

## Gender Inequality in India

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### Abstract

This study factors in the gender inequality which is experienced in all regions and socioeconomic groups and impedes the growth of the Indian economy to improve the lives of Indians. Indian gender disparity is a multilateral and complex phenomenon that applies to all spheres of life such as education, future occupation, income, health, cultural, social and economical challenges. The causes of this issue in India have been attempted to be identified. In this way, the complex context of gender inequality in India is introduced in this study. In sum, the paper emphasizes how the economic, social, cultural, and legal prejudice is unequal and thus it is incredibly hard to see that the social scientists and policymakers could provide the right equilibrium across the social field. The researchers have strived to present some relevant strategies and policy suggestions to reduce gender inequality and promote Indian women into their respectable positions.

**Keywords:** Economic, social, cultural, and gender inequality

One of the areas, which policy representatives and social scientists were concerned about in the post-modernization period after World War II, was gender issues and concerns. Gender problems simply mean the issue concerning both men and women including those women who feel discriminated based on gender. The gender issue that is most widespread in India is gender inequality. Gender inequality is now frequently taken into account in Indian politics, government, and non-governmental organizations. Policymakers are strongly convinced that a positive dedication to gender equity, and indifference will empower all labor sectors to eradicate poverty because women might bring new voices and energy to the sector. In the recent decades, discussions related to the growth of women have been many. Consequently, several international and national organizations strive to make all forms of racism against women obsolete in order to advance the growth and full involvement of



women in the developmental process. The role of feminism has been gaining more and more significance and obtaining scholarly credit over time.

## Gender Inequality

Gender inequality is the unequal state of these two sexes concerning various social, political, economic, cultural and legal aspects. This issue is simply described as a gender stratification or distinguishing between a male and a female which is simply termed as gender biasness. The Human Development Report (2013) of the United Nations Development Program has placed India as 132 out of 187 countries in gender disparity index after ranking it below Pakistan (123). The research showed that all South Asian countries except Afghanistan had ranked better than India concerning women with Sri Lanka (75) being the highest.

**Types of Gender Inequality:** There are now seven types of gender inequality, which were determined by Nobel Laureate Prof. Amartya Sen (2001). These numerous types of gender discrimination are described briefly.

- 1. Mortality Inequality:** This form of inequality between men and women has a direct impact on life and death. It is expressed in excessively high mortality rates among women and, consequently, a majority of males among the total population, rather than the majority of females among a population also characterized by low or absence of gender bias in nutrition and health care.
- 2. Natality inequality:** This kind of inequality is more favorable to boys as compared to girls. It is common in most of the civilizations where the males are the dominant species and it manifests through parents favoring a boy on top of a girl child. Sex-selective abortions have become common in India because of the use of modern means of identifying the gender of the unborn baby.
- 3. Inequality in the Employment:** Women are more often faced with hindrances in employment and career progression than their male counterparts. This is demonstrated by the fact that the male gender is accorded

more advantage over that of the female gender as regards to job opportunities and payments.

4. **Ownership Inequality:** Property ownership can also be quite unequal in most of the countries. Conventional property rights have traditionally favored men in much of India. Besides the dampening of the voice of women, deprivation of property rights may complicate success of women in business, economy, and even certain social aspects.
5. **Special Opportunity Inequality:** Young women can also have significantly less opportunities of higher education young males in situations where there is little variation in the basic facilities such as schooling. In India, the prejudice based on gender is in professional training and tertiary education, in fact.
6. **Basic-Facility Inequality:** Women may also be unfairly treated in other ways, even in some situations where the role of demographic characteristics does not involve a great deal of anti-female bias.
7. **Home Inequality:** Often there are imminent gender disparities in the family or home, and these disparities are numerous in sporting forms. There can be great inequality in allocation of household chores and child care in the family even in the case where there are no obvious signs of anti-female bias even in such matters as survival, favoring sons over daughters, education, and even advancement to higher executive roles.

### History of Gender inequality

The status of an Indian woman in ancient India was quite high because in the Vedas and the Upanishads, the woman was termed as either a Devi (goddess) or Maata (mother). Girls were also nurtured in the early Vedic period just like Manu Smriti and women were seen as beautiful creatures. Polygamy then reduced the status of the women and during the Middle Ages the purdha system, dowry system and sati system came into being. However, women's position declined with time. A lot of people end up committing female feticides due to the development of science and technology. The gender ratio has also decreased as a result of this. The Kerala sex ratio, according to the 2011 census of India was the highest at 1084 women per 1000 men, whereas

Haryana was the lowest with only 877 women to 1000 men. The dowry was then popularized and in some areas it became the origin of female murder. India has experienced a sex-selection phenomenon since the 1980s as males born during this period are now at age in which they can get married. Second, the 1990s have seen the migration of many families and men towards cities in search of jobs as a result of urbanization. Individuals are much wealthier, but there are also sex selection pressures to have boys as heirs, which increases sex selection in affluent and educated families. All these variables combined to form this mutant brew have caused violence against women as it has been a more pressing problem in the modern world. Gender inequity has been rooted in male domination. A woman still requires the stability of a spouse and a family, at least in India. Women have crumpled heads because they are overbearing. Nothing was not practised in the beginning and is practised even at the present time. The arguing groups opposing the reserving of a woman in parliament argue that women are supposed to care of the house and bring up a family. Women in most parts of India are seen as financial burdens despite their numerous contributions to our work, our societies, and our families. The crimes committed against women are increasing every day. Domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment, molestation, eve-teasing, forced prostitution, and sexual exploitation in the workplace is not something unusual these days. It is therefore a worrying issue to our country. The official necessity of male child in family, high dowry amounts, continuous financial and physical support of girls, poverty, family violence, agriculture as an important work of the poor, and caste system are the primary reasons of gender inequality.

