

GENDER EQUALITY AND INEQUALITY IN THE PRESENT SCENARIO IN INDIA

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Abstract

Discrimination against women is widespread and systemic, and they are subject to exclusion in various spheres. Most women work in the informal economy, which is characterized by job insecurity, poor working conditions, and low pay. The persistence and reproduction of women's exclusion are also supported by social norms and religious values. In many communities, traditional barriers still prevent women from going out of their homes to work. For some women, having primary or sole responsibility for household duties, including childcare, also prevents them from working outside their homes or areas of residence. The use of digital platforms is providing women with greater access to markets, knowledge, and more flexible working arrangements. In my work, I want to focus on the present condition of women in the Indian sub-continent as well as problems of participation of women in higher education in the Northeastern region of India from the Vedic to the modern age of digitalization using secondary data as well as primary data for my study.

Keywords: Work, Digitalization, Childcare, Social Norms, Religious Values, Employment, Discrimination.

RESEARCH METHODS

Secondary data are collected for my study. Secondary data is collected from books and websites. Primary sources of data have also been collected through telephonic interviews with different persons.

INTRODUCTION

Gender in itself is a grossly misunderstood word. The moment this word is spoken, one arrives at the concept of the weaker sex present in society which is the female. Gender is the range of characteristics used to distinguish males and females, particularly in the case of men and women and the masculine and feminine attributes assigned to them. Depending on the context, the discriminating characteristics vary from sex to social role to gender identity.

Sexologist John Money for the first time in 1955 introduced the terminological distinction between biological sex and gender as a role. Earlier it was not so common to use the word gender to refer to relative statuses of men and women but use the word only grammatically. However, Money's meaning of the word did not become widespread until the 1970s, when feminist theory embraced the distinction between biological sex and the social construct of gender.

Gender inequality has been a problem in India for centuries. That in many parts of India, the birth of a baby girl is unacceptable. It is also a well-known fact that discrimination begins even before the baby girl is born and is sometimes killed in the womb, and if she can see the light of day, she is killed as an infant, making the birth rate of 1000 boys in India over 908

girls. In that case, it is clear that for several reasons, many girls all over the country are forced to drop out of school.

The patriarchal traditions have identified women as inferior to men. A baby girl is considered a burden and is often not even allowed to see the light of the world. It is difficult to imagine this situation in the 21st century when women have proved to be powerful leaders in all fields. From cooperation to business, the world has been transformed by extraordinary women leaders in areas that were still completely male-dominated. And this discrimination continues in all aspects. Be it education, health, protection, or participation, a girl child is always treated unfairly. Indian society has not yet awakened to the importance of empowering women. Statistics tell of the horrific stories of feminized, discrimination against girls, and sexual harassment.

Cultural institutions in India, especially those of apartheid (inheritance by male generations) and patrilocality (married couples living with or in-laws' parents), play a key role in promoting gender inequality and perceptions about sexual morality.

The traditionally rooted parental love of sons - arising from their importance as parental caregivers when they grow up - is linked to the negative effects on daughters.

The lobola scheme, which includes cash or other payments by the bride and groom's family during the wedding, is another institution that deprives women of power. Incidents of lobola payments, which are often a major component of family income, have been increasing over time in all regions and sectors of the socio-economic sector.

This often leads to violence against women by their husbands and in-laws if lobola is considered inadequate or as a means of demanding additional compensation.

These practices create incentives for parents not to have girls or to invest less in girls' health and education. Parental preferences are expressed in terms of masculinity in India. In 2011, there were 919 girls under the age of six out of every 1,000 boys, although sexual harassment was banned in India.

This reinforces the low status of Indian women and puts them at risk of violence in their marital families. According to the 2005-06 National Family and Health Survey, 37% of married women are victims of physical or sexual violence by their partners.

Status of Women in the Vedic to the Modern Period

Women in the Vedic period held a high position and enjoyed the right amount of personal freedom and equal rights with men. But another theory holds that the birth of a girl was not an acceptable event. However, she did not suffer for this reason. She was given all the rights given to his son. No discrimination is made based on education. At least twenty women named Rig Vedic Hymns. Gargi and Maitrei were prominent philosophers at the time.

