

TO STUDY GENDER INEQUALITIES IN DIFFERENT AREAS OF SOCIETY*Principal: Dr. Reni Francis**Student teachers: Miss Disha Kanojia**MES's Pillai College of Education and Research, Chembur*

Gender inequality refers to unequal treatment or perception of individuals based on their sex. It reflects and manifests in numerous dimensions of our life. Gender inequality and resultant discrimination in varying degrees on the grounds of sex are commonly witnessed, admitted and even justified in India. Despite the policy measures to overcome gender discrimination, gender inequalities within the family, higher education and at work place still exist. Most of the forms of discrimination against women have their roots in patriarchal system and its values. Women are dominated over by their male members in their own family. They have little power in making decisions. The present paper proposes to examine the nature and extent of gender inequality within the family, higher education and work place. The main objectives of the study are to analyze the power dimensions of women in family and work place and to examine their participation in decision-making process. The study considers the gender inequality that exists among every religion and social class prevents the growth of Indian education systems. The reality of gender inequality of higher education in India is very complex and diversified, because it exists in every field like education, employment opportunities, income, health, cultural issues, social issues, economic issues etc. An attempt has been made to find out those factors which are responsible for this problem in Indian education systems. So, this paper highlights the multi-dimensional context of gender inequalities prevalent in Indian society. Overall, the study indicates the inequality in economic, social, educational aspects in the Indian society. The researchers have tried to suggest some relevant strategies and policies implication for reducing this gender inequality and to promote the dignified position for Indian women.

GENDER INEQUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION:-

Probably the most important problem faced by the higher education system in India is the persistence of inequalities in access to higher education. It is a cyclic chain of Inequalities: inequalities in access to higher education result in inequities in access to labor market information, which result in inequalities in employment and participation in labor market, resulting in inequalities in earnings contributing in turn to socio-economic and political inequalities. The socio-economic and political inequalities again are translated into the education sector, resulting in inequalities in

Women constitute 43 per cent of the total enrollments in higher education in 2011–12, while there were only 14 women per 100 men in higher education in 1950–51, according to the available UGCs statistics (UGC, 2013). Thus, compared to the earlier decades, this marks a significant improvement. While this 43 per cent is an all-India average across all disciplines of study, there are wide variations between different states and also across disciplines. Women students constitute 11 per cent in engineering/technology, 4 per cent in medicine and less than 5 per cent in education. Nevertheless, the overall level of participation of women in higher education has improved remarkably and the current overall level is quite impressive. Further, research studies (for example, Besant and Sen.

2012) have also shown that ‘after controlling for other factors, the chances of women participating in higher education are higher than that of men meaning the generally observed inequalities by gender in higher education need to be interpreted with caution. The gross enrollment ratio among men increased from 10.9 per cent in 1983–84 to 27 per cent in 2009–10 it increased by 2.5 times in about two decades and a half. In contrast, only 19 per cent of the women in the relevant age groupware enrolled in higher education in 2009–10. But what is strikingly clear is: there has a rapid progress in the enrollment ratio among women compared to men. The gross enrollment ratio forewomen increased by more than four times. As a result, gender inequalities in gross enrollment ratio have come down very significantly during this period. The available estimates on net enrollment ratios, however,

indicate that between 1999–2000 and 2004–05, the increase in enrollment ratios is very small in case of both men and women; hardly it increased by 2 per cent points in either case, and the level of inequality remained the same. The male–female differences are much less in case of eligible enrollment ratios. While 49 per cent of eligible girls join higher education institutions, the corresponding ratio is marginally higher for men, 56 per cent, a difference of about 7 per cent points. Inequalities in access to education reflect loss in individual as well as social welfare.