### Factors of Growing Gender Inequality

The problem of gender inequality in India occurs due to a great number of variables.

These factors are the following:

Economic factors

- **Labor participation:** In India, there is a salary gap between men and women. Most women enter the workforce after they have attained their thirties, and it is usually after their reproductive roles of childbearing and rearing.

- As far as the access to financial services is concerned, men and women differ greatly in this aspect. Because of their low ownership of property, women often do not have collateral to secure loans in the bank and micro credit programs have been cited to have coercive lending practices.
- **Occupational inequality:** Women are not allowed to be employed as combat personnel in the military. In India female officers could not be granted permanent commissions because they lacked leadership training and had no sense of responsibility.
- **Property Rights:** Women cannot have equal rights to own property and inheritance, yet, in practice, they are disadvantaged. Under the Hindu Succession Act of 2005, if there is equal succession, the joint and the ancestral property is also provided as equal rights, though there is laxity in the application of the law.
- **Inequality of female inheritance:** Women are particularly deprived of their inheritorial rights whether culturally or religiously. According to the Islamic constitution, women are not allowed the same inheritance as their male counterparts; women are not given the equal share of property compared to their male counterparts. Although the Islamic law gives women the right to hold half the amount of property that male counterparts possess, the society is reluctant to offer women the property that they would wish to own, in addition to the one that they equal.
- **Employment inequality:** The differences between boys and girls regarding the number of individuals who hold the position of authority and manage the operations of the organization is one of the most common inequalities that arise at the workplace. Women take a long time before they can climb into higher paying positions as compared to males. The level of inequality differs significantly, and certain organizations possess more than others. At the workplace, women are usually employed at the lower paying job such as secretaries with the males at the top.

### Social factors

- **Education:** Women have lower levels of literacy in India as compared to their male counterparts. The 2011 Indian census shows that the literacy rate for women is 65.46% while it is 82.14% for men.
- **Health:** With all these incidents of violence, sickness, and other relevant variables, women have lower chances of having longer and better lifestyles compared to male.
- **Patriarchal Society:** Most areas in India are highly patriarchal whereby most men inherit property, titles, and they have power over the women members in their families. Women are also supposed to move in with their husbands and with their families in case of getting married and it is expected that the inheritance goes through the father to the son and that there are marriages that require bride price or dowry.
- **Dowry:** The concept of females being a liability to families that the Indian dowry system perpetuates contributes to gender inequality. This perceived limit the resources that parents can invest in their daughters and their bargaining power within the family.
- **Gender-based violence:** Women are fabricated with all kinds of violence like rape, sexual assault, insults to modesty, abduction, kidnapping, abuses of intimate or family members, importing or trafficking girls, rolling persecutions, obscenity, and all kinds of crimes. The crimes are evidence of the great inequality in India.
- **Inequality in women decision making in India:** In India women have reduced power to make either a home-based or external decision and less access to information and knowledge outside and legal protection and power in comparison to the general power that men enjoy. This is the other reason behind gender disparity.

### Cultural factors

- **Help of boys in old age:** One of the primary sources of unequal treatment of boys and girls is the idea that boys are more valuable than girls.

- **Patrilineality system** represents a type of kinship system whereby the membership to a given family rests on and through the lineage of the father. It usually entails property, names or titles by individuals who are connected with one by their male relatives.
- The other reason is that the sons were involved in religious ceremonies and that they had to be male since they could only do the rites on behalf of their parents in order to get into their afterlife. Sons, more often than not, are the only ones who are allowed to do the funerals of their parents.
- **Preference to the sons:** Sons are regarded as additional status to the family and they are the only ones that inherit the family name and wealth. Additional reasons to discourage the parents to have girls include that they might lose their children to the family of the marrying husband, and the expensive dowry of the girls. The concept of a daughter being a liability is commonplace.

### **Political and Legal Factors**

The Indian Constitution mentions that there is an equal right of men and women as they are all equal in the eyes of law. Regrettably, the law has never been given a chance to be equally gender fair because of political and legal biases. It is another reason why there exists a disparity in gender.

### **Analysis & interpretation:**

According to the variables mentioned above, we can arrive at the conclusion that gender disparity in India has economical, social, cultural, legal and political reasons. In India, gender inequality should be eradicated. The existing trends enable women to offer advice on the career choices that are not limited by the traditional list of careers, but also to get out of the culturally determined employment patterns. Amazingly, a number of regulations do not help women to avoid feeling stressed and tense. There is much to be accomplished before we can ensure the status equality of women. Man and woman are like a carriage's two wheels. The life of the other cannot be complete without the other.

**Suggestions:** - There is no problem without a solution. To reduce gender inequality in India, we ought to offer girls quality education as well as empower women. We should also allow them to be actively involved in political and other activities in order to help them integrate into the Indian society. The government ought to come up with regulations and policies to deter abortions and sex detection. Considering the above, NGOs may play a very important role toward the elimination of gender inequality. Considering this scenario, politicians should set up the policies that will enhance the development of social welfare. The effectiveness of the campaign of our Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi, called Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, will be determined by the Indian society attitude of women.

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