

WOMEN'S STATUS IN INDIA: EMERGING ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract – *The Status of Women in Complex Society like India is not uniform. This article attempts to analyse the gender discrimination in India, to examine the educational status of women in India; to study the parliamentary status of women in India; and to offer prescriptions for reduction of gender discrimination. Women's status in Karnataka some progresses were made in various fields. The last five decades have witnessed some basic changes in the status and role of women in our society. Today this progress has been further accelerated with some women becoming increasingly self-conscious of their discrimination in several areas of the family and public life. They are also in a position to mobilize themselves on issues which affect them vitally, and constitute a significant segment in the electoral politics.*

Key Words: *Women's, Status, Sex Ratio, Literacy, and Discrimination, and Equality.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the 1970s, especially when the United Nations (UN) declared the year the 1975 as Women's Year and the decade 1975-85 as the Women's Decade that the perception about women's role in development process has been changed from "welfare perspective" to "economic Moving away from the male dominated culture, discrimination is still highly visible in rural as well as in urban areas throughout all strata of society. While women are guaranteed equality under the constitution, gender discrimination would be reduced.

The general development of a nation depends on the maximum usage of people, the two men and women. The last two hundred years have seen a considerable, verifiably uncommon, expansion of women's rights, both economic and political In India women contain almost 50% of the aggregate populace With the advancement of time, the truth has now been perceived that without guaranteeing women development, the national development can't be accomplished. In every single industrialized nation, women went from being the property of their spouses or potentially their fathers, with not very many legitimate rights, to having the same political rights and the majority of indistinguishable economic rights from men.

perspective", regarding women as active contributors to development process rather than passive beneficiaries. The Government of India also observed the year 2001 as the "Women's Empowerment Year" basically with a view to accord top priority on women's empowerment and engendering development process.

The current development paradigm has been committed to reduce gender inequality and discrimination and empowering women so as to converting the long-standing "vicious circle of poverty" into long-lasting "virtuous circle of well-being" in the market-driven economy. This calls for understanding the status of women in key domains of her life

Since the 1970s, especially with the introduction of New Economic Policy (NEP), women have ample opportunities in different sectors in India. In spite of rapid advancement in women's life, she continued to be deprived and discriminated. India is still a male dominated society, where women are often seen as subordinate and inferior to men. This gender bias is the cause for following we will focus on top of, and we cover some of those in the "Indian women on the rise" section However, even though India is

The Government of India had selected the Committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI) which deduced in its report that, women as a gathering have been antagonistically influenced by the procedure of economic change. There was additionally a level headed discussion in Parliament. As per the recommendations of the council, the National Plan of Action was worked out in 1976, which gave rules to development systems in view of United Nations world arrangement of activity for women. The arrangement distinguished vital zones like well being, family arranging, sustenance, instruction, employment, enactment, social welfare and so on for the defining activity programmes for women. In the meantime the Women Welfare and Development Bureau was set up under the Ministry of Social Welfare to facilitate strategies and projects for the development of women group. The Government of India designated a Working Group on Employment of Women. The gathering examined in subtle elements the effect of development of women and

underlined development of women instead of welfare of women.

The Seventh Five Year Plan (1985 – 90) focused on the requirement for balance and empowerment of women and for coordinating them into the standard of national development. There was additionally an accentuation on mindfulness about their rights and benefits, preparing for undertaking economic exercises and giving employment chances to women. With a specific end goal to quicken the pace of development of women, the Government of India, made a different department in 1985 named "Department of Women and Child Welfare". The department capacities as a national nodal office and is accountable for arranging and executing different projects for women and furthermore screens different projects identified with women in different departments and Ministries, both at the national and state levels. Likewise Women Development Corporations were set up in different states amid 1986-87, as plan needs. These partnerships are responsible for planning and observing women particular plans and projects particularly those for the development of economically in reverse women". They were setup in various states to take up different issues identified with women, for example, endowment, separate, outrages on women and so on. The Government of India therefore made Institutional system under arrangement needs for the development of women and furthermore acquainted unique plans for women with be implemented all through the nation.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To analyse the gender discrimination in India
- To examine the educational status of women in India;
- To study the parliamentary status of women in India; and
- To offer prescriptions for reduction of gender discrimination.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATABASE

The study is based on secondary data collected from various government documents such as Population Census of India.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Gender Discrimination and Missing Women

A critical outcome of adverse sex ratio is the phenomenon of missing women. According to Amartya Sen, if equal opportunities are available for women for survival, then there would be parity in the female ratio. If it is lesser than that, Amartya Sen argues that so many number of women are missing. That is due to discrimination meted out to women at various stages. (Sen, 1990)

Sex ratio is considered as an important indicator of women's status. In India sex ratio was unfavorable to females. Female adverse sex ratio embodies on female survival. The sex ratio (number of female per 1000 males) over successive censuses indicated that the ratio has unfavorable to females in India.

