



SOCIAL and COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Gender Dynamics in Society- Gender Equality in India?

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Abstract: India, despite making strides in development in the past three decades, lags behind on gender equality. It ranks 131 of 188 countries on the U.N. Development Program's Gender Inequality Index. Dowry, female infanticide and women's education are persistent issues despite decades of successive governments' efforts to address them. The problems in India are not limited to villages and uneducated people — the behavior of outspoken critics of sexism shows how deeply these attitudes entrenched are. A sample of India's young, modern women — would be parroting female stereotypes, despite labeling themselves as feminists. What we hear are Indian women saying is disturbing. Over and over would it shake head in disbelief that yet another smart and smartly dressed woman, an artist, a business manager, a financial analyst, a professor, a dentist, an engineer, a lawyer, a researcher, a scientist, a teacher, an educated stay-at-home mom was so unsure of herself. Society is stagnating under the veneer of modernity; Women have internalized these behaviors that make it so men continue to be in power. Many women described being groped — almost all women had experienced being inappropriately touched. This has become normalized. This is no longer traumatic for them. Such behaviors occur because of how young girls in India are raised; the way girls are raised 'fear training,' literally, training girls to become fearful. It is training based on no and don't. No, you can't do this. No, you can't do that.

Keywords: *Gender, Equality, Stereotyped, Femininity, Sociology*

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I. Introduction:

Gender inequalities, and their social causes, impact India's sex ratio, women's health over their lifetimes, their educational attainment, and economic conditions. Gender inequality in India is a multifaceted issue that concerns men and women. Some argue that various gender equality indices place men at a disadvantage. However, when India's population is examined as a whole, women are at a disadvantage in several important ways. In India, discriminatory attitudes towards either sex have existed for generations and affect the lives of both sexes. Although the constitution of India grants men and women equal rights, gender disparities remain.

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. In a survey-based study of 1990s data, scholars found that son are believed to have a higher economic utility as they can provide additional labor in agriculture. Another factor is that of religious practices, which can only be performed by males for their parents' afterlife. All these factors make sons more desirable. Moreover, the prospect of parents 'losing' daughters to the husband's family and expensive dowry of



daughters further discourages parents from having daughters. Additionally, sons are often the only person entitled to performing funeral rights for their parents. Thus, a combination of factors has shaped the imbalanced view of sexes in India.

II. Statement of the Problem: This research has been taken up to find out the solution to the problem that whether the Gender Dynamics in Society- will bring Gender Equality in India?

III. Hypothesis: The study is designed to assess the hypothesis that whether Gender Dynamics in Society- will bring Gender Equality in India? To find answers to this question particularly, are the major thing in this research paper. During the course of this research work the major focus will be a tentative explanation of this theory that soon the gender dynamics Equality can be seen as social & community development factors.

IV. Methodology:

This paper is based on descriptive study. It is an elaborative research. The data for this research paper is collected from the secondary sources, newspaper articles, online reports; etc. The information is also gathered from television/newspaper advertisements. Qualitative and quantitative both the approaches have been adopted in this paper.

V. Significance of the Study: Based on the various theories

A) Indian Gender theories:

The **social construction of gender** is a notion in feminism and sociology about the operation of gender and gender differences in societies. According to this view, society and culture create gender roles, and these roles are prescribed as ideal or appropriate behavior for a person of that specific sex. Some supporters of this idea argue that the differences in behavior between men and women are entirely social conventions, whereas others believe that behavior is influenced by universal biological factors to varying degrees, with social conventions having a major effect on gendered behavior. The construction of gender and stereotyped roles can be examined through a given environment.

Theory-I

A certain gendered patriarchy turns abstraction into material reality. This reality is negotiated into each interaction we have. For example, based on a simulation discussed in “Walk like a Man, Talk like a Woman”, the simulation used “demonstrates the social constructiveness of gender, maintaining that gender should be conceptualized and portrayed as a process, system of stratification, and social structure. The perceptions of the social world in which these students view the world around them is as an “objective reality rather than as a product of human interaction and interpretation that is institutionalized and transformed over time. One of the most powerful notions that this simulation encourages is teaching from a constructionist perspective that requires instructors to “challenge perceptions by requiring students to unpack the “hows and whys” of sociological phenomena”.



Theory -II

A 2005 study in Madurai, India, found that old age security, economic motivation, and to a lesser extent, religious obligations, continuation of the family name, and help in business or farm, were key reasons for son preference. In turn, emotional support and old age security were main reasons for daughter preference. The study underscored a strong belief that a daughter is a liability.

