

# Gender Discrimination and its Impact on Women's Development in India

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## **Abstract**

*Gender is a broad term, but gender discrimination is limited to women because women are the only victims of gender discrimination. Females make up nearly half of the total population, but they are underrepresented in public life. Recognizing women's rights and having faith in their abilities are critical for women's empowerment and development. This research looks at gender discrimination in India, its various manifestations, and its causes. This paper also discusses the importance of women's development, women's legislation, and solutions to gender discrimination.*

**Keywords:** *Gender discrimination, women's development, legislation for women, education, employment, economic independence, empowerment, decision making and self-confidence.*

## **Introduction**

Gender is a broad term, but gender discrimination is limited to women because women are the only victims of gender discrimination. Gender discrimination is not biologically determined, but rather socially determined, and it is changeable through appropriate and ongoing efforts. Gender discrimination is the denial of equality, rights, and opportunities, as well as oppression in any form, based on gender. Females make up half of the world's population. They perform two-thirds of all work in the world but receive only one-tenth of total global income. Nearly two-thirds of women are illiterate, and they own only one percent of the world's assets. Only one-fourth of all families in the world are headed by a woman. India is a country.

## **Causes of Gender Inequalities in India**

Discriminations from web to death females are facing lots of discrimination against them. Some of them are:

- Abortion of female gravida with the help of scanning.
- Foeticide (By giving liquid extract from cactus / opuntia, giving raw paddy to new born female baby, by pressing the face by pillow or by breaking the female baby's neck)
- Not giving enough and nutritious food
- Not allowing to go to school (Denial of education)
- Not giving needy health care while in ill health
- Early marriage
- Eve teasing, Rape and Sexual

- harassment
- Dowry
- Divorce, Destitution even for silly or without any reason.
- Causes of Gender Discrimination
- The causes of gender discrimination are
- Educational backwardness
- Caste
- Religious beliefs
- Culture
- On the name
- of family history
- Customs and beliefs
- Races
- Low-income
- Unemployment
- Society
- Family situation and Attitudes Like male or even above them female play's important role in the family and national development. But her contribution is not recognized by the male dominant society.

### **Importance of Women's Development**

Females account for nearly half of the total population, but they are underrepresented in public life. Most of the household work is still done by women. Her primary role in society is often viewed as that of a housewife.

The cardinal goals of democracy, "of the people, by the people, and for the people," cannot be fully realised if the female population is excluded from political participation. Women's subordination in society acts as a structural barrier to their participation in political activities. This limitation applies to all classes and communities of women. Another constraint in this regard is prevalent culture, which is very complicated and frequently makes decisions behind the scenes.

Recognizing and believing in women's rights and abilities is critical for women's empowerment and development. Females should recognise their own abilities and potentials, which will boost their self-esteem and confidence to act in life. Political empowerment does not simply imply the right to play a role silently, but also the right to discuss, share, and empower politics by understanding its pros and cons, and thus to influence policies and decision making.

Empowering women is fundamental to human rights because she does not want to beg for power or seek a power hierarchy in order to exercise power over others. On the contrary, she demands that she be recognised as a human first. She as a person in command of herself, with equal access to all physical, social, economic, political, cultural, and spiritual resources, is a prerequisite for considering the entire issue of empowerment.

Male chauvinism has been inherited in Indian society, but the society has begun to recognise women's importance and has accepted women's empowerment, women as active agents for development, participation in and guiding their own development.

## **Legislations for Women**

Several laws, legislations, policies, and institutional reforms have been enacted in India to carry out the gender action plan for women's development. Legislation is an important tool for bringing about change in India's unequal economic and social status. Few laws were passed in pre-independence India in response to social demands and with humanitarian considerations. They are the Bengal Sati Regulation Act of 1829 and similar Anti-Sati laws in Madras and Bombay, the Hindu Widow Remarriage Act of 1856, the Hindu Women's Right to Property Act of 1937, the Shariat Act of 1937, and the Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act of 1939.

Following independence, significant changes in legislation and litigation facilitated increased participation of women in political activities as well as socioeconomic development activities, and the increase appears to be more likely at the lower levels of decision making than at the highest levels.

Article 14 of the Indian Constitution states that the state shall not deny any person equality before or equal protection of the law, Article 15 states that no woman shall be discriminated against based on sex, Article 15 (3) states that the state shall make special provisions for women and children, and Article 16 states that the state shall provide equality of opportunity in matters relating to employment.

Article 39(a) emphasises that citizens, men and women alike, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood; Article 39(d) states that the state should secure equal pay for equal work for both men and women; and Article 34 states that the state shall make provisions for securing just and humane working conditions and maternity relief.

The 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Indian Constitution, enacted in 1993, are a watershed moment in Indian history, granting significant powers to local governments. It paves the way for decentralisation and empowers both the poor and women.

According to these amendments, not less than one-third of the seats meant for direct election of members at each tier of Panchayats are to be reserved for women, as are one-third of the chairperson seats at any level.