The data presented in Table 1 shows that there were 933 females to that of 1000 males. Since decades India has seen a decades there has been in slight increase in the sex ratio. Since the last five decades the sex has been moving around 940 of females to that of 1000 of males and Karnataka also.

Table 1: Trends in Sex ratio India and Karnataka

Year	India	Karnataka
1951	946	966
1961	941	959
1971	930	957
1981	934	963
1991	927	960
2001	933	965
2011	940	973

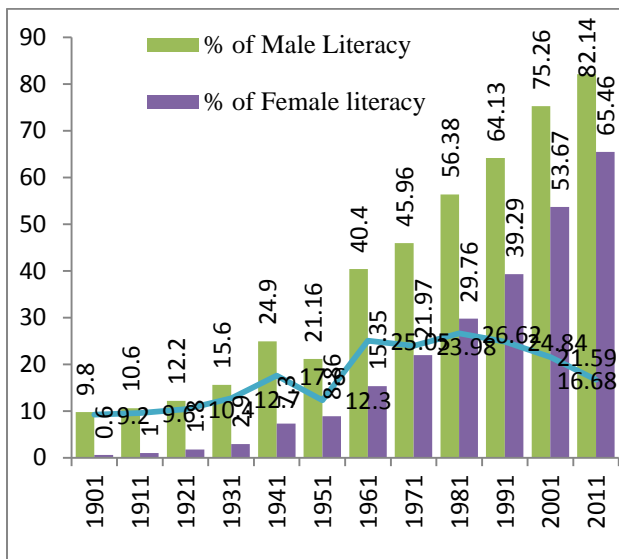
Source: Various Reports on Population Census of India.

The sex ratio deviates from these norms because of the tradition of son preference. Son preference is most prevalent in an arc of state. Sons are preferred because (i) they have a higher wage-earning capacity, especially in agrarian economies; (ii) they continue the family line; and (iii) they are generally recipients of inheritance. Girls are often considered an economic burden because of the dowry system; after marriage they typically become members of the husband's family, ceasing to have responsibility for their parents in illness and old age.

Karnataka recorded a moderate drop in child sex ratio from 960 in 1991 to 946 in 2001. The CSR increased thereafter by a marginal 2 points over the next decade reaching 948 in 2011. Both rural and urban CSR registered a marginal increase with the urban CSR increasing more than rural CSR both ratios settling around 950.

4.2. Educational Status of Women in India

Figure 1. Literacy Rate in India Since 1901 to 2011 (%)



Source: Census of India, various years

The vertical comparison looks very sound when we see that female literacy rate has increased from about 0.6 per cent in 1901 to 39.3 per cent in 1991 and further to 62.46 per cent in 2011. The gender gap in literacy has come down from as high as nearly 27% in 1981 to nearly 17% in 2011. But that gap is still huge is a matter of concern. Further, if we look at enrolment rates, the rates are lower for females as the level of education increases. Also, the dropout rates are also noted to be higher among females. This reflects the lower gender development in the country and also the first formidable barrier in gender empowerment. An NSSO report states that about 15 percent of girls (around 90 million) never attend school as compared to 11 percent of boys. As the young people grow older, the gap in their educational status widens and widens with huge implications over time.

The low female literacy has other unwanted consequences such as the negative impact on family planning and population stabilization efforts. Uneducated mothers are less likely to send their own children to school and often

do not participate in the labour force or the political process. They rarely have any say in household affairs. The HIV/AIDS epidemic is closely linked to education. The National Family Health Survey (1998-99) showed that only 4 out of 10 women of reproductive age had heard of AIDS. Awareness is much lower among rural and less educated women.

Table 2: Trends in Female Literacy Rate in Karnataka (%)

Year	Rural	Urban	Total
1951	5	23	9
1961	n.a.	n.a.	14
1971	15	42	21
1981	20	48	28
1991	35	66	44
2001	48.01	74.08	56.86
2011	59.71	81.36	68.08

Source; census of India 2011

The negative attitude of parents towards the girl child and her education is one of the major reasons of low female literacy rate in India. In most of the families, boys at home are given priority in terms of education but girls are not treated in the same way. Right from the beginning, parents do not consider girls as earning members of their family, as after marriage they have to leave their parents' home. So their education is just considered as a wastage of money as well as time. For this reason, parents prefer to send boys to schools but not girls.

