

Impact of Gender Discrimination and Measures to Help Reduce Gender Discrimination in Indian Setting

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Abstract—The old, customary and prevailing practice of preferring one gender over the other since time of birth due to biological differences associated with the gender is called gender discrimination. It exists in all the societies of world so in India. This research paper endeavors to reflect the impact of gender discrimination in Indian setting and measures initiated by the government to help reduce gender discrimination. The present study is based on content analysis. The impact of gender discrimination in Indian setting is unbalanced sex ratio due to female feticide, honor killing, premarital and post marital suicide in addition to exploitation of female gender in all spheres of social activity, taking undue advantage of the belief that female gender is weak and delicate creature. In spite of various measures initiated to help reduce gender discrimination by both the governments (Central and State), gender discrimination remains a social problem until now. Gender discrimination is built into the social structure of Indian society in such a way that it is passed down from generation to generation like culture. As such it has remained constant source of violence, oppression, depression and injustice. Both genders are born equal and they should be treated so. There should be no discrimination on the basis of gender. It has neither moral sanction nor legal approval. The need of an hour is to shed away the orthodoxy related to gender and adopt the practices and courses of action having gender inequality resistance at their core.

Keywords: Measures, Reduce, Impact, Gender, Discrimination

Introduction

Gender Discrimination

Gender is a general term but gender discrimination has feminine affiliation for certain reasons-biological, social and the like. The old, customary and prevailing practice of preferring one gender over the other since time of birth is called gender discrimination. It exists in all the societies of world so in India. In patriarchal societies like Indian society, gender discrimination is more pronounced (C. N. Shankar Rao, 2011).

Denial of equality, rights and opportunity to girls and women is at the root of gender discrimination (Garima Bastola, 2007).

The various causes of gender discrimination in India are educational backwardness, unemployment, low income, religious beliefs, customs, family situation, attitudes, caste, racial affiliations (Marimuthu Sivakumar, 2008) and technology like sonography (Garima Bastola, 2007).

Discussion

Review of Literature

Government of India Planning Commission (2008) reports that discriminatory attitude against female gender has led to encroachment upon their right to health. It is apparent in the form of worsening health and nutrition indices.

Julie Mullin (2008) reveals that the poverty struck families in the developing world visualize their daughters as an economic trouble. This attitude towards female gender results in widespread neglect of baby girls in Asia, Africa and South America.

Anna-Maria Lind (2006) states social norms and traditions still regulate the lives of many people in Indian condition, particularly of women. Son preference pervades all social classes in India, which sets the standard for girls throughout their whole lives.

Berta Esteve – Volart (2004) describes that gender discrimination has kept women out of economic mainstream and is paving the choicest way for wastage of available talent in an economy.

Sonalde Desai (1994) observed that parents reluctant to educate daughters because they hold view that education of girl children brings no returns to them in addition to their belief the future roles of their daughters are primarily reproductive and agricultural labor.

Objectives

1. To study the impact of gender discrimination in Indian setting.

2. To study the impact of measures initiated by Indian government to help reduce gender discrimination.
3. To suggest the measure to achieve gender neutrality in Indian condition.

Methodology

The present study is based on content analysis. Books, news paper articles, Google scholar, Research Gate and Wikipedia are used as data bases.