## **Review of Literature**

Sonale Desai (1994) observed that parents' reluctance to educate daughters has its roots in the situation of women. Parents have several incentives for not educating their daughters. Foremost is the view that education of girls brings no returns to parents and that their future roles, being mainly reproductive and perhaps including agricultural labour, require no formal education.

Kalyani Menon Sen and A. K. Shivakumar (2001) found that girls in India are discriminated against in several ways – fewer months of breastfeeding less of nurturing and play, less care or medical treatment if they fall ill, less of “special” food, less of parental attention. As a result,

girls are far more susceptible than boys to disease and infections, leading to poor health and a shorter lifespan. It is this life-long discrimination in nurturing and care that is the real killer of girls – less visible and dramatic, but as unequivocally lethal as female foeticide and infanticide.

Berta Esteve – Volart (2004) described that gender discrimination against women in the market place reduces the available talent in an economy, which has negative economic consequences. Gender discrimination takes many forms. Many social practices seen as normal from a religious or cultural point of view (which may have deep historical roots) have women out of the economic mainstream. These social practices may have profound economic consequences because they do not allow society to take advantage of the talent inherent in women.

Anna-Maria Lind (2006) stated that India's population still leads traditional lives in rural areas. Religious laws and traditions still determine the lives of many people, particularly women. Even if women are formerly entitled to own land and resources social and religious factors make many women refrain from this right in order not to cause distortions within the family. The preference for having sons permeates all social classes in India, which sets the standard for girls throughout their entire lives.

GOI Planning Commission (2008) indicated that discrimination against women and girls impinges upon their right to health and manifests itself in the form of worsening health and nutrition indices. Thus, India continues to grapple with unacceptably high MMR, IMR, and increasing rates of anaemia, malnutrition, HIV/AIDS among women.

Julie Mullin (2008) indicated that the developing world is full of poverty-stricken families who see their daughters as an economic predicament. That attitude has resulted in the widespread neglect to baby girls in Africa, Asia, and South America. In many communities, it is a regular practice to breastfeed girls for a shorter time than boys so that women can try to get pregnant again with a boy as soon as possible. As a result, girls miss out on life-giving nutrition during a crucial window of their development, which stunts their growth and weakens their resistance to disease.

## **The Need for Awareness**

In India, women are treated as second-class citizens, and the situation is deteriorating. Gender equality in the country is abysmal. According to a World Economic Forum (WEF) report, India ranked 134th out of 145 countries in terms of gender parity in 2018, down from 130th in 2017. This is, without a doubt, a wake-up call for all of us. We must all work together to help women overcome discrimination. We need to raise awareness of Indian women's legal rights. Care India is one of many organisations that work to raise awareness about women's rights and equality. We must vigorously support such organisations that work to provide women with equal opportunities and rights.

Furthermore, we must change the mindset of people, particularly men, who still believe that women are inferior to them. We must instil in everyone the concept of women's empowerment. We have established a process for improving and promoting women's social, political, and economic status. We must focus our efforts primarily on five major issues:

- Give women access to education just like men
- Give women opportunities to be in power and achieve economic success.
- Stop the violence and sexual assault against women.
- End child marriages
- Aware women about women's rights in India

By focusing on these five major points, we can hope to achieve gender equality in our society. It is not difficult or impossible; we can all do it together.

## **Solution for Gender Discrimination**

The government, voluntary organisations, and a variety of social activities are carrying out various movements and programmes for women's development and against gender discrimination. The E4 SD factor would be extremely useful in resolving the gender discrimination issue. These are the E4 SD factors.

### **Education**

Education develops the skills, imparts knowledge, changes the attitude, and improves the self-confidence. It provides employment opportunity and increases income. Hence educating women is the prime factor to combat gender discriminate and for the upliftment of women. Not only the female, the society must be educated to give equal right for female.

### **Employment**

Employment gives the income and improves the economic position of the women. Employed women are given importance by the family members. Employment gives the economic independence for the women.

### **Economic Independence**

In India, mostly, women in the young age – depends her father, in the middle age- she depends on her husband and in the older age – depends on her son. Woman always depends on somebody for her livelihoods hence, independent in economic aspects are imperative for women's development.

Economic independence will free the women from the slavery position and boost the self-confidence. Economic independence of women also helps in the national economic development

### **Empowerment**

Empowering women with the help of laws, education and employment will make the society to accept the women as an equal gender like male. Female also has all the potential and empowering women will help to use her full capability and mitigate the economic dependency of women.

## **Self-confidence**

Due to prolonged suppressant, Indian women, an especially uneducated and unemployed woman has not had the self-confidence. Women need self-confidence to fight against all the atrocities against her and to live self-esteemed life. Hence, boosting the morale and self-confidence of the women, is the key to eliminate the inferior complex of her

## **Decision Making**

Even in the family as well as in the society the decision-making power of women is denied. Mostly males make the importance decision in the family and in the society. This makes women as voice less and destroys herself confidence and she feel less important in the family as well as in the society. So, to end gender discrimination women must empower with decision making power.

## **Conclusion**

A nation or society cannot develop without the participation of women. If we eliminate gender discrimination, women will contribute all their potential, skills, and knowledge to the development of the family, the nation, and the entire world.

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