



Discrimination and Evils against Women in India

Hasina Julfa Choudhury

Department of Political Science, Jadunath Sarkar School of Social Science, Assam University, Silchar-788011, Assam, India
burhanchoudhary64@gmail.com

Available online at: www.isca.in, www.isca.me

Received 23rd November 2015, revised 2nd January 2016, accepted 27th January 2016

Abstract

The gender discriminatory attitudes towards women have existed for generations in India. Although the constitution of India grants equal rights to women, but still Gender Discrimination remains. There had been always a specific reason of gender discrimination, men over women in India. The women are disadvantaged soul and are perceived to be a weaker section of the society and have been discriminated. Fundamentally, both men and women are the important reproduction to the nature but literally men had been given more important to. The cultural construction of the Indian society is so high today, where women or girls are been discriminated on petty social evils of being a female. Female infanticide, girl sex abortion, female fetus killing and the list is endless, is strongly adopted in India, and is considered to be the main reason behind Gender India Discrimination. The demand for son among wealthy parents is being pacing high in the nation since ages. This is also the key factor of the Gender Discrimination among the society of India. Education is not largely being attained by the women in India to the hands of the social evil of Gender Discrimination. The rural India is the insight example of such gender discriminatory system. The parents prefer for their son to attend school and colleges so that he could be a bread earner for the family in the near future. On the other hand, the girl child is dutiable to look after the household and get married sooner, so that she does not become a burden on the parents. This entire scenario is regarded as the gender discrimination system and alas! Still prevails in India. Gender Discrimination against women has led to the lack of autonomy and authority of women in. Although equality had been to the women but in practice, land and property rights are weakly discriminated on women's behalf. Women do not have right on their parental property in India which again displays a huge example of gender discrimination. Gender discrimination stops growth with less female in India. With such a social evil of gender discrimination against women in India, the nation will never rise or shine.

Keywords: Exploitation of women, Oppression of women, Male ego, Male dominance, Patriarchy.

Introduction

The term 'discrimination' is very much familiar with that group who constitutes the half part of our society i.e. women. It's a very pathetic concept for them only. Discrimination against women in India is evidently found in the age old religious and cultural practices. Exploitation of women, oppression of women, male ego, male dominance, patriarchy etc are some of the synonymous words used as themes for debates and discussions. These are the concepts which are associated with the slow growth of women and their contribution towards their society. Empowerment of women is the basic necessity for the progress of the society but our male-dominated society didn't accept that.

Indian society is patriarchal and particularly oppressive to women. That's why variety of discriminations are there against women like cruelty to women, men's oppression over women, sexual harassment, dowry related harassment, domestic violence etc. Women in general are placed in a very disadvantageous position. Women are treated as third-class citizens because earlier women didn't have the right to vote. Our male-dominated society treated males are superior and females are

inferior. That's why women are not getting their actual position in the society. They are exploited in every stage of their life.

Discrimination and Evils against Women in India

Women oppression starts from womb to tomb which we can find out from some of the prominent facts¹, viz:

In womb: In India, women oppression starts from the grass root level i.e. from womb. In the age of science and technology, so many facilities are there to identify the upcoming baby whether male or female. After identifying, there started discriminations like abortion or feticide in preference for male babies.

As a baby: When a girl baby is in her infancy stage, discrimination started in case of medical attention, food, scolding etc.

As a child: When a girl baby is in her childhood stage, at that time they have to face different types of discriminations such as child marriage, sexual abuse, child prostitution etc.

As a girl: When a girl baby reached in her young age, they have to face different types of discrimination like sexual abuse,

financial exploitation, violence at work place etc. Because, in our Indian society, girl baby are treated as the burden of the family. That's why, they have to face such type of discriminations.

As a wife: When a woman gets married, she has to look after the whole family. She always have to remain busy with domestic works. She is not allowed to go outside. As a wife, different types of discriminations are there in our Indian society like, cheating by husband and family members, dowry related murder, dowry deaths etc.

