



A STUDY ON THE GENDER EQUALITY: A STUDY ON RAJASTHAN AND KERALA

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ABSTRACT

Women and girls represent half of the world's population and, therefore, also half of its potential. Gender equality, besides being a fundamental human right, is essential to achieve peaceful societies, with full human potential and sustainable development. Moreover, it has been shown that empowering women spurs productivity and economic growth.

Unfortunately, there is still a long way to go to achieve full equality of rights and opportunities between men and women. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to end the multiple forms of gender violence and secure equal access to quality education and health, economic resources and participation in political life for both women and girls and men and boys. It is also essential to achieve equal opportunities in access to employment and to positions of leadership and decision-making at all levels. Inequality based on gender is a concern that is prevalent in the entire world. Even in the 21st century, across globe men and women do not enjoy equal privileges. Gender equality means providing equal opportunities to both men and women in political, economic, education and health aspects.

India ranks at 132 out of 148 countries in the gender equality index. The Indian society is still wrecked by such stigma that dictate that women are meant to manage home and stay indoor.

Women are creating examples everywhere and we all should highlight it to change the scenario and give them equal rights.

Kerala is a state in India often cited for its achievements in high literacy, high quality health statistics, and a low population growth rate (Murdoch 1980 and Dreze and Sen 1996). Of particular interest in development studies is the fact that Kerala has reached a high level of social development without complete modernization or industrialization (Murdoch 1980). Many of the successes of Kerala were reached through organized public action and political involvement, indicating a public command, concern, and ultimately a high success rate for social development issues. "In Kerala, informed political activism—building partly on the

achievement of mass literacy—has played a crucial role in the reduction of social inequalities based on caste, gender, and (to some extent) caste

OBJECTIVES

- To clarify the concept of gender equality
- Identify the factors responsible for gender inequality.
- Understand the impact of gender inequality.
- Explain gender inequality in Rajasthan and Kerala.
- Suggest measures to promote gender equality.

INTRODUCTION

Gender equality is when people of all genders have equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities. Everyone is affected by gender inequality - women, men, trans and gender diverse people, children and families. ... Societies that value women and men as equal are safer and healthier. Gender equality is a human right that both men and women deserve equally.

For example -Male and female employees holding the same position receive different pay, even when other factors such as experience, education level, etc. are similar. Asking any woman to resign on becoming pregnant or not hiring a woman because she is pregnant.

Deeply ingrained social practices, traditions and customs passed down through generations have created a culture that accepts discrimination against women as a part of life. This discrimination shows up as some of the most troubling statistics on the status of women in India; Rajasthan holds the record for highest percentage of married females between the ages of 10 and 14 and has one of the lowest sex ratios in the country. Discrimination against women manifests itself in many forms that start even before birth. Sex selection, not celebrating the birth of female children girl-child, naming girls *Mafi* (Sorry) or *Dhapu* (Enough) and forcing them to drop out of school after primary level to assist at home are just some examples of this. The prevalence of child marriage and the dowry system, an insistence that girls keep purdah, domestic violence and harassment of young girls by in-laws are also linked directly to gender inequality. Women are excluded from decision-making processes in their homes and communities and the traditional caste and community leadership structures do not encourage women to voice their grievances openly.

Rajasthan is the largest state by area in India with most of its terrain arid and semi arid. The state houses 5.5% of the country's population with only 1 per cent of the nation's water resources. 76 percent of the population of this desert state lives in villages. Because of a lack of water resources, there is major pressure on ground water resources in the state. Child marriage is still prevalent. According to the government of India statistics, 49% women in the age group of 15-19 are married in Rajasthan. gender inequality is unfortunately deeply embedded in the cultural fabric of Rajasthan, there were 888 women. The districts of Jaisalmer and adjoining areas were the most affected. But the state had made tremendous progress till 2016 while recording a rise in the child sex ratio by 37 points. According to a government report, the child sex ratio in the state stood at 929 women per 1000 men in 2015.

While good health and educational attainments are necessary for gender equality, the development experience in Kerala suggests that these accomplishments are insufficient to support gender equality- a constitutional promise and a constitutional right for all Indian men and women. Also women in Kerala do not have equal access to economic opportunities and

resources or equal voice in political decision making necessary dimensions of gender equal development.”

