



Global perspectives on Gender inequality

Dr. Madhumita Baidya

Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Sidho-Kanho-Birsha University, Purulia

Priyanka Das

Research Scholar, Department of Education, Sidho-Kanho-Birsha University, Purulia

Abstract

Education takes a great role to balance in gender inequality and it impacts on bridging the gender gap. Females are less valued for some continuous cultural processes like the continuous cycle of male patriarchy. In general, violences against female represent the actual status of women. Though the various countries of Asia are progressing in recent years, women are facing multiple issues such as social and cultural issues to achieve gender equality and empowerment. Individuals' unequal attitude specially based on gender is a deeply rooted and vital problem in present modern society. From 1980s, gender inequality become a crucial part of academic research. Governments in national and international level set some measures like Gender Development Index, Gender Inequality Index and annual report by the United Nation Development Programme to keep the issue in observation.

Key words: Causes of gender inequality, Conflicts for gender equality, Education, Gender inequality, Importance.

Introduction

Education and gender equality both are the essential part and a core concern of human development. The term gender which indicates sex discrimination in the society. Now a day gender inequality become the integral part of development process. Everywhere in the world, there are still openly consider unequal living conditions of male and female in family, society even, in professional life also. Women are not getting equal opportunities to enjoy their life as equal to man. Especially, in our Indian society male and female do not get the same access of nutritious food, educational opportunities, health care and equal political empowerment. When women feel ill, is not a serious issue but when same situation is faced by male member in a same family, it become a serious issue, is great example gender inequality in our Indian society. On the basis of inherited social custom and tradition, women should play a great role to take care of all family members. So, it is not essential thing in the patriarchal society for women to be much educated and sometimes they are forcefully deprived from educational facilities by parents. If women had equal opportunities or priorities and treatment in the same way as men get,

millions of women do not lose their life all over the world. The professional life of women is also not a flexible and convenient for them because they work longer hour but they get little payment for their work. Especially rural women are facing multiple problems for gender inequality and they are trying to fulfil their everyday random responsibilities in their family and society because they are not aware about gender equality and it will be not a demanding factor in future also for the lack education. “Gender disparities remain among the most persistent forms of inequality across all countries. Given that these disadvantages affect half the world’s people, gender inequality is arguably one of the greatest barriers to human development. All too often, women and girls are discriminated against in health, in education, at home and in the labour market—with negative repercussions for their freedoms.” — **UNDP 2019**. Poor women are suffering from various problems due to unequal factors of labour force participation, political participation and in decision making position. So, it is very essential issue for policy makers to overcome gender discrimination in mobilization.

Gender: The gender is a most significant form of social stratification and social stratification describe the pattern structures of inequality in the present society. The easiest and most widely accepted explanation division between male and female is the biological one. The identification of gender generally based on hormonal makeup, chromosomal pattern and genital structure. **Cecilia Ridgeway and Shelley Correll**, argue that “gender is more than an identity or role but is something that is institutionalized through social relation contexts”.

Gender inequality: The term gender refers to the biological discrimination that identify male and female bodies. Gender inequality has been identified as a central concern by sociologist. Disparity between men and women sphere operates in the educational institution, political system, religion, culture even in the family. All over the world, gender inequality is still considerable condition of women.

■ World view on gender equality

According to various surveys and reports from reputable organizations such as the United Nations Development Program and the World Economic Forum, a significant majority of people in 23 out of 27 countries believe that gender equality has made progress in their country over the past two decades. Notably, some countries have shown particularly high levels of support for gender equality, with Sweden standing out as one of the most egalitarian countries in Europe, where a staggering 80% of respondents agree that gender equality has improved. Similarly, countries like India, Australia, and South Korea have also shown strong support for gender equality, with 76%, 75%, and 74% of respondents respectively believing that progress has been made.

However, a closer examination of the survey results reveals a striking disparity between the perceptions of men and women regarding gender equality. While men are more likely to believe that their country has achieved gender equality, women are more sceptical and disagree, stating that there has been no change in gender equality in most countries. This highlights a significant gap in the way men and women experience and perceive gender equality. Furthermore, the survey results vary widely across countries, with some nations showing remarkable

progress in gender equality, while others lag behind. Sweden, for example, has made significant strides in gender equality, with an impressive 82% of respondents believing that progress has been made. In contrast, Hungary has shown little progress, with only 29% of respondents agreeing that gender equality has improved, and a majority stating that there has been no change. These findings underscore the need for continued efforts to address gender inequality and promote gender equality globally.

Source - Spring, 2018 survey

■ Causes of Gender Inequality

Some significant causes of gender inequality are discussed below:

Lack of legal protection

According to World Bank research more than one billion women do not get legal protection against domestic economic and sexual violence. In many countries where don't have any legal protections against harassment in school, workplace and even in public place. This is the reason for women unemployment. They make decisions to compromise and limit their goals.

Lack of religious freedom

The absence of religious freedom is one of the major contributors to gender inequality. All around the world, where exist multiple religion and almost in each religion follow strictness for women. According to the World Economic Forum, when extremist ideologies inter into a community, gender inequality gets worse.

Societal mindset

Some worse traditional mindset of society has a significant impact on gender inequality. Not only in developing countries, even in various develop countries in the world, it is considered that women are the weakest manpower and they have no high intellectual and physical ability. The society bound them in domestic work and caring person of family members.