At the old age: When a woman reached in the last stage of her life i.e. in the old age, at that time most of the women became widow. In that stage also, women have to face so many types of discriminations such as financial disadvantage because of their widowhood, psychological violence because of their physical weakness etc.

There are so many areas regarding the discrimination against women in India. Among them, we find out six major areas of discrimination which are briefly discussed below:

Malnutrition: In India, malnutrition is an important factor of discrimination because we find that India has exceptionally high rates of girl-child malnutrition in compared to male-child. There is a misconception in our Indian society that male-child should take nutritious food than girl-child because male child is treated as the source of the income of the family which causes gender discrimination in India.

Poor Health: It's an important factor of discrimination in our Indian Society. Because, we know that our society is male dominated where male-child is more preferable to girl-child. In case of healthcare, girl-child did not get proper treatment than male-child and because of that girl babies get attacked with many types of diseases which become an obstacle for her next generation, for instance, many women die at the time of giving birth to their child.

Lack of Education: We know that education is the most important factor for the development of the society. But our society is male dominated where girl-child is less preferable to male-child. There is a misconception in our society that girls are not allowed to take education; they have to remain within the four walls of the home and also liable for domestic works. So, from the above, we can say that lack of education among girls is the common factor of discrimination and evils in India.

Over Work: Basically, women have to remain busy longer hours with their domestic works. Because, they are not allowed to go outside for taking education or for taking part in public affairs also. Men think that women have nothing to do except their domestic works and child bearing. That's why overwork is treated as the domestic violence against women in India.

Unskilled: Women are treated as inferior in our male-dominated society. That's why; men think that women are not skilled in every sphere of their lives.

Mistreatment: It's a well known factor of discrimination against women in India because we know that women are always mistreated. Now a days, there have been an alarming rise in atrocities against women in India such as rapes, assaults, dowry-related murders, female infanticide, sex selective abortions etc. Hence we can say that mistreatment is the most dangerous area of discrimination except others.

Few areas of discriminations are discussed in this Article. But some other few left out areas like health, family planning, sexual harassment, land and property rights, dowry etc also has been discussed there, vise,

Health: Female received less health care than males. Social attitudes and prejudices inherent in our society which are unfavorable towards girls and women, effects their health and nutrition negatively. Poor health of women is due to the inadequate basic health care facilities, malnutrition and uncontrolled fertility extending over a prolonged span. So, we think that the cultural norms that especially affect women's health are the attitudes to marriage, age of marriage, the value attached to fertility and sex of the child, the pattern of family organizations and the ideal role demanded of women by social customs.

Family Planning: The average Indian women has little control over her own fertility and reproductive health. Women are victims of possessive syndrome and many other kinds of problems. The majority of women face mental depressions due to family related problems which are the outcomes of the present social attitudes. It is unfortunate that the family planning policy is oriented towards fertility control and not concerned with providing a means for women and men to have control on their own bodies.

Land and Property Rights: This is the most important area of discrimination against women in India. Because as per our patriarchal tradition, women didn't have their own land and property rights. We know that our society is male-dominated society and because of that women are deprived from that right. Regarding access of women to land, the land records do not incorporate the rights of women in the landed property shown in the name of the husband or the father. In most Indian families, women do not have any property in their own names and do not get a share of parental property.

Sexual Harassment: Half of the total number of crimes against women is related to molestation and harassment at the workplace. Now-a-days, sexual harassment is one of the major area of discrimination against women in India Women do not feel safe and secured anywhere. Because, now-a-days, sexual harassment is going on anywhere and in any place. Women do

not feel safety even in their own workplace or in the institutions. Indian society is male-dominated society and because of that male treated the female as 'sex symbol'. Man thinks that they are superior and women are inferior in the society. But they don't know that half of the world constitute by the help of the women. If such type of discrimination cannot be stopped, then growth and development can never be possible.