“Support for gender equality is often mistaken for feminism reducing demand among men and women, and there is little appreciation of the important function that gender equality plays in reducing poverty and in enhancing economic growth. given the unique and favourable human development context, Kerala is badly in need of a considered gender and development strategy to address the second generation of economic and political challenges.

Gender equality is very important nowadays. Its because women have to deserve an equal things as same as the men. such as, education rights and many more. Women are worth it to receive good education. Not only men who must be educated, but also the women are worth it to receive it.

Women are only asking for equal rights and equal rights are not special rights.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this paper secondary data has been taken to study the gender inequality in Kerala and Rajasthan.

GENDER INEQUALITY IN RAJASTHAN

Over the years, in-depth research on gender, power and masculinity has made it abundantly clear that men and boys must be an integral part of efforts to promote gender equality. Recent research suggests that men’s attitudes and more broadly, masculinity, perpetuates son preference and to some extent, intimate partner violence in India.

With 68.5 million people, Rajasthan is the eighth most populous state in India and contributes to 6% of the total population of the country³.

TABLE 1- DEMOGRAPHICS OF RAJASTHAN

indicators	Estimates (Year)	
Sex ratio at birth (Girls per 1000 boys)	870 (2006-08)	893(2011-13)
Literacy rate	60(2001)	66(2011)
Male literacy rate	70(2001)	79(2011)
Female literacy rate	44(2001)	48(2011)

Table 1 presents the key demographic indicators of Rajasthan. The sex ratio at birth (girls per 1,000 boys) has improved significantly by 23 percentage points between 2006-08 and 2011-13 but is low as compared to the national average of 909 (2011-13)². The overall literacy rate for the population ages seven and above has improved slightly in Rajasthan by six percentage points though continues to be lower than the overall national average of 74%. The female literacy rate of 48% is also much lower than the national average of 65% (2011

census). Rajasthan lags behind not only in terms of these demographic indicators but also development indicators, especially with regard to the status of women. According to the 2005-2006 National Family Health Survey-3 (NFHS-3), the percentage of ever-married women who have experienced spousal physical or sexual violence is higher (46%) in Rajasthan than in any other state except Bihar. A preference for sons is evidenced by the fact that two-thirds of women (67%) who have only daughters, desire more children, compared to 16% of women who already have two sons. Data on the age at marriage from last NFHS-3 reveals that as high as 65% of the women ages 20-24 years old were married before 18. The prevalence of child marriage is more in rural areas where a significant proportion of 20-24 year-old women were married before turning 15 (46%) and 18 (76%). Only 23% of girls' ages 15-17 attend school in the state, where a majority of girls discontinued their schooling in rural areas (85%), as per NFHS-3. According to the 2011 Census, the female work participation rate in Rajasthan is low (35%) and varies widely across its districts.

Gender inequality in KERALA

Gender Inequality has always been of great concern for nations because it leads not only to social loss but is also an economic loss for a nation in conjoint to the deplorable condition of females. Gender equality still remains a distant dream in economic participation. Despite achieving parity in the field of education, Kerala faces the ignominy of having the highest female unemployment rate in the country.

While the overall employment rate in Kerala stood at 6.7%, a wide gender gap of 14.1 % for women and 2.9 % for men existed (2017-18). The national average in both unemployment rate for women and men stood at 2.2%.

The scenario existed despite the state maintaining higher economic growth rate than many other states and ensuring relatively high literacy level among women. Highlighting gender parity in literacy in Kerala, youth literacy levels for male and female stood at 99.04 and 99.03 respectively.

FACTORS CAUSING GENDER INEQUALITY

A key factor driving gender inequality is the preference for sons, as they are deemed more useful than girls. Boys are given the exclusive rights to inherit the family name and properties and they are viewed as additional status for their family.