Women and their position in the family:-

Children cannot inherit their caste or surname of their mother. In spite of education of women, they occupy an inferior position in family. Important decisions like pregnancy, size of family, purchase and ownership of property, vehicles and cell phone etc. are mostly taken by male members. Economically Independent women are also helpless. They begin their day at the crack of dawn. They take care of entire family, send children to school, pack their husbands' lunch and go to the vehicle stand to catch overcrowded vehicle for reaching at work places. They have to perform their duties equivalent to their male counterparts. On returning home they have to complete all their household works and have to manage the same routine of the next day. The works they do at home are uncountable. Their works are not considered as productive work by family. The household work and childcare are not considered "work". This invisibility towards women's labor fails to get them their due weightage in the family. Wife is the possession of husband. He has full right of her. According to Manu. "In childhood a woman must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband and when her lord is dead, to her sons. A woman must never be independent". In most of the times women are the convenient and easy prey of men because of their economic and social dependence. It is not only case of illiterate and economically dependent women but also the case of educated / uneducated employed women. Severe incidents of wife – beating cases are seen in our society which is mostly in connection with dowry. It is a medium to extract money or property from the relatives of married women even in excess of what was already negotiated. This sometimes leads to death of victimized women. Here the oppression of girl child does not end. When the girl child goes to school she faces the problem of sexual harassment. Even the child of 3 years is sexually tortured. Presently news papers bring out news concerning sexual assaults given by teachers, tuition masters, distant relatives, passerby bus conductors, auto drivers etc. Sometimes girls commit suicide after being raped or getting sexual offence. In some cases girls and even married women are raped and put to death mercilessly and thrown into the river or roadside bare bodied. Our civilized society hides itself and goes away without giving any help to those dying and dead follows. Women in the name of religious and socio-cultural practices have been denied opportunities of growth. To think equality of sexes is an illusion. Women historically have never been given the required importance in India be it in the field of agriculture, production, construction, politics and education, History is full of stories of exploitation, humiliation and suppression. Indian woman has a multifaceted personality. She is the centre around which the whole world revolves. She is hard working and works with dedication. She shares most of the duties and responsibilities of her family. She strongly influences the moral, social and creative development of her children. She is dutiful and housekeeping, childrearing, assisting in agriculture and in industry. But we are treating them as second class citizens. Oppression, rape, humiliation, disrespect are rewards for women. We are torturing women from cradle to grave. To quote Phillip kauri, Tirana, 2012 in this context, "when she takes birth, you become gloomy, when she sits back home, you call her crazy, when she marries you, you burn her; but can you live without her? Your daughter, your mother? your sister? Your wife?"

Gender inequality is a far reaching social impairment. Law is becoming lawless where women versus men are involved. (Justice Krishna Iyer). Time has ripened to analyze the causes of gender disparity, which give a low status to women. Efforts should be taken for empowering women which may help them to move out from a weak position and to exercise their power like men. They should be given free and compulsory education so that they can claim

their rights. They should be educated enough to exercise their opinion in taking decision in the matters of marriage, family size, household developmental activities, work situations and even community activities, national and international debates and discussions. Autonomy and power to maintain strong functioning position and to control their lives must be given to them. They should be made agents of their own development and be able to set their own aims and be strengthened to challenge and change their inferior position in the society. Then they will be freed from exploitation, social injustice and inequality. Women empowerment is not an automatic and spontaneous process. It requires efforts deliberately and consistently from all human beings in all walks of life.

Women at work place:-

Gender inequality at workplace is seen even today. The men usually hold the higher position and the women often hold lower paid positions. A very common problem women face at workplace is sexual harassment. While the #MeToo movement has helped to bring a light on this issue through which many women have opened up on how they are subjected to this type of mistreatment.

Due to either no earning or low earning activities of women their contributions to the society go unnoticed. The Five Year Strategic Plan of Ministry of Women and Child Development for 2011-16 notes that workforce participation rate of women in rural area is 31% where as it is 55% for men. In urban area this rate is 14% for women as compared to 54% for men. Women's share of organized sector and public sector is less than 20%. Their share in Central Government employment is less than 8%. Many women are working in domestic sector in India. About 10% of the female population over the age of 12 are employed in domestic service. It is second largest employment of women after agricultural labor. The women working as fulltime servants are harassed physically, psychologically and sometimes, sexually. Some women also serve as part time servants. After sexual harassment they are killed by super killers. In some cases they are underpaid. When the part time domestic woman worker comes to her own house after a day's work, her dirty home with hazardous environment waits her which damage her own children's life who do not attend school. In some corporate sectors women are given less amount of wages than men laborers'. In the field of politics their number is very low. Less than 11% seats of Parliament are held by women. There have been 5 women judges, of Supreme Court since Independence.

Conclusion: Based on the above discussion it can be concluded that a country like India has a long way to go before it can call itself a 'gender neutral' country. Possibly, the change will come only by creating awareness first in the family on how women have to be treated and as teachers we can bring a change in education by creating awareness in the classroom on gender equality. No government, be it state or central, can by itself bring long-lasting change. Government authorities, Education system and society as a whole need to come together to act to close the gender gap, and a system of accountability should be put in place to record the aid they provide.

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