Women, in the Vedic period, were so prominent in the field of education that even the god of learning became pregnant as a woman known as 'Saraswati'. Girls are allowed to enter Gurukulas and boys. There are also cases of Rishi women, such as Gosa, Kakhivati Surya

Savitri, Indrani, Shradha Kamayani, Yami Shachi, Poulomi, Urvashi, etc. The couple prayed that their love and friendship would not fade. Vedic texts also contain the idea that Kshatriya girls were allowed to arrange marriages according to their wishes. This is done according to the custom of 'Swayavara' or optional. This is an indication of their dignified status in Vedic society.

The idea of 'dan' or gift was common in the Vedic period. But the practice of bribery was unknown. The wife held a dignified position in the family. He enjoyed the freedom of movement and did more than just stay home. In religious ceremonies, the wife held a prominent position. Even performing certain rituals was forbidden without a wife. 'One man was a form of marriage during the Vedic days. The word 'Dampati' was frequently used in Vedic texts. The term means "joint owners."

The Vedic people did not know whether marriage bonds could be dissolved or even abolished. The idea of a widow's remarriage was in vogue and the brother of the deceased husband cared for the widow's bride in the Vedic days. The widow had no right to inherit her deceased husband in the Vedic years. However, Rig Veda recognized the right of the spinner to inherit his father's estate.

The two great epics Ramayana and Mahabharata have a great influence on Hindu society. Even today girls are brought up to follow in the footsteps of Sita, the wife of Rama. Sita is to be considered the ideal Hindu woman as she surrendered all her desires and followed Rama to the forest. On the other hand, Draupadi the central character of the Mahabharata is a woman who exhibits a greater sense of independence and courage. Sita of Ramayana and Draupadi of Mahabharata are still well known today. Despite their sub-jugated status via a visa with their husbands, they are universally respected and have become role models. The self-imposed blindness of Gandhari as a mark of respect for her blind husband did not lower her status as a queen. She gives out the message that a respectable wife humbles herself via a visa with her husband. Ancient India's march to civilization was accompanied by the growth of social discrimination. [1, p.22] The high-status women enjoyed during the early Rig Vedic period gradually started deteriorating in the late Vedic period between 1000 and 500 BC. Women began to be confined to the household. Because of the importance given to values such as purity and pollution, women began to be considered impure during certain periods of their life. They were kept away from many religious and social occasions. The strong belief was at that time only the male child could save his parent from the cycle of rebirth. (p23)

The modern period began at the onset of the 19th century. The British came to India in 1600 AD. For nearly 200 hundred years in their east India company incarnation, there was no real effort made to address questions of social inequality or social oppression. Social evils such as Sati, suppression of windows, denial of the right to education for women, and child marriage flourished unchecked. With the dawn of the 19th century, an era of change began and it was during this period that many efforts were made both by the British rulers and progressive sections of Indian society to put an end to social evils.

Women in the Digitization era

Digital creation offers a wide range of opportunities for women's empowerment and equal participation in labor, financial, and business markets. Currently, digital production seems to favor female workers who face a lower risk of machine switching, compared to male workers. A woman's high social skills reflect the comparative benefits of the digital age, and this is especially so when social skills are combined with higher education and advanced digital learning. Digital integration is likely to create many different trading opportunities, too. Current gender inequalities such as business skills gaps, lack of improved social networks of women entrepreneurs, insufficient number of role models for women in business, and the spread of financial constraints can prevent women from recognizing and pursuing such business opportunities. If women want to see their full potential in the digital age, the G20 governments need to identify these current gender gaps. Many of these gender inequalities can be effectively addressed through the use of new digital technologies.

Digital transformation, characterized by artificial intelligence, big data, cloud computing, and mobile robots can enhance women's participation in economic life and improve the economic and social independence of women (at least) in three ways. First, mobile and digital technology gives women the opportunity to overcome some of the traditional barriers to travel, especially in developing and developing countries. Digital technology can help women access new markets, operate flexibly and remotely, acquire and engage with clients, receive training and mentoring, and improve financial independence and access to finance for their businesses. Second, women tend to have higher social skills, which can expect rising rewards in the labor market in the digital age. Such social skills are often an integral part of female-headed activities and include, for example, a high sense of commitment to a wider community, greater empathy, effective communication, and a greater willingness to adapt to changing circumstances. They should help women avoid major job losses from automated work, which, in developed countries, is expected to account for 60 percent of all jobs over the next two decades. It is important to note that little is known about the effects of digitalization on labor markets in developing and developing countries. Third, the benefits of women's social skills can be further enhanced if they are complemented by intellectual (or cognitive) skills and advanced digital learning, which is a key requirement in the digital age. The realization of such skills is expected to grow and may open the way for women to find better-paying jobs and leadership.