Impact of Gender Discrimination in India

Vast and heinous impact of gender discrimination is reported by researchers in Indian scenario. It is reflected in the following lines. Skewed sex ratio due to female feticide, honor killing, suicide and murder is the most rampant impact of gender discrimination. Number of girls per thousand boys is decreasing with each passing decade. Violation of rights of female gender both at home and outside the home by way of discrimination in attention, food, dress, work, health care and opportunities for advancement is another impact of female gender discrimination in India. Economic exploitation of female sex by giving women work force much work and paying them less wages or salary than male workers especially in unorganized sector is attributed to female gender discrimination (C. N. Shankar Rao, 2011). Eve teasing, rape and sexual harassment of female gender by violating all norms of modesty is another tentacle of female gender discrimination in Indian situation (Catherine Verniers & Jorge Vala, 2018). Denial of fair share in property and denial of education is also attributed to female gender discrimination in Indian scenario (Sumanjeet Singh, 2017). Usage of female physique in a cheap manner to get publicity of the products to earn hefty sums by the advertising firms is the new approach adopted and practiced to strengthen gender discrimination. Little political representation due to less reservation since independence reflects the impact of gender discrimination in political sphere of the country (Altaf Hussain, 2019). Early marriage, easy divorce, desertion, destitution are other aspects of gender discrimination in Indian setting. Girls belonging to Brahmin and Kshatri families are compelled for early age marriage without their consent, especially (Samira Luitel, 1992). Gender discrimination affects the capacity of women to participate fully and freely in various spheres of social activity and in turn causes psychological harm (Samidha Pokharel, 2008).

Impact of Measures to Help Reduce Gender Discrimination in India

Government of India has initiated a number of measures to help reduce gender discrimination since independence. The eminent ones include The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971 to regulate termination of pregnancy by registered medical practitioners, The National Plan of Action for Girl Child, 1991-2000 for survival, protection and development of girl child, National Commission for Women, 1992 to

safeguard rights of women, 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 to empower women through political participation, Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994 to curb the brutal unhealthy practice of early sex determination, National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, 2001 for advancement, development and empowerment of women. Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act, 2002 to regulate pre-natal diagnostic techniques, Sarva Shiksha Aabhiyan to provide free elementary education to the girl child and Beti Bacho, Beti Parao, 2015 to end the gender selective abortion of female fetus. These measures do serve the intended purpose and the situation is improving. Still a lot remains to be done in this direction to eradicate the cancerous menace associated with the fair gender as is reflected by India's low ranking with respect to gender gap on the global indexes like World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index (GGI), 2014, The Global Financial Inclusion Index (Global Findex, 2014), UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI), 2015 (Sumanjeet Singh, 2017 and V. Chakraborty, 2019).

Conclusion

It can be stated conclusively in the light of present study that gender discrimination is the pervasive phenomenon in male dominated societies across globe and Indian patriarchal society is no exception to it. In India gender discrimination is cultural tradition and is accepted by females and applied by males as social value. Son birth preference is the communal common. Gender discrimination in various forms starts right after the birth of female child and continues throughout the life. Discrimination against female sex is so deeply rooted in the Indian society that it establishes the male- female hierarchy in which females are considered as secondary to males. There are different extant sets of behaviors reserved for male and female sex due to gender discrimination. It has helped to create many rigid gender norms that limit female opportunities and choke their development in the private and public field. Gender discrimination is built into the social fabric of Indian society in such a way that it is passed down from generation to generation like culture. As such it has remained constant source of violence, oppression, depression and injustice. Gender inequality not only limits women's access to resources and opportunities but also jeopardize the life prospects of the prospective generation.

In spite of various measures initiated to help reduce gender discrimination by Indian government, gender discrimination remains a social problem until now due to half hearted response of the target group towards gender discrimination reduction measures, pitiable implementation of earmarked measures by administrative machinery and intact orthodox attitude of society toward gender.

Suggestion

Both genders are born equal and they should be treated so. There should be no discrimination on the basis of gender. It

has neither moral sanction nor legal approval. The need of an hour is to shed away the orthodoxy related to gender and adopt as well as perpetuate the practices and courses of action having gender inequality resistance at their core. With elimination of gender discrimination all the potentials, skills and knowledge of female gender can be best harvested to develop the basic social unit, the family as well as nation and world community.

Acknowledgement

The author owes a favor to Naila Aziz. Without her perennial inspiration and solid back up this research toil cannot shape up. It would be diligence at the end of author not to express sincere thanks to parents and sisters for keeping him motivated till finishing point of this research work despite of ongoing political turmoil in the valley of Kashmir.

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