Dowry: Dowry is the promised asset, money or in kind by the bride's family to the bridegroom in lieu of the marriage. It is a social evil prevalent today in most communities. Muslim Community, which was regarded as more liberal to women's right earlier, followed the tradition of "Meher"² according to which the bridegroom promised to play an amount as security to the bride, in case of nullification of marriage. Dowry is one of the major causes of discrimination against women in India. With the help of dowry system, so many harassment is going on in our day to day life, e.g., domestic violence, suicides, murders, bride burning etc. So, we think the problem of dowry cannot be solved by educating the young only. It is necessary to realize the necessity of women to the development of society and it is also necessary to examine the present law against dowry and do away with the loopholes which have made it totally ineffective.

Six Major Causes of Gender Discrimination in India

Instead of seven major areas of discrimination against women in India, there are some major causes. These are briefly discussed as under:

Poverty: It is one of the most important causes of gender discrimination in India. Because in India 30% people who are living below poverty line and 70% are women³. In our patriarchal society, it is a well-known fact that the women have to remain within the four walls of the home and they are not allowed to take part in public affairs, education, jobs and also in the decision making process which are regarded as the cause of gender discrimination.

Illiteracy: Illiteracy is another important cause of gender discrimination in India because girls are not allowed to go outside for taking education. They have to remain within the four walls of the home and also liable for domestic works. By knowing that with the help growing literacy rate. We can developed our society. But our society is male dominated. That's, why, there is a misconception that only male child should be literate than girl-child which causes gender discrimination in India.

Lack of Employment Facilities: Women are not able to resolve the conflict between new economic and old domestic roles. In both rural and urban India, women spend a large proportion of time on unpaid home sustaining work. Women are not able to respond to new opportunities and shift to new occupations because their mobility tends to be low due to intra-house hold allocation of responsibilities.

Social Customs, Beliefs and Practices: It is also another cause of gender discrimination. The traditional patriarchal joint family system confines women's roles mostly to the domestic sphere just for their subordinate status in the society. The favor of sons and disfavor towards daughter is a complex phenomenon that still persists in our society. Thus anti-female social bias is the main cause of gender disparity in our society.

Social Attitude: We are very much familiar with the attitude of our society i.e. male-dominated. The traditional structure of our society is patriarchal i.e. men are superior and women are inferior. In our Indian social system, there is a social phenomenon that only women are house-keepers and should be confined to the four walls of the house. Women are not allowed to take part in decision-making process and also never raise their voice regarding the sake of their prestige in the family which also treated as another cause of gender discrimination.

Lack of Awareness of Women: Women are unaware in every sphere of their lives. The traditional concept of our society is that only men are superior and women are inferior. Due to their subordinate status in the society, women are exploited everywhere silently. They have to face all types of discriminatory practices whatever is going on in our family and society only due to their ignorance and unawareness.

Conclusion

So in conclusion, we can say that women can't be equal to men in all the spheres of life and in all situations but women have been socially, economically, psychologically, physically and sexually exploited sometimes in the name of religion, sometimes on the pretext of writing scriptures, sometimes by social sanction etc. Women are considered in the family as dependent, they face restriction on their movement opportunities which affect their education, economic opportunities etc. Women and girls are often kept at home to help the families and are responsible for household needs. And they are fed last, resulting in a diet of low in calories and proteins. Women are regarded as expendable assets. There is a large segment of society which have traditionally been subjected to unjust treatment, women are one of such segment and women are backward in education and political participation. In other words, women are backward class as compared to men.

References

1. Singh, Justice Rajkumar Manisha (2008). Discrimination Against Women in India (A Gender Study) Akansha Publishing House, New Delhi—110002(India) 23
2. Shing Alka (1992). Women in Muslim Personal Law, Rawat Publications Jaipur New Delhi,98.
3. www.yourarticlelibrary.com/india-2/gender-discrimination-in-india (2013)