It has been found that only 29% of women use the internet (Women, 2019). In the current scenario, more men own cell phones in rural and urban places, and rural women lag in mobile ownership. It has been found that many women in rural in urban India do not know how to read the message or send messages on their mobile phones and depend on their husbands or any other younger people. Their cell phone use was mostly for attending calls and calling their relatives or friends. A vast number of new opportunities have arisen in the IT sector through the expansion of the digital economy. For the last few years, women's engagement in various institutions has increased by a large number, and jobs in the IT sectors are secured by women. However, the study shows that women are deprived of various managerial and professional

skills, which leads to their being dominated by men and forced to do routine work. Nevertheless, for Indian women, new employment opportunities are being created through new platforms and they perform dual duties in their house as well as in their professional life. This economy creates employment opportunities without any social discrimination as well as creates gender equality. It can be used for both uplifting women and for balancing the economy of the country at large.

Women's Equality and Inequality

India bows its head to gender inequality

According to the World Economic Forum (WEF), India ranks 114th out of 142 countries in the world in terms of gender inequality. India's women face horrific discrimination in health, education, and the workplace, the report said. Inequality in the workplace and education

India ranks 15th in a good index on women's participation in politics but inequalities in income, education, workplace, and childbearing are terrible. India ranks 114th out of 142 countries in the world in terms of gender inequality

The decreased birth rate of girls

After the new government came to power, it campaigned against rape and violence against women but avoided the issue of women's health. The Modi government, however, has said it will launch new programs to improve the health of pregnant women. In India, the birth rate of women is much lower than that of men. Where 1,000 boys are born every year, 917 girls are born.

Many girls are killed in the womb before they are born, so that they cannot see the light of day. Infants are more neglected in the family in childhood. Their educational opportunities are less. Similarly, there are thousands of obstacles for women to participate in economic activities or work. Women are paid less than men involved in the same work and other benefits are also less.

Changes in the index

A year ago, India was ranked 101st in the index, and in 2006, India was ranked 97th out of 8 that is, as the economy grows, so does India's importance in the world, and so does gender inequality. Although Indian women have made some progress in women's empowerment in politics, they are somehow lacking in terms of access to education, health, and participation in economic activities.

India ranks 134th in terms of women's employment. But in 2008 it was in 110th place. India is currently ranked 141st in women's health and longevity. That is second 7 in the end. India also has the worst situation among the BRICS countries in terms of gender inequality or discrimination against women. Except Bhutan and Pakistan, which are the only South Asian countries, the situation is much better than in India. Not only that, the report says, according to 30 percent of people in the world, there must be some reason behind the beating of the wife by the husband.

According to Pedro, a senior official at the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, although gender equality has improved over the past few years, gender inequality remains due to wide power gaps. Section 7 of women's backwardness continues. Despite decades of women's empowerment, nearly half of the world's population still has weaker political leadership than men. At present, only 24 percent of the world's parliamentary seats are held by women. On the other hand, women make up only six percent of the world's business.

Gender Inequality exists in India in different forms:

1. Mortality inequality: Women mortality rates are higher as compared to men all over India.
2. Natality inequality: Many male-dominated societies have a preference for boys. The techniques of determining the gender of the fetus have encouraged this inhuman practice.
3. Basic Facility Inequality: girls are denied the right to education and many facilities in many countries, even today.
4. Special opportunity inequality: The opportunities for higher education and professional training are less for young women and more for young men.
5. Professional Inequality: In employment or in promotion women face discrimination.
6. Ownership Inequality: In many societies the basic assets i.e. home and land are owned by males. The lack of claims to property reduces the voice of women
7. Household inequality: Basic inequalities in gender that are reflected in sharing of housework and childcare.

Gender equality

Gender equality includes protection from sexual harassment and the right to work with dignity, which is a universally recognized basic human right. The common minimum requirement of this right has received global acceptance.

