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## THE GENDER EQUALITY AS A POTENTIAL FOR SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

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### ABSTRACT

Discriminatory social institutions that restrict women's access to opportunities, resources and power explain slow progress towards gender equality. They influence collective understanding of what are acceptable attitudes and behaviours for women and men. Social institutions influence decisions, choices and behaviours of groups, communities and individuals. They consist of both informal constraints. However, the promise of gender equality remains unfulfilled. **Gender equality is still a long way away.** The study aims to strengthen the national statistical capacities and transferring expertise on how to measure discriminatory social norms.

A gradual change is now visible in modern-day India, and this can be seen in large cities. Women have found employment in fields that have been traditionally considered male dominated. But though they have shone in every field, they face discrimination at every level of employment or promotion. In rural India, things continue to be discriminatory. Today, the thrust is directed more towards equality. These are focused on equal social, political and economic opportunities, as well as equal rights and legal protections for women in the Indian society.

The objectives and the relevance of the paper. The main objectives are listed below :

1. To know the level of progress towards gender equality
2. To understand the discriminatory nature of social institutions that restrict women's rights and access to empowerment opportunities
3. To analyse the challenges of gender based discrimination in social norms
4. To identify the potentialities and power of women influencing the changes at the global level of progress and development

The relevance of the study It is important and crucial to sensitize men at a young age so they become an integral part in bringing about a transformation for women in society. When men start respecting women and accepting them as equals, a lot of gender-based inequalities will reduce considerably. Gender sensitization initiatives are, therefore, very important. Educating children from an early age about the importance of gender equality could be a meaningful start in that direction. Achieving equality would mean empowering women. Empowerment of women means equipping them to be economically independent, self-reliant, in addition to providing positive self-esteem to face any difficult situation.

**Key words :** Attitudes, Behaviours, Social institutions, Communities and Individuals, Equal rights and legal protections, Gender sensitization

## 1. Introduction

They influence collective understanding of what are acceptable attitudes and behaviours for women and men. Social institutions influence decisions, choices and behaviours of groups, communities and individuals. They consist of both informal constraints. However, the promise of gender equality remains unfulfilled. **Gender equality is still a long way away.** But though they have shone in every field, they face discrimination at every level of employment or promotion. In rural India, things continue to be discriminatory. A gradual change is now visible in modern-day India, and this can be seen in large cities. Women have found employment in fields that have been traditionally considered male dominated.

Today, the thrust is directed more towards equality. These are focused on equal social, political and economic opportunities, as well as equal rights and legal protections for women in the Indian society. Gender discrimination has a significant impact on mental and physical health worldwide. It can limit peoples' access to healthcare, increase rates of ill health, and lower life expectancy. While it is true that women live longer than men on average, they experience higher rates of ill health during their lifetimes. It is likely that gender discrimination and inequity contribute to this.

When men start respecting women and accepting them as equals, a lot of gender-based inequalities will reduce considerably. Gender sensitization initiatives are, therefore, very important. Educating children from an early age about the importance of gender equality could be a meaningful start in that direction. Achieving equality would mean empowering women. Gender discrimination can also lead to a person having worse living conditions and less access to the things that they need to survive and thrive.

## 2. Objectives

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### **3. Methodology**

The data is drawn by adopting the Primary and Secondary data, is collected through the Observation techniques and also from various different news papers, research reports, journals, and websites and research papers and also through informal Interview method.

### **4. Review of literature.**

According Gaucher and others, 2011 study focuses on gendered wording in job announcements. The study shows that when job ads mostly include words associated with male stereotypes (e.g. 'leader', 'competitive' and 'dominant') they are found less appealing by women compared to job ads that mostly include words associated with female stereotypes (e.g. 'support', 'understand', and 'interpersonal'). Therefore, job ads with more "masculine" wording reinforce gender inequality in traditionally male-dominated occupations and thereby amount to "institutional-level mechanism of inequality maintenance"

According cross-cultural 2015 study found that across 48 nations, men had higher self-esteem on average than women. One explanation for this is the widespread influence of gender roles, stereotypes, and the emphasis on women's physical appearance in certain countries, such as the U.S.

According to WHO 2001 Gender on its own and through interaction with other structural determinants (class, ethnicity, educational levels etc.) has also been acknowledged as an important risk factor for depression and other mental health disorders.