4.3. Nexus between Educational Status and Health Attainments

A positive strong association exists between female educational status and health attainments. Low female literacy rate means an overall sluggish growth of India, as it impacts every arena of the development. India is struggling hard to stabilize its growing population through family planning programs. But if females are illiterate, then this has a direct and negative impact on these initiatives.

When a girl or a woman is not educated, it is not only she who suffers but the entire family has to bear the consequences of her illiteracy. It has been found out that illiterate women face more hardships in life than literate ones. They have high levels of fertility as well as mortality; they suffer from malnutrition and all other related health problems. In one of the surveys, it has been found out that

infant mortality is inversely related to mother’s educational level. In such a scenario not only women but their kids also go through the same conditions. She, who does not know the importance of education in life, does not emphasize the same for her kids. This hampers the family as well as the nation’s progress as a whole.

Lack of education means lack of awareness. Illiterate women are not aware of their rights. They know nothing about initiatives taken by the government for their welfare. Illiterate women keep on struggling hard and bear harshness of life, family and even their husbands

Health Status: Life expectancy

Generally life expectancy at birth should be high for women compared to men because of the genetic peculiarity of women. Males take more risks - across almost all species. There is a powerful biological reason. A species that can take more risks takes more advantages and evolves faster. The data provide in Table 5 clearly indicates that the life expectancy according to 2011 female life expectancy is more than the male India and Karnataka.

Table 3: Life expectancy of males and females in India and Karnataka

Year	India		Karnataka	
	Male	Female	Male	female
2003	64.3	63.1	62.5	66.4
2004	64.7	63.5	63.1	66.7
2005	65.0	63.7	63.4	66.9
2006	65.4	64.0	63.6	67.1
2010	66.1	64.6	66.5	61.1
2011	66.4	69.6	68.0	72.3

Source- NITI Ayoga

The reasons for Low life expectancy of men compare to women are; women are physically strong compare to men because men have many unhealthy habits like smoking drinking etc.. Compare to women. Which will affect the health of men physically?

4.4 Women in Bureaucracy

Table 4: Share of Women in Indian Administrative service

Year	Total of Persons			Share of Females and Males	
	Females	Males	All	Females	Males
2010	34	200	234	14.53	85.47
2011	33	188	221	14.93	85.07
2012	42	207	249	16.87	83.13
2013	44	187	231	19.05	80.95
2014	44	171	215	20.47	79.53
2015	53	176	229	23.14	76.86
2016	59	166	225	26.22	73.78

In the above table we can see the success of women in civil service examination, since 2010 to 2016, comparing to male, presence of female in the civil service is abysmally low. There might many reasons for the huge difference in taking this exam, reasons as follows.

- Least interest in civil service as women prefer for other easy less burden jobs.
- Women are needed to be promote take such exams.
- Less awareness of civil service exam among the women
- Usually women do not get support in their family for taking such high posts and even for study and coaching
- Poverty and lack of facilities in rural areas. These might be the possible reasons for the low participation and success of female in civil service examination.

5. CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

A woman is the mother of race and is the liaison between generations. Indian culture attaches much importance with this section of society; symbolizing India as Mother India, keeping in view the exemplary qualities of women- patience, endurance, love, affection, sympathy and generosity.

Women's status in Karnataka some progresses were made in various fields. The last five decades have witnessed some basic changes in the status and role of women in our society. Today this progress has been further accelerated with some women becoming increasingly self-conscious of their discrimination in several areas of the family and public life. They are also in a position to mobilize themselves on issues which affect them vitally, and constitute a significant segment in the electoral politics of the nation. Development in its wider perspective covers all aspects of life.

☑ The list of legislations as well as types of discriminations or inequalities may go on but the real change will only come when the mentality of men will change; when the male species of human beings would start treating women as equal and not subordinate or weaker to them. In fact not only men but women also need to change their mindset as through cultural conditioning they have also become part of the same exploitative system of patriarchy and are playing a supportive role in furthering men's agenda of dominating women.

☑ The movement for Women's empowerment where women can become economically independent and self-reliant is needed, where they can fight their own fears and go out in the world fearless.

☑ Strategies for advancement of women should be higher literacy, more formal education, and greater employment opportunity. In education it needs to be reducing primary and secondary dropout of female child.

☑ In job opportunities there shall be reservation or expenditure or provision of services or special provisions. In governance all rights and all legal measures should be available for women's protection and support. Human rights education, know how to take control of their circumstance, help to achieve their own goals, helping themselves, enhancing their quality of life and motivating for lobbying or advocacy are also enablers for their advancement. Collaborators such as NGO, INGOs, NPOs, SHGs, CBOs, policy makers, local leaders, information disseminators, health care providers, teachers and family members should help in the social advancement of women.

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