

Socio-Economic Development and Gender Inequality in India

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Abstract

This paper focus on Gender is a common term where as gender discrimination is meant only for women, because females are the only victims of gender discrimination. Eleventh plan witnessed economy strength in many dimensions and is well prepared to achieve faster, sustainable and inclusive growth. Twelfth five year plan aims at inclusive growth which should result in lower incidence of poverty, broad-based and significant improvement in health outcomes, universal access for children to school, increased access to higher education and improved standards of education, including skill development. The study of status of women is very much complicated. In a developing nation like India, women's lower status is reflected not only in their work being underpaid, un-recognized, but also in their limited access to productive resources and support services such as health and education. The focus of this paper is on issues concerning gender disparities in the context of India so as to examine the nature of prevalent discrimination and biases against women. It is clear from the above cited information is that our government is keen in feminine advancement. All these schemes have a positive impact on female advancement. Girl baby's birth rate which was considered as negative in many parts of India, government awareness programs had changed this negativity. Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) though has decreased considerably during 2007 to 2016.

Keywords: *Gender discrimination, Women Empowerment, Economic Independence.*

Introduction

Gender is a common term where as gender discrimination is meant only for women, because females are the only victims of gender discrimination. Gender discrimination is not biologically determined but it is determined by socially and the discrimination can be changed by the proper and perpetuate efforts. Denial of equality, rights and opportunity and suppression in any form on the basis of gender is gender discrimination. India adopted five year planning strategy from Russia to accelerate economic growth. We are now in 12th five year plan (2012-17) its theme is "Faster, more inclusive and sustainable growth". According to the National Sample Survey Report (2011-12), the workforce participation rate of male is 54.4% and female is 21.9%. As per the India Country Report, 2015 by Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation on the Millennium Development Goals, the percentage share of females in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector during 2011-12 increased to 19.3% which is higher than 18.6% reported during 2009-10 by National Sample

Survey Organization. Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner and Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation are involved in collection and dissemination of data covering wide range of issues that affect women's empowerment.¹ The report titled "Women and Men in India-2015" by Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation, Government of India highlights the status of women covering health, education, work and decision making along with social obstacles in women's empowerment. Eleventh plan witnessed economy strength in many dimensions and is well prepared to achieve faster, sustainable and inclusive growth. Twelfth five year plan aims at inclusive growth which should result in lower incidence of poverty, broad-based and significant improvement in health outcomes, universal access for children to school, increased access to higher education and improved standards of education, including skill development. It should also be reflected in better opportunities for both wage employment and livelihood, and in improvement in provision of basic amenities like water, electricity,

roads, sanitation and housing. Women and children constitute 70% of the population and this twelfth plan aims to give special attention to them in terms of reach of relevant schemes in many sectors. I could say this five year plan took 360 degree measure to empower female gender in all aspects.²

Objectives of the Study

1. To understand and analyze gender inequality in India.
2. To suggest cures to reduce gender inequality in India.

Research Methodology: The status of poor women in India can be analyzed by identifying underlying themes that affect their socio-economic development. The study is based on secondary sources of data. The secondary sources like books, journals, magazines and articles have been examined for this study.

Statement of the Problem: Reflects the extent of socio-economic development. Over a period of time that achievements in India’s developmental process have been significant. The goal of reducing gender inequality has held a prominent place in international organizations and in national strategy statements.³

Data Collection: For the present work, data for the study have been collected from the Statistical Abstract of India and other related documents published by Census of India, and from other world reports on India.

Area of the Study: The study of status of women is very much complicated. In a developing nation like India, women’s lower status is reflected not only in their work being underpaid, un-recognized, but also in their limited access to productive resources and support services such as health and education. The focus of this paper is on issues concerning gender disparities in the context of India so as to examine the nature of prevalent discrimination and biases against women.⁴

Results Discussion

Constitution of India not only grants equality to women but also enforces continues measures of positive discrimination in favour of women. Our government always strives for women’s advancement in different spheres. In that way 12th five year plan adopted and implemented numerous schemes which focuses on feminine gender equality and female empowerment.⁵

It is clear from the above cited information is that our government is keen in feminine advancement. All these schemes have a positive impact on female advancement. Girl baby’s birth rate which was considered as negative in many parts of India, government awareness programs had changed this negativity. Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) though has decreased considerably during 2007 to 2016.