According to Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (2008) affirmed that "any development initiative has to engage and ensure that both men and women contribute and benefit equally from it." The researcher, being firmly convinced by this assumption, further argues that women should be empowered and equally allowed to contribute to and benefit from all dimensions of development so as to bring about sustainability.

### **5. To know the level of progress towards gender equality**

Women are underrepresented in power and decision-making roles. They receive unequal pay for equal work and they continue to be targets of physical and sexual abuse. Additionally, women-owned enterprises are economically disadvantaged and lack equal opportunity to compete for business opportunities. Women also face legal and other barriers that affect their opportunities at work and as entrepreneurs. A growing number of business leaders recognize the importance of women as leaders, consumers, entrepreneurs,

workers and caretakers. They are adapting their policies, programmes and initiatives to create environments where women and girls thrive. Empowering women and girls helps expand economic growth, promote social development and establish more stable and just societies. Women's economic empowerment benefits both women and children. It is pivotal to the health and social development of families, communities and nations.

Women across the globe heeded our call to pivot as a result of COVID-19 and demonstrate what we know to be the strength of women – adaptability and flexibility. They illustrated this by utilising this platform to inspire and empower other women in a time of uncertainty, despair, and turmoil by honing in on their wisdom, experience, insights, and expertise to offer value to others in this time.

#### **6. To understand the nature of the discrimination of social institutions that restrict women's rights and access to empowerment opportunities**

Gender inequality in organizations is a complex phenomenon that can be seen in organizational structures, processes, and practices. This includes leadership, structure, strategy, culture, organizational climate, as well as policies. In addition, organizational decision makers' levels of sexism can affect their likelihood of making gender biased related decisions and/or behaving in a sexist manner while enacting practices. Importantly, institutional discrimination in organizational structures, processes, and practices play a pre-eminent role because not only do they affect practices, they also provide a socializing context for organizational decision makers' levels of hostile and benevolent sexism. Although we portray gender inequality as a self-reinforcing system that can perpetuate discrimination, important levers for reducing discrimination are identified.

The workplace has sometimes been referred to as an inhospitable place for women due to the multiple forms of gender inequalities present. Some examples of how workplace discrimination negatively affects women's earnings and opportunities are the gender wage gap the dearth of women in leadership and the longer time required for women (vs. men) to advance in their careers.

Furthermore, individual women can work to avoid stigmatization. Women in the workplace are not simply passive targets of stereotyping processes. People belonging to stigmatized groups can engage in a variety of anti-stigmatization techniques, but their response options are constrained by the cultural repertoires available to them. In other words, an organization's culture will provide its members with a collective imaginary for

how to behave. For instance, it might be unimaginable for a woman to file a complaint of sexual harassment if she knows that complaints are never taken seriously. Individuals do negotiate stigmatization processes; however, this is more likely when stigmatization is perceived as illegitimate and when they have the resources to do so. Thus, at an individual level, people engage in strategies to fight being discriminated against but these strategies are likely more constrained for those who are most stigmatized.

## **7. To analyses the challenges of gender based discrimination in social norms**

Women have been relegated to the domestic sphere, while gender roles have depicted men as more fit for public life, leadership positions, activities in business, politics, and academia. Children can be socialized from an early age to believe that women and men have different and proper gender roles in society. Those children may then grow up to perpetuate the existence of these damaging and restrictive roles in society. An example of this process is the differences in toys marketed to boys and girls. This shows that when adults think of a baby as a boy, they give the baby toy vehicles, action figures or construction equipment, and when they consider the baby to be a girl they offer her dolls and kitchen sets. As demonstrated in this sayings such as "run like a girl" or "throw like a girl" teach girls that they are physically weaker than boys and are also insulting to girls. It is important to note that these gender roles are limiting for everyone - while girls are taught that they are physically weaker ("run like a girl"), boys are taught that they are emotionally weaker ("boys don't cry"). These views of gender roles, and the socialization that keeps them alive, have led to discrimination against women in public life, as they are often seen as inappropriately defying their assigned gender role. Essentially, the power structure at the basis of discrimination and violence against women is reinforced through the process of internalizing stereotypes and gender roles.

Women and girls can be victims of sexual harassment in the home, the workplace, in school, and the larger community, among other places. Examples of such harassment could be unwanted touching, comments of a sexually suggestive nature, rude or offensive comments about one's gender identity or gender expression, questions prying into the personal private life about their sexual history or orientation, just to name a few. Boys can also be victims of sexual harassment, with the harassers almost always being men.

