



Gender equality in past and present

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Abstract

Despite recent progress, women are still disadvantaged by their greater domestic labor commitments and impaired access to well-paid jobs; and, in extreme cases, denied the right to live. This has consequences for the well-being of individuals and economic development.

Although tools to evaluate country performance in gender equality, especially composite indicators, have been developed since the 1990s, a historical perspective is lacking. This study introduces a composite index of gender equality covering 129 countries from 1950 to 2003. This index measures gender equality in four dimensions (socioeconomic, health, household, and politics). The index shows substantial progress in gender equality, though there is little evidence that less gender-equal countries are catching up. Goldin's "quiet revolution" hypothesis is tested as an explanation for this observation, but fails to provide a good explanation. Rather, the long-term institutional and historical characteristics of countries are the main obstacles to convergence.

Keywords: gender equality, labor, economic development

Introduction

The past 200 years has seen marked improvements in these respects, as well as many that Wollstonecraft could never have foreseen. Women have gained far-ranging legal rights, such as near-universal women's suffrage and the implementation of legislation in many countries to ensure gender equal inheritance. Girls around the world have achieved vastly increased educational attainment both in absolute terms and relative to their male compatriots, and women everywhere can now expect to outlive men (World Bank 2011).

However, for all the progress that has been made, the elimination of discrimination against women has not been achieved. For instance, globally only 23 percent of parliamentarians are women. One-third of girls in the developing world are married before age 18, and one in nine before age 15 (International Center for Research on Women 2014). The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development highlights that gender inequality in access to primary schooling is an issue in sixty-eight countries. More women have entered the paid workforce in recent decades; however, they typically work in the informal sector, characterized by poor earnings and insecurity. Thus, from the persistence of gender pay gaps to the 65–110 million women missing in 2002 due to discriminatory access to medical or dietary resources throughout their lives, to this day women have not achieved equality with men in terms of institutional treatment or well-being outcomes.

Status of Gender Inequality in India

India has the highest levels of sex discrimination at birth. According to the 2017 analysis of demographic data, India shall continue to have the worst sex ratio in South Asia, even in 2050. The heart wrenching 918 girls for 1,000 boys ratio as per 2011 has urged the Indian government to take action in the movement of the 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' program to ensure survival, safety, & education to the girl child. The Beti Bachao program fights bias and offers benefits to fight female foeticide.

Discrimination against women and girls is a pervasive and long-running phenomenon that characterises Indian society at every level. India's progress towards gender equality, measured by its position on rankings such as the Gender Development Index has been disappointing, despite fairly rapid rates of economic growth. In the past decade, while Indian GDP has grown by around 6%, there has been a large decline in female labour force participation from 34% to 27%. The male-female wage gap has been stagnant at 50% (a recent survey finds a 27% gender pay gap in white-collar jobs). Crimes against women show an upward trend, in particular brutal crimes such as rapes, dowry deaths, and honour killings. These trends are disturbing, as a natural prediction would be that with growth comes education and prosperity, and a possible decline in adherence to traditional institutions and socially prescribed gender roles that hold women back.

Benefits of Gender Equality in India

Gender Equality prevents violence against women/girls.

Gender Equality in India is good for the economy of the Nation.

Gender equality in India is also fundamental, as well as the human right of women. Gender Equality in India makes our society safer and healthier.

Challenges Involved

Every girl of our Nation and across deserves to reach her full potential, but the gender disparity hinders reality. Wherever they live in India, girls witness gender inequality in their home and communities almost every day in textbooks, movies, the media, etc. In India, gender inequality results in unequal opportunities, and while it impacts the lives of both genders, statistically, it is mostly the disadvantaged girls. Around the globe, girls have higher survival rates at birth, are more likely to be developmentally on track. Still, India is the only country where more girls die than boys. Girls are more likely to drop out of school. In India, girls and boys encounter adolescence differently. Whereas boys tend to experience greater freedom, girls tend to face extensive restrictions on their ability to move freely and make decisions affecting their work, education, marriage, and social relationships.

As girls and boys age, gender barriers continue to expand and continue into adulthood, where we see only a quarter of women working in the formal workplace. Some Indian women are global leaders and influential voices in diverse fields. Still, most Indian women do not fully enjoy many of their rights due to deeply entrenched patriarchal ideologies, norms, traditions, & structures.

India cannot fully prosper unless both girls and boys are equally supported to reach their full potential. There are risks, violations, and vulnerabilities; girls in our society face because of their gender. With the prevalence of gender unfairness and social norms and practices, girls are exposed to the possibility of child marriage, early pregnancy, domestic work, poor education and health, sexual abuse, exploitation, and violence. Many of these signs will not change unless girls are valued more.

Solutions to Encourage Gender Equality in India

By realizing the value of girls, we can collectively contribute to the achievement of specific results, some short-term (increasing access to education), others medium-term (ending child marriage), and others long-term (eliminating gender-biased sex selection). Changing the perspective towards girls should include men, women, & boys. It has to mobilize multiple sectors in society. Only when society's perception changes will affect all the girls' rights and gender equality in India.

Empowering girls of our Nation requires planned investment and collaboration. Providing girls with the services and safety, education, and other skills they need in daily life can reduce the risks they encounter and enable them to develop and contribute to India's growth. Girls have an incredibly tricky time accessing life-saving resources, information, and social networks in their daily life. Access to programs specifically tailored to girls' needs – with an eye on education & developing life skills, mitigating violence, and incorporating girls' needs and contributions from vulnerable sections, including those with disabilities, can strengthen girls' resilience. Long-term solutions designed for girls can further enhance the strength and be a roadmap of girls' transformational & lifelong opportunities.

Conclusion

Society should look for gender equality in India and burn their old school thought that women are commodities. It's the only way to usher the Nation on the track of prosperity and accomplishments. We all know that gender equality in India can immensely contribute to its progress in all the departments. Various stats and figures related to countries in which a significant section of empowered women resides indicate that countries with a higher percentage of gender equality are rapidly rising every day on all the fronts at the global level.

Our NGO, Hindrise Foundation, is wholeheartedly dedicated to supports women's aspiration to transform their lives and their communities. It further provides them with the ample opportunity to embark on an empowerment journey to gain the confidence, knowledge, experience, and skills they require to reach their full potential as agents of sustainable change. It further supports their entrepreneurial aspirations and dreams.

Gender equality in India is a term more than equal representation in society. It is strongly associated with women's rights and often requires policy changes. Gender Equality in India is the secret for all upheld success that our Nation deserves in the long run. Gender equality in India is the secret mantra for achieving the desired state of the Nation.

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