



Women's Human Rights and Gender Justice in India

DR. NAYANA

Abstract:

The women's human rights have been elaborated in various provisions of the Indian Constitution that is Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State Policy. Thus Indian Constitution contains several provisions at different places for the safeguard and protection of women through which women can be granted the right of equality and dignified life. However, in the sphere of women's human rights in India, there exists a wide gap between theory and practice.

Key words: Women's human Rights, gender Justice, gender discrimination, findings and suggestions

Introduction:

Indian Constitution has granted equal rights to women like men and several laws have been enacted by successive governments to realize the goal of gender justice, but the ground reality is different in actual terms. In real life treatment to women is based on biases and discrimination. Definitely, the Indian society does not stand for a fair status of women in practice. The male-dominated society is even not ready to give them social justice.

Objectives of the study:

1. To understand the concept of women's human rights.
2. To analyse the concept of gender justice aspects.
3. To know the condition of women in sociocultural and political aspects.
4. Findings and suggestions.

Methodology: This study is fully based on secondary data. The data was collected from books, magazines, research articles, newspapers, documents, reports and websites.

Women's Human Rights:

Women's rights are the fundamental human rights that were enshrined by the United Nations for every human being. Women enjoyment of all human rights including freedom from violence, access to justice, socio-economic equality, participation of decision making etc., In India these rights include a women's constitutional rights. In constitution women's human rights are essential to achieving gender

justice. But in our society is a male dominated society where men are always assumed to be superior to society and the condition of women in India is miserable.

Gender justice:

Gender justice identifies and accepts the equal distribution of liberty, status, dignity, opportunities and authority between men and women as its prime values. It is not enough if these values are only legally guaranteed and rest are only in the law books and the constitution, but are never actually practiced. Definitely, the Indian society does not stand for a fair status of women in practice. The male-dominated society is even not ready to give them social justice. Their condition is deplorable in the country. Very often they have to face discrimination, injustice and dishonor.

Discrimination of Women in Sociocultural Aspects:

Some major Areas of Discrimination are the practices of female foeticide, female infanticide, child marriage, child labour, pushing girl children into bonded labour, sale or trafficking in young girl, sexual exploitation etc.

1) Discrimination in socialization :

In our socialization process, female children are becoming victims of discrimination. Male preference and female negligence has almost become a working policy especially in the rural areas. Discrimination between male and female in matters relate to food, dress, health care, education, domestic work etc.

2) Continued craving for male child:

Due to the predominance of patriarch values mothers show preferences for male children. Women especially in north India is made to feel that her image would go down in the circle of relatives if she fails to fetch to her husband's family a male child.

3) Violence against women:

i. Domestic violence:

The violence against women that takes place within the family is known as domestic violence. Normally we believe that a family gives protection, comfort and security to girls. But it reality many of the acts of brutality against women take place within the family. This type of violence includes crimes such as – dowry related harassment, dowry death, wife- battering, physical violence, mental violence, Sexual Atrocities and deprivation of sufficient food to female members and so on.

ii. Social Violence:

Violence against women in outside the family such as kidnapping, raping, murdering are very serious offenses. Eve teasing, sexual harassment in workplace, blackmailing, acid attack and so on. Today many women are entering public life. At the same time atrocities against them are increasing.

4) Education:

Gender Bias in education: Social reformers and social thinkers believe that in a nation like India giving education to women in as large a number as possible can prove to be a panacea for many of the problems of women. But we find glaring differences between the level of education of men and women.

Table:1

Literacy Rate in India 1901-2021

(In percentage)

Year	Percentage of Literates to Total Population		
	Persons	Males	Females
1901	5.3	9.8	0.7
1911	5.9	10.6	1.1
1921	7.2	12.2	1.8
1931	9.5	15.6	2.9
1941	16.1	24.9	7.3
1951	16.7	25.0	7.9
1961	24.0	34.4	13.0
1971	29.5	39.5	18.7
1981	36.2	46.9	24.8
1991	52.1	63.9	39.42
2001	65.38	76.0	54.0
2011	74.04	82.14	65.46
2021	77.70	84.70	70.30

Source: Census of India, 2021.

Indian literacy rate remains considerably below the literacy rate of other Asian countries. Gender inequality continues to remain a serious problem in India. Female literacy rate in India in 2021 census is 70.30% and male literacy is 84.70%.

Discrimination of Women in Political Aspects:

Participation of women in political structures implies the degree of equality and freedom enjoyed by women in shaping and sharing of society to the role of women. In most societies men have always monopolized the political space. Until and unless marginalized sections of society which include women get into the political system of power, true democracy cannot be realized.

We find only a negligible number of women in prestigious positions like those of Central and state cabinet ministers, governors, secretaries and legal advisers to the governments, ambassadors to other countries, IPS, IAS, IFS officers, judges in courts, mayors of big cities, office bearers of all-India parties, etc. No political party of India has given position to women in proportion to their number in the total population. Women so far have not constituted themselves into a “*pressure group*”. In our political life, we have caste lobbies, linguistic lobbies, capitalist lobbies and minority lobby, etc. But we do not have “*women lobby*” to bring pressure on the government.

Findings and Suggestions:

Fundamentally India is a male dominant society where in all privileges were male oriented. Women were denied basic rights and discrimination is obvious in every walk of life. Indian women, by and large, educationally backward, socially and economically dependent, she was assured, the unique pride of the mother hood of man, and unparalleled influence in the shaping of the society, has lived through suppression, exploration and ill treatment at the hands of man.

Despite governmental concern and official attention to these issues of women, a large proportion of women living in the country both, in the rural and urban areas, continue to experience and suffer from acute inequalities, deprivation, exploitation and violence.

Therefore more efforts are made to bring in women force in policy-making and public life in the years to come. Women should also make use of the opportunities and provisions provided to them and try to come to the mainstream both in administration and public life. Moreover, it is the moral obligation of all including the Media, Educational Institutions, NGO, Governmental Machinery, Feminists, Political, Social and Religious Leaders to fight injustice and uphold individual dignity.

References:

1. Ram Ahuja (1998). *‘Violence against Women’*. Rawat Publications, New Delhi.
2. Sadhana Arya , *Women, Gender Equality and the State*, Deepanand Deep Publications Pvt Ltd, New Delhi
3. Shamim Aleem 1996 (Editor) *‘Women`s Problems and Prospectus’*.
4. Verma S B (2015), *‘Status of women in Modern India’*.
5. Shankar Rao C N (2019), *‘Human Rights and Gender equality’*, Jai Bharath Prakashana, Mangalore.

6. Kishori Nayak K (2020), 'Gender Equity', *Departmental Magazine Womens Study Centre, Mangalore University*.
7. Ajithpal (2009,) 'Women`s participation at Grass Root Level: An analysis, mainstream', *EPW. Vol.47, No. 12.*
8. Devaki Jain (2013), 'Women Changing Governance', http://nird.ap.nic.in/elic/rrld_97. *Social status of women in India, Anman Publications, New Delhi,*.
9. Venkatesh B, Athreya and Sheela Rani Chukanth (2020), 'Literacy and Empowerment', *sage Publications, New Delhi*
10. Sushma Sahay(2016), 'Women Empowerment: Approaches and Strategies', *Discovery Publishing House, New Delhi.*
11. *Economic and political weekly, October, 2021.*

Table:1. Literacy Rate in India 1901-2021.