Implicit gender stereotypes: Theory III

One example of an implicit gender stereotype is that males are seen as better at mathematics than females. It has been found that men have stronger positive associations with mathematics than women, while women have stronger negative associations with mathematics and the more strongly a woman associates herself with the female gender identity, the more negative her association with mathematics.

These associations have been disputed for their biological connection to gender and have been attributed to social forces that perpetuate stereotypes such as aforementioned stereotype that men are better at mathematics than women

Role Theory-IV

Gender roles are often centered on the conceptions of femininity or masculinity. In our society even today, women are socialized as being the caretakers of the house, who nurture the children, cook and clean. With men, they "should" be the workhorse, the provider, protector, a leader, and a teacher to his family. Role theory is a perspective in sociology and in social psychology that considers most of everyday activity to be the acting out of socially defined categories (e.g., mother, manager, and teacher). Each role is a set of rights, duties, expectations, norms and behaviors that a person has to face and fulfill. The model is based on the observation that people behave in a predictable way, and that an individual's behavior is context specific, based on social position and other factors. The theatre is a metaphor often used to describe role theory.

The division of labor in society takes the form of the interaction among heterogeneous specialized positions that we call roles;

1. Social roles included "appropriate" and "permitted" forms of behavior, guided by social norms, which are commonly known and hence determine expectations;
2. Roles are occupied by individuals, who are called "actors";
3. When individuals approve of a social role (i.e., they consider the role "legitimate" and "constructive"), they will incur costs to conform to role norms, and will also incur costs to punish those who violate role norms;
4. Changed conditions can render a social role outdated or illegitimate, in which case social pressures are likely to lead to role change;
5. The anticipation of rewards and punishments, as well as the satisfaction of behaving in a prosaically way, account for why agents conform to role requirements.



In terms of differences among role theory, on one side there is a more functional perspective, which can be contrasted with the more micro level approach of the symbolic interactions tradition. This type of role theory dictates how closely related individuals' actions are to the society, as well as how empirically testable a particular role theory perspective may be.

VI: Findings of this Research Study:

A) Achieving gender equality in India: To know what works, and what doesn't:

India's progress towards gender equality, measured by its position on rankings such as the Gender Development Index has been disappointing, despite fairly rapid rates of economic growth. Discrimination against women and girls is a pervasive and long-running phenomenon that characterizes Indian society at every level. Crimes against women show an upward trend, in particular brutal crimes such as rapes, dowry deaths, and honor killings. These trends are disturbing as a natural prediction would be that with growth comes education and prosperity, and a possible decline in adherence to traditional institutions and socially prescribed gender roles that hold women back.

In the past decade, while Indian GDP has grown by around 6%, there has been a large decline in female labour force participation from 34% to 27%. The male-female wage gap has been stagnant at 50% (a recent survey finds a 27% gender pay gap in white-collar jobs).

B) Sons -must have in a family: A culturally ingrained parental preference for sons - emanating from their importance as caregivers for parents in old age - is linked to poorer consequences for daughters. Cultural institutions in India, particularly those of patrilineality (inheritance through male descendants) and patrilocality (married couples living with or near the husband's parents), play a central role in perpetuating gender inequality and ideas about gender-appropriate behaviour.

C) The dowry system-involving a cash or in-kind payment from the bride's family to the groom's at the time of marriage, is another institution that dis-empowers women. The incidence of dowry payment, which is often a substantial part of a household's income, has been steadily rising over time across all regions and socioeconomic classes. This often results in dowry-related violence against women by their husbands and in-laws if the dowry is considered insufficient or as a way to demand more payments. These practices create incentives for parents not to have girl children or to invest less in girls' health and education. Such parental preferences are reflected in increasingly masculine sex ratios in India.



D) Ratio of Girls to that of Boys: In 2011, there were 919 girls under age six per 1000 boys, despite sex determination being outlawed in India. This reinforces the inferior status of Indian women and puts them at risk of violence in their marital households. According to the National Family and Health Survey of 2005-06, 37% of married women have been victims of physical or sexual violence perpetrated by their spouse.

E) Affirmative action: There is clearly a need for policy initiatives to empower women as gender disparities in India persist even against the backdrop of economic growth. Current literature provides pointers from policy changes that have worked so far. One unique policy experiment in village-level governance that mandated one-third representation for women in positions of local leadership has shown promising results. Evaluations of this affirmative action policy have found that in villages led by women, the preferences of female residents are better represented, and women are more confident in reporting crimes that earlier they may have considered too stigmatizing to bring to attention.

F) Female Leadership: Female leaders also serve as role models and parents. Behavioral find that while in the short run there is backlash by men as traditional gender roles are being challenged, the negative stereotype eventually disappears. This underscores the importance of sustained affirmative action as a way to reduce gender bias.

