



Combating Gender Inequalities through the Role of Different Stakeholders & Govt. Initiatives

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Abstract

This paper aims to discuss the major issue regarding Gender Inequality in our country. The social structure of India has been traditionally male dominant one. Women always have to depend on men and in their family, outside and throughout their life. From historic situation we can see different kind of gender inequality issues are exist and women are facing those issues. For this study the sample comprised of 160 primary school teachers of govt. schools and 25 teachers of education colleges. Data collected by using qualitative method conducted focus group discussion and interaction sessions. The study describes various types of Gender Inequality stated by Prof. Amratya Sen mentioning special focus on responsible factors which affects the development of our society. The paper also explains different aspects and responsible factors of Gender Inequality in present time. In this paper, Gender Inequality Indicators with related areas existing of some facts about Gender Inequality in India also explain. Furthermore, the article highlights some data about gender inequalities and the need and importance to enhance gender equality in present times with reference of the UNESCO Agenda for ensuring gender equality in Indian context. This paper also explains role of different stakeholders & Govt. initiatives to be taken for removing Gender Inequality and ensuring equality to people. As a result by practical implementing of these policy initiatives, we can see a reforming change in the women's social status in relation to every aspect.

Key Words: Gender Inequality, Gender Inequality Indicators, UNESCO Agenda, Stakeholders, Policy Initiatives

Introduction

Men and women are the basic structural components of any human society. Both are different in terms of biological, emotional, mental and social behaviours. Our society has been traditionally is male dominant. The status of women in Indian society has been a complicated. During the Vedic period, they enjoyed a high position and equal status with men but in the Post-Vedic period of their status deteriorated and their position needed to improve so as to be equal that of men of the society. India's women are discriminated against their related issues which is unparalleled in developed and in developing nations in the world. Indian society is still extremely male-dominated, patriarchal and unequal. Female foeticide, infanticide, early marriages, slavery are the some issues reflecting the gender inequality situation in society. All sorts of gender inequalities continue to exist, some of these seem resistance to change, and they exist in a completely different context of cultural norms, political and social rights and institutionalized rules.

Objective

This study aims to explaining the need of Gender Equality to achieve balance development for Indian society. It seeks to highlight the comprehensive understanding of gender inequality with its indicators, focusing on responsible factors gender imbalances in India. The study also highlights the UNESCO agenda for removing existing gender inequalities and some facts of gender inequalities in India. It also explores the implementing steps under practical govt. policy initiatives with the help of different stakeholders to promote gender equality to be improved.

Method

In this research article mixed-methods approach combining quantitative with qualitative to comprehensively understand the complex dynamics of Gender Inequality considering intersectional factors was adopted. I analysed historical and contemporary sources fact basis information and explored an extensive literature review. I emphasized statistics on employment rates, health conditions, education levels, economic participation, educational attainment and in-depth the focus group discussion, addressed in the study.

Sample

For this study, I collected primary data from 160 Primary level teachers working in govt. primary schools located rural areas in Tarntarn Distt.of Punjab state. I also contacted with 25 college teachers of both gender working in education colleges in Tarntarn Distt. Selected sample population discussed gender inequality indicators, various relevant factors responsible for gender inequality, statistics about gender inequality, gender inequalities and role of different stakeholders and govt. initiatives to take progress steps for gender equality.

Procedures

On the selected sample, employment, health and educational levels and attainment statistics, employment rates, health conditions, economic participation and along with group discussion conducted for collection data about the status of gender inequality in society regarding attitudes, perspectives, and experiences up to what extent. To get relevant facts on the issue data collection procedure adopted ethically, ensures informed consent and confidential. For this study, adopted protocols culturally appropriate also kept in mind. For result drawn the collected information must record in written and descriptive way and also considered national and international reports.

Measures

Concept of Gender Inequality

Gender Inequality arises from the differences in socially constructed roles. Basically, it refers to unequal treatment or perceptions of individuals based on their gender. It is a kind of behaviour that shows favouritism towards one gender over another. Gender Inequality in India refers to health, education, economic and political inequalities between men and women in India.