Attaining gender justice is not an easy task in India. From time immemorial, a girl child has been considered as an unwanted entity and a burden whom the parents would not mind doing away with. Discrimination against women begins even before her birth. The gruesome evils of female feticide and infanticide prove how brutal the world could be to women. Though the Indian constitution provides equal rights and privileges for men and women and makes equal provision to improve the status of women in society, majority of women are still unable to enjoy the rights and opportunities guaranteed to them. Traditional value system, low level of literacy, more house hold responsibilities lack of awareness, non-availability of proper guidance, low mobility, lack of self confidence family discouragement and advanced science and technology are some of the factors responsible to create gender disparity in our society.

1. Uneven access to education

Around the world, women still have less access to education than men. $\frac{1}{4}$ of young women between 15-24 will not finish primary school. That group makes up 58% of the people not completing that basic education. Of all the illiterate people in the world, $\frac{2}{3}$ are women. When girls are not educated on the same level as boys, it has a huge effect on their future and the kinds of opportunities they'll get.

2. Lack of employment equality

Only 6 countries in the world give women the same legal work rights as men. In fact, most economies give women only $\frac{3}{4}$ the rights of men. Studies show that if employment became a more even playing field, it has a positive domino effect on other areas prone to gender inequality.

3. Job segregation

One of the causes for gender inequality within employment is the division of jobs. In most societies, there's an inherent belief that men are simply better equipped to handle certain jobs. Most of the time, those are the jobs that pay the best. This discrimination results in lower income for women. Women also take on the primary responsibility for unpaid labor, so even as they participate in the paid workforce, they have extra work that never gets recognized financially.

4. Lack of religious freedom

When religious freedom is attacked, women suffer the most."

5. Racism

It would be impossible to talk about gender inequality without talking about racism. It affects what jobs women of color are able to get and how much they're paid, as well as how they are viewed by legal and healthcare systems. Gender inequality and racism have been closely-linked for a long time."

6. Societal mindsets

It's less tangible than some of the other causes on this list, but the overall mindset of a society has a significant impact on gender inequality. How society determines the differences and value of men vs. women plays a starring role in every arena, whether it's employment or the legal system or healthcare. Beliefs about gender run deep and even though progress can be made through laws and structural changes, there's often a pushback following times of major change. It's also common for everyone (men and women) to ignore other areas of gender inequality when there's progress, such as better representation for women in leadership. These types of mindsets prop up gender inequality and delay significant change.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Over the years, the world has gotten closer to achieving gender equality. There is better representation of women in politics, more economic opportunities, and better healthcare in many places of the world. However, the World Economic Forum estimates it will take another century before true gender equality becomes a reality.

1. Give girls access to education.

There are 130 million girls in the world who are not in school. Although there has been a significant boost in girls' enrollment in schools, there is still much progress to be made. Girls are more likely than boys to never receive an education. There are 15 million girls in the world of primary-school age who will never enter a classroom, compared to about 10 million boys. Although there are countless boys and girls worldwide who face barriers when trying to receive an education, there are several specific forms of discrimination that only affect girls. These include forced marriages at a young age, gender-based violence in school settings and certain cultural or religious norms that restrict girls' access to education. Education is an extremely valuable resource for girls. According to the World Bank, better-educated women tend to be healthier, participate in formal labor markets, earn higher incomes and marry at a later age. By receiving an education, girls can develop fundamental skills and gain invaluable knowledge that allows them to thrive in their careers and simply make decisions that will improve their lives.

2. Give women platforms to be in power and achieve economic success.

Globally, women have less political representation than men. Around the world, 62 percent of countries have never had a female head of government or state for at least one year in the past half-century, including the United States. The number of women in political positions compared to men is alarmingly disproportionate. In global legislatures, women are outnumbered four to one. Gender equality in political positions is a rarity as only three countries have 50 percent or more women in parliament in single or lower houses. By having an equal presence of women in politics or leadership positions, the interests and values of females will be better represented on the political level. For many women, it is hard to achieve economic success and move up the socioeconomic scale. Throughout the world, women work for long hours of unpaid domestic jobs. In some places, females do not have the right to own land, earn an income and progress their careers due to job discrimination.

