participation and decision-making, and when the different behaviors, aspirations and needs of women and men are given equal importance and preference.

Why is gender equality important to economic development? Because sustainable development relies on ending discrimination toward women and providing equal opportunities for education and employment. Gender equality has been conclusively shown to stimulate economic growth, which is crucial for developing countries.

GENDER INEQUALITY:

Gender Inequality, to put it simply, discrimination against women on the basis of their sex is known as gender inequality. Men now hold a higher status than her. She faces discrimination, abuse, exploitation and degradation in her

family as well as in the outside world. This particular type of grotesque discrimination against women is more common in Indian society than in any other country in the world.

GENDER INEQUALITY IN INDIA:

The low ranking of India in most worldwide gender indices is another indication of gender inequality. India is ranked 127th out of 152 countries in the UNDP's 2014 Gender Inequality Index. As far as SAARC countries are concerned, this position is only higher than Afghanistan. India is ranked 114th out of 142 nations in the world in the World Economic Forum's 2014 Global Gender Gap Index. This index looks at the gender gap in four key areas:

- ❖ Economic Participation and opportunity-134th
- ❖ Educational achievements-126th
- ❖ Health and life expectancy-141st
- ❖ Political empowerment-15th

The status of gender equality in India is depicted by these two significant global indices. India is doing well, which is encouraging, just in the area of "political empowerment." However, a lot more work needs to be done to improve the other indexes, which are quite low. Gender discrimination can take many different forms. Additionally, the following are the main indicators that apply to India:

- ❖ Female Feticide
- ❖ Female Infanticide
- ❖ Child (0 to 6 age group) Sex Ratio: 919
- ❖ Sex Ratio: 943
- ❖ Female literacy: 46%
- ❖ Maternal Mortality Rate: 178 deaths per 100000 live births.

The aforementioned are a few notable indicators that show how women are positioned in our country. Even though India has had rapid economic progress in recent years, gender inequality, or the gender gap, remains a major cause for worry. Women's status in the home and at work has been diminished by patriarchal traditions and conventions.

We 21st century Indians are proud to celebrate when a boy is born and if it's a girl then silent or non celebratory is the norm. Such is the love for the child that since time immemorial we kill our daughters at birth or even before birth and if, fortunately, she is not killed, we find various ways to discriminate against her throughout her life. Although our religious beliefs make women goddesses, we fail to recognize her as a human being first; We worship gods but exploit girls. We are a society of people with double standards when it comes to our attitude towards women; Our thoughts and actions are different from our actions.

The most inhumane acts are those of female feticide and female infanticide. Furthermore, it is regrettable that these practices are widely accepted in India. The information suggests that the number of sex-selective abortions in our nation is rising. This difference indicates that there is a significant gender gap in India and that girls' education is not given due weight by Indians.

The poor status of gender justice and women's human rights in India is indicated by all of these indicators. Although the government launches new initiatives each year to further support women's empowerment, not enough noticeable changes are occurring on the ground. The shift won't happen unless Indian culture shifts its mindset, treating men and women equally and no longer viewing girls as a burden.

LEGAL & CONSTITUTIONAL SAFEGUARDS AGAINST GENDER INEQUALITY:

Indian Constitution provides for positive efforts to eliminate gender inequality; the Preamble to the Indian Constitution mentions the objectives of attaining social, economic, and political justice to everyone as well as giving equality of status and opportunity to all of its inhabitants. Further, Women also enjoy the same voting rights as men in our democratic system. In addition to other reasons like religion, ethnicity, caste, or place of birth, Article 15 of the Constitution forbids discrimination on the basis of sex. The State may establish any particular provisions for women and children under Article 15(3). In

addition, the Directive Principles of State Policy include a number of measures that protect women from discrimination and work in their favour.