Table 1: Infant Mortality Rate

Year	Female	Male	Total
2012	44	41	42
2013	42	39	40
2014	40	37	39
2015	39	35	37
2016	36	33	34

Source: Ministry of Women and Child Development

Literacy rate of girls as also witnessed a remarkable growth in this 12th five year plan which is evident from the below data.

Table 2: Literacy and Education

Indicators	Gender	Ratio
Literacy 2011	Total	73.0%
	Female	64.6%
	Male	80.9%
Gross Enrolment Ratio at Primary level–2015-16	Total	99.2%
	Female	100.7%
	Male	97.9%
Gross Enrolment Ratio at Upper Primary–2015-16	Total	92.8%
	Female	97.6%
	Male	88.7%
Gross Enrolment Ratio at Secondary level–2015-16	Total	80.0%
	Female	81%
	Male	79.2%
Gross Enrolment Ratio at Higher Secondary Level–2015-16	Total	56.2%
	Female	56.4%
	Male	56%

Source: Ministry of Women and Child Development.

Women’s mean age at marriage at all India level is 22.1 years and the same in rural and urban areas are 21.6 years and 23.0 years respectively. The women’s mean age at marriage has shown an increasing trend in all the major States and at all India level it has increased from 21.2 to 22.1 years during 2011 to 2015. This gives an opportunity for the women to set up their career and be financially independent. For female growth to be inclusive government must create adequate

livelihood opportunities and add to decent employment commensurate. 12th five year plan as sited above has introduced various new schemes and enhanced existing schemes to encourage livelihood opportunities.⁶

In 2011, the Workforce Participation Rate at all India level was 25.51% for females and 53.26% for males. The current work force the number of female entrepreneurs has doubled over

Table 3: Workforce Participation

Participation in Economy		
Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) (15+ years) 2015-16	Total	52.40%
	Female	27.40%
	Male	75.50%
Unemployment Rate (15+ years) 2015-16	Total	3.70%
	Female	5.80%
	Male	3.00%
Worker Population Ratio (15+ years) 2015-16	Total	50.50%
	Female	25.80%
	Male	73.30%

Source: Ministry of Women and Child Development

The past ten years to about 10 million mostly due to the rise in enterprises. Their share rose in all sector and women now account large percent in total entrepreneurs.

Table 4: Women Enterprises

Year	Indicators	Registered Sector	Unregistered Sector	Economic Census-2005*	Total
2010-11	No of Women Enterprises (in lakh)	2.15 (13.72%)	-	6.40 (4.34%)	8.55 (18.06%)
2015-16	No of Women Enterprises (in lakh)	2.15 (13.72%)	18.06 (9.09%)	6.40 (4.34%)	26.61 (7.36%)

Source: Ministry of Women and Child Development

Female owned enterprise had experienced a drastic growth in this last five years. This increased female enterprise has positive impact on employment generation results in reduction of income inequalities. Twelfth Plan has to meet the aspirations of millions of young men and women.⁷

Gender Inequality in India: The Ministry of Women and Child Development is administering following schemes for gender equality socio-economic development of women. Swadhar and Short Stay Homes to provide relief and rehabilitation to destitute women and women in distress. Support to Training and Employment Program for Women (STEP) to ensure sustainable employment and income generation for marginalized and asset-less rural and urban poor women across the country. Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) to provide micro-finance services to bring about the socio-economic upliftment of poor women. National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW) to strengthen the

overall processes that promotes all-round Development of Women. 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. One Stop Centre to provide integrated support and assistance to women affected by violence. ⁸ Scheme for Universalisation of Women Helpline intended to provide 24 hours immediate and emergency response to women affected by violence. 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 MatritvaSahyogYojana (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.⁹

Conclusion

In nutshell, various welfare programs are implemented by government to secure female gender and in favour of women empower. It is even apt to say that government took 360 degree measure to have positive discrimination for female. This five year plan witnessed remarkable growth in female gender but still there are lots more to overcome, government has to pay more heed to elevate females. Education is the most important way to erase gender inequality. So, steps must be taken in order to promote education among women. Women should be given free education up to post-graduate level. Every girl must get the opportunity to go to school. Sufficient number of seats must be reserved for the eligible women candidates for services in all autonomous institutions, semi-government and government institutions. More police protections should be given around cities and

towns especially during nights so that the employed women can move on freely to complete their tasks. More political and decision making power must be given in the hands of women.

Ethical Clearance: Completed

Source of Funding: Self

Conflict of Interest: Nil

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