Definitions of Gender Inequality

According to Oxford Dictionary of Sports, Science& Medicine, “Gender Inequality is understood as the social process which people are treated differently and disadvantageously, under similar circumstances, on the basis of gender.”

According to Cambridge Business English Dictionary, “Gender Inequality-Unfair difference in the way women and men are treated.”

Different Aspects and Responsible factors of Gender Inequality

According to Nobel Laureate Prof. Amratya Sen (2001) describes seven types of gender inequalities including responsible factors and existing examples are present in India.

Sr. No.	Aspect of Inequality	Responsible Factor	Examples
1.	Mortality Inequality	Differences in Socioeconomic Status, Unequal Access to Healthcare	A higher Death Rate among Low-Income Individuals Compared to High-Income Individuals of Infant & Maternal
2.	Natality Inequality	Unequal Birth Rate due to Social Factors including Gender Preferences, Particularly Favouring Boys over Girls	Sex-selective Abortion, Preference to Male Children
3.	Employment Inequality	Unequal Access to Quality Education and Training	A Significant Gap in Leadership Positions, Limited Job Prospects for Individuals with disabilities
4.	Ownership Inequality	Unequal Access to wealth due to inheritance, Discriminatory Practices	Disparity in Land Ownership, Unequal Access to Housing based on Socioeconomic Status
5.	Special Opportunity Inequality	Gender, Race, Ethnicity, Socioeconomic Status, Geographic Locations	Unequal Access to Quality Education based on Geographic Locations & Healthcare Access in certain Regions
6.	Basic Facility Inequality	Gender Discrimination, Poverty, Lack of Awareness	Education Disparities, Nutritional Deficiencies, Housing Disparities
7.	Household Inequality	Less Pay Income to Women than Men for Same Work, Low level of Education can Limit Access to Income , Minority Status	When One Partner in a Relationship takes on Significantly Larger Share of Domestic Chores and Childcare Responsibilities Compared to Another

Gender Inequality Indicators

Sr. No.	Measurement Index	Areas
1.	Gender Gap Index	Health, Education, Economy and Politics
2.	Gender Equity Index	Education, Economic Participation and Empowerment
3.	Gender Development Index	Health, Education and Economic Resources
4.	Gender Empowerment Index	Economic Participation, Political Participation and Power over Economic Resources
5.	Gender Equality Index	Women Potential against Violence, Politics, Health, Education and Economy
6.	Gender Pay Gap Index	Economic Participation & Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health & Survival, Political Empowerment

Gender Inequality causes to prove girls and women everywhere deserve to live in a better world than exists today. In India, gender disparity between men and women in different health, social, political, cultural and legal and aspects etc. Here are describing **some facts** regarding Gender Inequality:

- Women hold only 12.4% of cultivated holdings, accounting for 9.9% of cultivated area held by individuals. (2005-2006, Agricultural Census)
- 55% of adult women are literate compared with 78% of men. (2005-2006, National Family Health Survey-3)
- Biomass remains the primary source of energy for cooking for 85% of rural household. (2007-2008, National Sample Survey 64th Round)
- Only 34% of rural households and 81% of urban households have access to a toilet facility. (2007-2008, District Level Household Survey-3)
- Average wages for women workers are 68% of those of men in rural areas, 57% urban areas. (2007-2008, National Sample Survey 64th Round)
- Women account only for 18.6% wage employment in the non-agricultural sector. (2009-2010, National Sample Survey 66th Round)
- Women own less than one-third of deposits in commercial banks. (2010, Reserve Bank of India Basic Statistical Returns)
- 79% of women vs. 63% of men continue to be engaged in agriculture. (2009-2010, National Sample Survey 66th Round)

In **September 2015**, the world agreed to **17 Global Goals** to build a sustainable more equal world including a goal to ensure a quality education for all.

Gender Inequality Statistics in India

Global Indices: Gender Inequality is also reflected in India's poor ranking in various global gender indices.