3. End violence and sexual assault against women.

An unprecedented number of countries have laws against domestic violence and sexual assault. However, these laws often go ignored, jeopardizing women and girls' rights to their safety and justice. Every day, 137 women across the world are killed by a family member or intimate partner. This statistic is a disturbing example of the severity of violence toward women. Females are more likely to experience sexual violence than men. Approximately 15 million girls aged 15 to 19 worldwide have been raped at some point in their lives. Beyond sexual harassment, women and girls are vulnerable to human trafficking as they account for 71 percent of all human trafficking victims. In many cases, females are trafficked as child brides and/or sold as sex slaves. The extent of sexual violence toward women and young girls is an extreme violation of human rights.

4. Assure girls and women have access to menstrual health facilities.

Menstrual hygiene management is necessary for girls and young women to attend school and participate in their daily lives, however, this necessity is not always guaranteed. The women most affected by ineffective menstrual care live in poverty. Often, girls will stay home from school when on their periods because they do not have access to sanitary products and/or their schools lack the necessary facilities. Dangerous ignorance and societal judgments about menstruation exist worldwide. Some cultures believe a menstruating girl causes harm to everything she touches. For instance, in rural Nepal, girls on their periods are sometimes forced out of their homes, forbidden from being in contact with people, animals and even plants. These girls are forced to stay in “menstrual huts” which can be harmful and potentially fatal. These misleading cultural taboos lead to ostracism, early marriage and the endangerment of girls’ futures. Young women in refugee camps also have a difficult time accessing safe and security sanitary products.

5. End child marriage.

In some cultures, it is acceptable if not expected for girls to marry at a young age. Every year, 12 million girls marry before the age of 18 worldwide. Child marriage most affects girls and is mainly fueled by gender inequality and poverty. This practice is a violation of human rights as it prohibits women from making decisions about their own lives. It deprives young girls of a childhood and an education, but it also has other disturbing effects. Girls who are forced into marriage may be sexually harassed by their partner and have an increased risk of getting sexually transmitted diseases, cervical cancer, malaria and death from childbirth. Girls Not Brides is one of the most prominent organizations working to raise awareness on these issues by partnering with more than 1,000 civil societies across the globe.

6. Raise aspirations of girls and their parents

We need to give girls images and role models that expand their dreams.

7. Empower mothers

When mothers are educated and empowered to make choices in their lives, they enable their daughters to go to school.

8. Give proper value to ‘women’s work’

The unpaid work women and girls do provide the foundation for the global economy. This fact needs to be highlighted more in the media, with the private sector, and in communities.

9. Get women into power

A proven way to overcome many systemic barriers to a woman’s success has been increased participation by women in local, regional and national legislation as empowered change agents.

CONCLUSION

Gender Inequality has always been considered as a great concern since Independence in India. Persistent gender inequalities continue, we need to rethink concepts and strategies for promoting women's dignity and rights. There is a need for new kinds of institutions, incorporating new norms and rules that support equal and just relations between women and men. The implementation of the law is becoming extremely difficult as sex detection is done within the doctor-patient confidentiality. The only full proof method to stop this crime of pre-birth sex selection is to bring about a change in the mindsets of the people that it is okay to have a girl because she is no less than a boy. Today the issue has reached such colossal proportions that a multi-pronged strategy with the single goal of balancing the sex ratio is the need of the hour. This is not an issue that can be dealt by a few but requires a mass movement. Gender inequality is unfortunately deeply embedded in the cultural fabric of Rajasthan. High rates of female infanticide and foeticide still exist. Women are still considered less important than men and treated with less respect.

Women want equal rights. They are not asking for more or any kind of special rights. Just equal rights nothing less and nothing more. Gender equality means providing equal opportunities to both men and women in political, economic, education and health aspects.

While the laws of independent India are strong for giving security disposables to women, it is unfortunate that gender equality is still an issue. Women have not been treated equally in society, their gender inequality has been going on for centuries. However, over the years, there has been a lot of emphasis on treating all humans equally regardless of their gender. Women, as well as girls, still lag behind men and boys on basic aspects globally. Gender equality is essential for global development. Until now, women are still unable to contribute effectively, and in fact, do not recognize their full potential. There is a definite need to strengthen our legal and regulatory framework to fight the deeply-entrenched practice of gender inequality.

We hope that the whole world will recognize the efforts of men and women in our modern society equally soon.

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