This illustrates that sexual violence stems from male supremacy over what is considered undervalued or what can be dominated through the body. It is important to emphasize the effects of this patriarchal power, which is expressed in everything that is

considered undervalued and hierarchized by that supremacy. Gender discrimination describes the situation in which people are treated differently simply because they are male or female, rather than on the basis of their individual skills or capabilities. The following is a list of discriminatory acts you may come across among your peers, at home, at school or in the workplace.

#### **8. To identity the potentialities and power of women influencing the changes at the global level of progress and development**

Women are empowered and gender equality is achieved so that women can play their role in economic, social, political, and environmental areas, the country will not achieve sustainable development with the recognition of only men's participation in all these areas. The fact that women constitute half the entire population of the country makes empowering them to be an active part of all development initiatives in the country a compelling circumstance. Hence, this paper calls for the strong commitment of the government to empower women and utilize all the potentials of the country to bring about sustainable development.

The Global Campaign for Education works for the full integration of gender equality in its policy frameworks, planning processes and political engagement. GCE also calls on States to ensure that education sector plans, policies, curricula and budgets are gender responsive, including mainstreaming gender equality in teacher education and in-service professional development. Since this inequality has been widely documented in developed countries, where the right to education of migrants and refugee women is called into question. It is also known that in contexts of conflict girls and women are targeted in attacks on schools, as well as in refugee camps. Only a systematic approach to women and girls needs and rights, covering emergency situations, can contribute to the solution of the structural violence they face.

Valuing girls and women is critical factor in making societies more prosperous and my experience of working in other countries shows this. Women's economic empowerment is highly connected with poverty reduction as women also tend to invest more of their earnings in their children and communities. Some of them have become successful entrepreneurs and inspiration for others. As a result, the evidence shows that these women experience greater food security, better access to finance, and higher incomes that benefit their families and communities.

It is an opportune time to revisit and reform outdated legislation and policies that act as deterrents to women entering or staying in the labor market. Fostering the creation of better jobs, providing support for child and elder care, and ensuring mobility to and from work can remove significant structural barriers for women to access employment. Employers need to walk the talk and commit to supporting diversity in the workplace by hiring women and paying them the same wages as men for similar jobs. We need safe transportation and zero tolerance of sexual harassment in the office. The private sector should take a leading role in expanding women's share of employment and firm ownership in emerging industries.

There are many examples and indications that the government is acting to turn the trend around. Some promising signs are the government's program for skills development, subsidized loans for businesses led by women, and recent legislation doubling maternity leave, and requiring childcare facilities in companies that employ more than 50 people. If implemented and respected, these policies could remove some of the barriers women face and offer a significant boost to India's economy.

## **9. Recommendations**

- a. Empowering women and making full use of their labour force for economic growth.
- b. Educating and maintaining the health of women to enhance productivity and social development.
- c. Empowering women and providing them with fair representation across different decision-making levels of the government structure to better protect women's interests and to achieve quality governance.
- d. Protecting the rights of women to make them active participants in the economic, social, political, cultural, and other arenas of the country, thereby bringing about development.
- e. Protecting the environment to bring about sustainable development, as the environment is the key source of the country's economy. Empowering women to play an equal role in the protection and management of the environment, with their special knowledge and expertise, is also essential.



## 10. Suggestions and Conclusions

The relevance of the study It is important and crucial to sensitize men at a young age so they become an integral part in bringing about a transformation for women in society. When men start respecting women and accepting them as equals, a lot of gender-based inequalities will reduce considerably. Gender sensitization initiatives are, therefore, very important. Educating children from an early age about the importance of gender equality could be a meaningful start in that direction. Achieving equality would mean empowering women. Empowerment of women means equipping them to be economically independent, self-reliant, in addition to providing positive self-esteem to face any difficult situation. Gender inequity has serious and long-lasting consequences for women and other marginalized genders. Exposure to violence, objectification, discrimination, and socioeconomic inequality can lead to anxiety, depression, low self-esteem.

The full use of their potential for economic, social, political and environmental development is not being carried out due to the widespread gender gap. This paper concludes that attaining development among all the pillars of sustainable development is unthinkable without empowering women and obtaining gender equality, thereby using the entire potential of the country. Thus, this paper suggests that the government needs to work hard to change the existing position of women and achieve gender equality, which will have a positive spillover effect on the sustainable development of the country.



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