- **UNDP's gender Inequality Index-2014:** India's ranking is 127 out of 152 only above Afghanistan as far as SAARC countries are concerned.
- **World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index 2014:** India's rank 114th out of 142th including these areas: Economic Participation & Opportunity-134th, Educational Achievement-126th, Health and Life Expectancy-14st & Political Empowerment-15th
- **Gender Inequality Statistics: Female Foeticide & Female Infanticide** practiced at a large scale, **Child Sex Ratio** (0-6 age group: 919 in 2001), **Sex Ratio:** (943 in 2011), **Female Literacy:** 62.98% in 2015, **Maternal Mortality Rate:** 178 deaths per 100000 live births in 2010-2012.

Need and Importance to enhancing Gender Equality in Present Times

The importance of Gender Equality in our society rises every single moment when men realise how hard is "to hold the other part of the sky." Women equality is a precondition for solving many problems. Gender Equality works as the foundation for peaceful and sustainable world, men and women are equal valued to society, helpful to eradicate domestic violence ensuring equality, to get rid of poverty, making democracy powerful, for development of worthy citizens, creating healthy environment, must for economic and social development, for ruling out under-employment and unemployment, development of worthy citizens, to facilitate National development.

The **UNESCO Agenda** for ensuring Gender Equality to promote education for women's empowerment at all levels and in all fields encourage the equal access to knowledge in all fields, notably within science and technology, support to women's human rights by implementing the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discriminations, mainstream a gender perspective in conceptualisation, implementation and evaluation of policies relating to development, peace and security, assist in building a culture of peace in the minds of women and men by recognising women's capacity for leadership and non-violent conflict resolution, promote the attainment of gender parity, women's full citizenship and equal participation in policy making and the elimination of stereotyped roles and expectations, fostering partnership and dialogue and develop a new gender contact, underlying the long term gains from the social transformation towards gender-sensitive societies and encourage women's creativity and freedom of expression by supporting their cultural activities, research, training, capacity building, networking, exchange of information and women's NGOs.

Role of Different Stakeholders in Combating of Gender Inequality

UNESCO General Conference, Paris, 1995, "All people engaged in educational action must have adequate teaching materials and resources at their disposal. In this connection, it is necessary to make the revisions to textbooks to remove negative stereotype sand distorted views of 'the other',"

Gender Inequality is defeated when women and men enjoy the same rights and opportunities across all sections of society, including economic participating and decision making and when the different behaviours, aspirations and needs of women and men are equally valued and favoured. The following sections are explaining the role of various stakeholders in combating gender inequality in the social and institutional academic environment.

Society: Society take step forward to fight gender stereotypes, promote gender equality at home, talk about gender issues with an age appropriate lens, imbibe gender equality and respect as core values, the right gender messaging, tap into girls and women power, engage with men and boys, gender sensitisation of service providers, celebrate and promote 'positive deviants' in society and media as a game changer.

Schools: School enhance on practice to avoid gender role stereotyping, integrating life skills and gender equality, undertaking gender sensitization, providing training in gender responsive teaching, empowering girls with skills, de-conditioning of gendered attitude, providing sex-education, safety and security, gender equitable rich environment, gender responsive text books and libraries, functional guidance and counselling.

Curriculum: Curriculum redesign construction of content, learning methods, language of instruction and literacy, methods of evaluation and assessment, involvement of stakeholders, implementation of government schemes, ensuring strong legal measures.

Textbooks: Textbooks must cover attention to gender /human right issues, consultation with experts, consider principals of gender sensitivity, clear understanding of assumptions, reviewing manuscripts, emphasis on visual medium, depiction of human values, questioning of customary practices, promotes critical thinking, awareness schemes, focus on current issues, try to bridge all segments of society, mention of women role models.

Teachers: Teachers practice to establish rules, used engendered pattern of class organisation, have a classroom seating plan that supports equal participation, have equal academic and behaviour expectations for all students, use group work, tips for classroom strategies, addressing students equally, use gender neutral language & activities, incorporating gender dimension in teaching.