Gender equality can define by some basic factors;

1. An equal amount of work and payment.
2. Dignity without Equality is not possible.
3. Equality of opportunities in service.
4. Equality is the right of the child.

The question of gender equality is a very old and burning problem. Twenty years ago in Mexico, the first world conference on Women inspired a movement that has helped to reduce gender inequality in the world. Illiteracy among women is being decline, maternal mortality and fertility rates are beginning to fall and women are participating in the labor force.

Women Participating in Higher Education in Northeast India

Women could not participate in higher education due to the traditional duties at home as well as their duties and responsibilities at their working places. But with the changing scenario of higher education presently they can participate in seminars, conferences, workshops, meetings, etc. To discuss various social issues from time to time and contribute a lot to the growth of higher education. On the other hand girls student in higher education levels were also found to participate in every social movement led by student bodies. This is a positive sign from that perspective

Women from the Northeast especially from rural areas are still ignorant about higher education especially areas of professional education. The lack of knowledge about courses, institutes, scholarships, and the further prospect has been a major factor for these rural girls students not being able to flame clear career goals and plans. There is a need to build awareness through both government and non-government initiatives, having an information center and career counseling at the secondary school level may help generate awareness in rural areas.

Women in northeast India are still poor and affording a higher education remains still a luxury for them. Whereas some girls from upper-class and middle-class families still go to other cities for receiving higher education but for the girls living in poor families in rural areas is still a dream for them.

In many parts of Northeast India, there are many droplets, especially in the secondary and higher secondary levels. This shows that there is a lack of motivation to participate in higher education among rural girls students.

There is a lack of employment opportunities in Northeast India; this is the main reason women migrate from northeast India to other parts of India. Over all the years the lack of infrastructure and the threat of insurgency have kept the industries to remain skeptical wholeheartedly in northeast India. If job opportunities are not created immediately there will be a huge number of unemployed women, and this employment may lead to depression in their life.

Today women in northeast India are depressed and unmotivated. This is only because they belong to a place that lacks infrastructure and opportunities. The general population of women in northeast India has a feeling of isolation; depression and identity crisis, and a lack of young population settling in faraway cities. The most unfortunate fact is that poor women from northeast India cannot effort to go outside to pursue higher education and full fill their career aspirations. However poor women do not have any aspirations it is the present scenario where poor women have no option but to remain poor, undeveloped, and underprivileged.

During the pandemic, many women from rural villages in Northeast India started making a mask and selling their products in their nearby villages also they uploaded the art of making masks and sanitizers on the social networking site Face- book, and from there many people started making masks and sanitizers in their home. From this, we can understand the participation of women in employment through the use of digital media. After the lockdown was over many of their masks and sanitizers are sold online and they earned a lot of profits.

Due to digitalization, many women in rural and urban areas have started their online businesses.

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Nowadays the present scenario is changing they can participate in seminars, conferences, workshops, meetings, etc. To discuss various social issues from time to time and contribute a lot for the growth of higher education. On the other hand girls student at higher education levels were also found to participate in every social movement led by student bodies.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

It has been found that there is gender equality and inequality prevails in different parts of India but the gender gap is coming to get reduced due to proper education in society, but, in a different part of India especially in the remote areas we can see many problems for women in most places the Dowry system is still now. Many NGOs (nongovernmental organizations) are working in different sectors for the upliftment of women and the Government sector such as the Women's Commission is also been introduced to look after the problems related to women. Digitalization has given women a new platform many girls are working in the IT sectors, and many girls in rural and urban places have started their online businesses.

Since time immemorial women are most of the time neglected and humiliated the great dramatic shake spear wrote "Frailty, thy name is women." Even in these recent years, we see the same negligence and humiliation of women, most the state government all over the world have tried to include the position of women they are successful in many cases till inequality has not been wiped out although we are not despairing about the future of women till we have to be careful we may expect that in future the condition will change. Men and women will stand on the same footing let us dream of that glorious day.

Conclusion

My book is based on primary and secondary data. I took a lot of effort the collections all the information from the fields through sampling methods, questionnaires, observation, and interviews of the respondents. Some of the information's to be collected from secondary data with the help of research articles, websites, and books. All of these essays and articles have been presented in international national seminars in India and Russia.

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