G) Equal Inheritance Rights: Another policy change aimed at equalizing land inheritance rights between sons and daughters has been met with a more mixed response. While on the one hand, it led to an increase in educational attainment and age at marriage for daughters, on the other hand, it increased spousal conflict leading to more domestic violence.

H) Better Prospects for Labor market: Improvements in labor market prospects also have the potential to empower women. An influential randomization study found that job recruiter visits to villages to provide information to young women led to positive effects on their labor market participation and enrolment in professional training. This also led to an increase in age at marriage and childbearing, a drop in desired number of children, and an increase in school enrolment of younger girls not exposed to the programme.

I) Training and recruiting young women: Recent initiatives on training and recruiting young women from rural areas for factory-based jobs in cities provide economic independence and social autonomy that they were unaccustomed to in their parental homes.



J) Getting to parity: For India to maintain its position as a global growth leader, more concerted efforts at local and national levels and by the private sector are needed to bring women to parity with men. While increasing representation of women in the public spheres is important and can potentially be attained through some form of affirmative action, an attitudinal shift is essential for women to be considered as equal within their homes and in broader society. Educating Indian children from an early age about the importance of gender equality could be a meaningful start in that direction.

VII. Concluding Comment:

- **Shifting gender roles:** The way in which men and women are treated or behave differently in society, either with their own gender or with each other. The changes in gender dynamics and roles in society for an individual or group can be changed by either economic standing, age or other factors. These can either be behaviors which society doesn't question, are hidden within society and society may even be against changing. A handful of behaviors are sometimes considered negative by a portion of society whom believes it makes men and women unequal. **Feminists** being the most popular example of this. Though most **feminists** tend to ignore how gender dynamics tend to treat men **unfairly** as well or how they're ultimately **inescapable** but can be reversed or changed in a way to become different from their original form. Other than that gender dynamics are an important part in the human experience and have been found in every society throughout history. Including our own, and will continue to be relevant in the societies **our future descendants** make.
- **Measures taken by the Government for gender equality/socio-economic development/empowerment of women**

The Ministry of Women and Child Development is administering following schemes for gender equality/socio-economic development/empowerment of women:

- i. Swadhar and Short Stay Homes to provide relief and rehabilitation to destitute women and women in distress.
- ii. Working Women Hostels for ensuring safe accommodation for working women away from their place of residence.
- iii. Support to Training and Employment Program for Women (STEP) to ensure sustainable employment and income generation for marginalised and asset-less rural and urban poor women across the country.
- iv. Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) to provide micro-finance services to bring about the socio-economic upliftment of poor women.
- v. National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW) to strengthen the overall processes that promotes all-round Development of Women
- vi. Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme for Children of Working Mothers (including single mother) to provide day care facilities for running a crèche of 25 children in the age group 0-6 years from families having monthly income of less than Rs 12,000.
- vii. One Stop Centre to provide integrated support and assistance to women affected by violence.
- viii. Scheme for Universalisation of Women Helpline intended to provide 24 hours immediate and emergency response to women affected by violence.



- ix. Sabla Scheme for holistic development of adolescent girls in the age group of 11-18 years.
- x. In order to strengthen the process of gender budgeting the Ministry of Women and Child Development has been undertaking various capacity building measures for the officials of the State Governments by organizing training programs/workshops regularly.

In order to improve employability a separate Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has been created.

Equal Remuneration Act, 1973 provides for payment of equal remuneration to men and women workers for the same work of similar nature without any discrimination. In order to ensure social security to the workers including women in the unorganized sector, the Government has enacted the Unorganized Workers' Social Security Act 2008.

The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 regulates employment of women in certain establishments for a certain period (12 weeks) before and after childbirth and provides for maternity and other benefits.

Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY) Scheme is being implemented as Conditional Maternity Benefit for pregnant and lactating women to improve health and nutrition status to better enabling environment by providing cash incentives to pregnant and nursing mothers to partly compensate wage loss both prior to and after delivery.

The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 has been enacted, which covers all women, irrespective of their age or employment status and protect them against sexual harassment at all workplaces both in public and private sector, whether organized or unorganized.

The modern woman of today has a lot of potentials. From managing the household to serving in the armed forces, or managing businesswomen are excelling in every field. Thus, the Government of India is also taking various steps such as launching the above-mentioned schemes which would further empower them. Women are the most important members of the society serving multitude roles such as being a mother, sister, daughter, wife, and a friend etc. These days the role of women has not been restricted to household rather many women are occupying a high position in society they are excelling in every field whether its sports, finance, education etc. Thus, government has launched many schemes for women aimed at their upliftment and help them to evolve better.

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