In addition to these constitutional protections, the Parliament has passed a number of protective laws to end the exploitation of women and grant them equality in society. i. e. the Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987, the Dowry Prohibition Act, the Special Marriage Act, 1954 to give rightful status to married couples who marry inter-caste or inter-religion; Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Bill, 1994, The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act-2005. Care and Protection Act-2000, Commission of Protection of Child Rights Act-2005, Prohibition of Child Marriage Act-2006, Equal Remuneration Act-1976, Maternity Benefits Act-1961, Prevention, Prohibition and Redress Act-2013, National Policy for Women's Empowerment-2001. In order to designate dowry-death or bride-burning as a distinct offence carrying a maximum sentence of life imprisonment, Section 304-B was inserted to the Indian Penal Code, 1860.

Despite the fact that women are protected by a number of laws, the actual situation is completely different. In our nation, women are still viewed as second-class citizens despite all of these safeguards; males view them as objects to satiate their lustful cravings. The rate of crimes against women is alarming, dowry systems remain common, and female infanticide is a common practice in households.

CAUSES AND TYPES OF GENDER INEQUALITY IN INDIA:

- ❖ Under no circumstances should she be permitted to make her own decisions.
- ❖ The exploitation of women is a long-standing cultural issue in Indian society.
- ❖ Women do not have the right to make independent decisions in their homes or in the outside world.
- ❖ Due to the socio-cultural conditions, women have accepted a position under the dominance of men. And they too are an integral part of the same patriarchal system.
- ❖ Extreme poverty and lack of education

THE CHALLENGES OF EQUALITY IN INDIA:

Although there has been a reduction in gender disparity in India over the past year, a recent survey found that the nation still has some of the worst health and economic possibilities for women in all of South Asia. In India, women perform more than half of the unpaid, informal, and unprotected employment in the country. In the majority of fields, including leadership in business, women are underrepresented. Though they comprise of agricultural labour. Women are also shut out of the formal financial system. Additionally, the formal financial system excludes women. In addition to lacking any valued possessions, nearly half of Indian women do not own a bank account or savings account. India's GDP contribution from women is less than that of other countries. Women also experience a lot of bodily insecurity. The high rate of crimes against women in India. A significant proportion of women in the capital city of Delhi reported having been victims of physical or sexual violence in public places.

THE OPPORTUNITY:

The economic impact of achieving gender equality in India is estimated to be US\$700 billion of added GDP by 2025. According to IMF estimations, a 27 percent GDP boost in India will result from equal involvement of women in the workforce. Over 50% of Indian women do not own a cell phone, and 80% do not use it to access the internet. If women owned as many phones as men, phone companies could earn \$17 billion in revenue over the next five years. 80% of purchasing decisions and \$20 trillion of global expenditure are made or influenced by women. Empowering women has positive societal effects as well. Women devote ninety percent of their earnings to their families, and those who are economically empowered increase demand, give birth to children who are healthier and more intelligent, and advance human growth.

SUGGESTS POLICY MEASURES TO INCREASE GENDER EQUALITY:

- ❖ End Discrimination Against Girls and Women.
- ❖ Eliminate Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage.
- ❖ Honor unpaid assistance and encourage shared household responsibilities.
- ❖ Make sure everyone is fully involved in leadership and decision-making.
- ❖ Universal Access to Reproductive Health and Rights.
- ❖ Equal rights to financial services, property ownership, and economic resources.
- ❖ Adopt, strengthen, and enact laws that are enforced to promote gender equality.
- ❖ Safeguard Vulnerable Groups & Encourage Women's Empowerment via Technology.

A FEW STEPS TO ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY IN OUR LIVES:

- ❖ Speak to girls and women respectively.
- ❖ Stop sexual harassment and child marriage.
- ❖ Make education gender sensitive.
- ❖ Encourage girls' and their parents' aspirations.
- ❖ Respect "women's work" appropriately.
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CONCLUSION:

The catalogue of laws and forms of discrimination and inequality may be endless, but true change can only occur when males adopt a different mindset and begin to view women as equals rather than as people who are inferior to them. Indeed, not only men but women also need to adopt a new perspective because, as a result of cultural conditioning, they have joined the patriarchal system of exploitation and are actively advancing men's ambition to dominate women. Let's hope and wish that in the future, our participatory democracy will be able to solve the issue of gender inequality via the efforts of both men and women, and that it will lead us all closer to our dearly held goal of a fully contemporary society in both thought and deed.

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