Racism

Gender inequality and racism have a close relation between them for a long time. It is impossible to describe gender inequality, without describing racism. Colour of women indicate the ability of women and how much they are paid. The pay gaps on the basis of colour mostly contributes to gender inequality all over the world.

Lack of employment equality

Employment gender inequality is the national and international issue. It can be said that it is the barrier of economic development of any country. Though there are a little bit of chance for women to be employment but their pay scale is very low as compare to men. It cannot be denied that there has a huge gap in employment for women in government and private sector.

Less access to education

All over the world, women still suffering for less access to education as compare to men. Some studies reveal that 1/4 of young women between 15-24, are not completing their primary education. Sometimes guardians are not agreeing to send their girls child to government school where boys are also studying. But government unable to access government girls' school especially for girl's child.

Poverty

One of the most significant drivers of gender inequality is poverty. Poverty is the primary barrier of quality education, economic opportunities and healthcare where they take a great role to balance gender equality. According to world bank report, approximately 70% world's impoverished population is female.

■ Measures of Gender Inequality

Gender Inequality Index (GII) is widely accepted global index which was calculated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The GII is a composite measure which aggregates gender inequality on the basis of three dimensions of human development:

- i. Reproductive health: This dimension measured by maternal mortality ratio and adolescent birth rate.
- ii. Empowerment: This dimension measured by proportion of parliamentary seats occupied by females and proportion of adult females and males with at least some secondary education.
- iii. Labour market: This another most important dimension measured by labor force participation rates of female and male populations.

Gender Development Index (GDI) is another measure of gender inequalities in achievement. GDI measures on the basis of three basic dimensions of human development:

- i. Health, measured by female and male life expectancy at birth.
- ii. Education, measured by female and male expected years of schooling for children and mean year of schooling of male and female for adults 25 years ages and older.
- iii. Economic resources, measured by female and male estimated earned income.

The **Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI)** is one of the most establish national level indicates of gender inequality across the world. The nations are ranked on the basis of four subindices:

- i. Women's economic participation and opportunity.
- ii. Women's educational attainment.
- iii. Women's health and survival.
- iv. Women's political empowerment.

■ Importance of Gender Equality

Economic development: Globally, still women are facing personal or social barriers to accessing labour markets. Women empowerment to work is not beneficial for an individual, but also has wider contribution in global annual GDP. So, it can be said that when they get equal opportunities to be independent, they able to earn same salaries and helps to boosts economies. Women's participation in economic have a significant positive impact on the GDP.

To provide better healthcare for all: Today's modern society is not serious about women's health. Every day, almost 1000 women lost their life during pregnancy and childbirth which are preventable causes. Absence of women has negative impact on families and communities. Children of sick mothers are suffering from various problems, sometimes they are forced to drop out of schools. But one single healthy mother is enough to take care of all family members.

To prevent violence against women: Gender equality is the most essential part of society to prevent violence against women. Men always dominate women even they limit independence of women's personal life. There are many historical proofs about women related violence but still it exists in our modern society for gender inequality.

To foster peace: Each level of society disrupts in violence. Gender inequality is one of the major sources of a lot of violence. Lack of legal protections for abused women is the significant example of gender inequality. Where gender equality improves the peace of country.

Alleviation of poverty: Poverty is the common issue of any developing country. But it is possible to prevent when the burden of total household is divided between men and women. When women will getting equal opportunities to be employ in government and private sector.

Decline in crime: Still in our modern society, women are the frequent victim of any crime or conflict. Even women or girls are not safe in their own family. Sexual harassment and domestic violence are the common issue. Gender equality is very essential to reduce crime which has negative impact on women's life and society as whole.

To provide equal educational opportunities: Gender equality is mostly important for equal opportunities in the field of education. From ancient period to till now women are suffering from various social and cultural restriction. They do not get equal opportunities to be educate where education is the fundamental right of each human being. So, it can be said that everyone gets the opportunity to improve their lives when gender equality starts with education.

■ Violent conflict for gender equality

Gender equality is an essential factor for stability and security of any country. Women are still disproportionately affected by various forms of violence and by unequal discrimination in every aspect of life. Gender equality is

not only a justice for women, even it takes a major role in economic development and flexible growth in any field of development. The larger gender gap involves to create inter and interstate conflict for the demand of gender equality. United Nations Secretary- General Antonio Guterres disclose that women's rights were "abused, threatened and violated" all over the world and still gender equality not properly achieved in today's modern society. Icelandic women still protest against gender inequality. Where women are suffering from pay gap as compare to men. Icelandic women earn 20% less than men. The study of university of Iceland found that 40% women experience gender based and sexual violence in their lifetime journey. In Saudi Arabia, after long protest, women were allowed for first time to vote and run for office in 2015. "A day without women" was the first major action by American women. In this action, where millions of women participate to protest against gender inequality, sexual abuse and prejudice against women.

Conclusion

Gender inequality is not only a local issue, it is considered as a world-wide issue. The majority of countries considered that there are significance differences between men and women in social norms, decision making power, access to opportunities and in economic participation. Some recent studies reveal that gender inequalities around the world have decreased rapidly but some countries have some challenges. In some regions, increase female labor force participation, decrease gender gap in education, rapidly increase women literacy rate and increase number of women elected office. But in the other hand, some regions are facing tremendous challenges to develop gender equality such as lack of proper education, low economic condition, lack of government concentration, societal attitude etc.

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