Teacher Education Institutions: TEI's introducing and implementing initiatives to introduce Gender training courses, relationship and style of learning, teaching and living gender equity.

Govt. Initiatives on Promoting Gender Equality

Increasing Women's Employment Opportunities: National Employment Policy, draft 2008 (equality in labour market, increased access to opportunities), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (33% participation by women and equal pay for women), State-level policies on the public (e.g., reservation of 33% of government jobs in Madhya Pradesh, 30% in Karnataka) and State progress supporting women's enterprise.

Eliminating Discrimination in Wages, Recruitments, and Working Conditions: Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 (equal pay), Equal treatment in recruitment, promotions, and women and men for the same and similar work.

Increasing Access by Women to Skills and Training

National Policy on Skill Development, 2009 (women's participation in vocational, with target of at least 30% by 2012, Use of proactive measures (such as hostels, scholarship, transport loans) also of concern at the state level, such as Rajasthan 11th Five Year Plan (expansion of technical training facilities and employment-related courses for women).

Improving Women's Employment Opportunities and Wages in the Construction Sector: National Urban Housing and Habitat Policy, 2007 (skill upgrading, employment in supervisory positions, and development as contractors), Requirement that construction companies and public authorities provide adequate support services & facilities and such as crèche and toilet facilities and Promotion of state legislation on health, safety and insurance measures especially for women in construction.

Increasing Women's Participation in all Government Programmes: 11th Five Year Plan, 2007-2012 (minimum of 33% participation), Reiterated in some state level five-year plans for the same period (e.g. in Bihar), Strengthening women's ownership rights: Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005 (women's inheritance rights and 11th Five Year Plan 2007-2012 (transfers to women through land reforms and antipoverty and resettlement programmes.)

Strengthening Women's Participation in Water Resource Management: National Policy for Farmers, 2007 (greater role for women as water users, both in access and management), Similar issues addressed in state-level policies (e.g. Himachal Pradesh State Water Policy, 2005, Maharashtra Ground water Development and Management Bill, 2009) and Chhatisgarh Ground Water Bill, 2012, regarding participation of farmers and all other water users in irrigation management.

Increasing Women's Participation in Local Decision Making: 73rd & 74th Constitutional Amendments (establishing rural and urban local bodies, respectively) Minimum one-third representation of women and State governments are responsible for implementing legislations and several have increased or are to about to increase the reservations to 50%.

Results and Discussion

After analysing the collected data there are many social issues arises like more importance to male child, biased behaviour towards girls and women, ignorance to proving educational facilities to females, poor health conditions, lack of employment facilities, early age marriage scenario, unequal distribution of wages, domestic violence etc. But this scenario can change through implementing the govt. initiatives in collaboration with rural and local administrative bodies. As it is border area location less access of availabilities to promote gender equality. For change the attitude, behavioural shifts, empowerment outcomes, social impact, improved mental well-being, producing more opportunities for women, improve women's status by actionable role of stakeholders and govt. initiatives will play as active basic components.

Conclusion

According to UNESCO, “Gender Equality is therefore the equal valuing by the society of similarities and the difference of men and the roles they play.”

All types of inequalities may go on but the real change will only come when the mentality of men will change, when the species of human beings would start women as equal and not weaker to them. Let’s hope that our participative democracy in times to come and with the efforts of both women and men would be able to found solutions to the problem of gender inequality and would take us all towards our cherished dream of a modern society in both thought and action. Equal access to education, decent work and representations in political and economic decision making processes are not only rights women should have they benefit the humanity at large.

Implications

By implementing various efforts for Gender Equality to make empowered women will be end all forms of intersectional discrimination basis behaviour toward them. It will also helpful to ensure full and equal participation & opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in personal, economic, political and public life. It will ensure to undertake reforms for equal rights in every sphere of life. Adopting strengthens and sound policies for promotion of gender equality all women at all levels.

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