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*International Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 12(1), 79-83

Retrieved from: <https://ijeponline.com/index.php/journal/article>

**SOCIO- ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF GENDER EQUITY IN INDIAN PERSPECTIVES**

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**Abstract**

*Gender equality means that the different behavior, aspirations, and needs of women and men are considered, valued, and favored equally. It does not mean that women and men have to become the same but that their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. The concept of gender equity refers to fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities. It is distinct and different from the concept of gender equity, which is the effective equality between men and women that entails the concept that all human beings, both men and women, are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypical views, rigid gender roles, and prejudices.*

**Keyword:** - Gender, equity, Gender Disparity, men, women.

**Introduction**

Gender equity stands for equal prospects for both men and women in every sector. This means same salary as well as opportunities of advancement in terms of statute and position. Gender equity means that women and men, and girls and boys, enjoy the same rights, resources, opportunities and protections. It does not require that girls and boys, or women and men, be the same, or that they be treated exactly alike. Three decades ago, the thought was not so popular as women were considered inferior to men in terms of physical strength as well as mental capability. But the beginning of twenty first century has seen a change in the ideologies as women stepped out of their traditional domains into the corporate world. The women discrimination can be visualized on various angles. In a male dominated society like ours one has to accept that women are at the receiving end. The sex ratio is unfavorable to women and it has declined overtime. The literacy rates are low among women. The expectation of life is low for women in India up to the recent times. The opportunities and access to decision-making institutions are not equal to both men and women. There is clear division of labour among men and women, designating certain tasks exclusively to woman. Mostly activities, which have low market value, are attached to women. Women mostly spend their time in household maintenance. There were also gender

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differences in respect of access and control over resources, which were important elements to consider in development, programmes especially where interventions may change the value of resource and reduce women's access.

Gender equality is the goal, while gender neutrality and gender equity are practices and ways of thinking that help in achieving the goal. Gender parity, which is used to measure gender balance in a given situation, can aid in achieving gender equality but is not the goal in and of it. Gender equality is more than equal representation; it is strongly tied to women's, and often requires policy changes. As of 2017, the global movement for gender equality has not incorporated the proposition of genders besides women and men, or gender identities outside of the gender binary.

Gender is a socio-culturally constructed division between females and males, which is deeply woven into the organization of institutions and of everyday life. It is not just a division, but also an asymmetry, with men having more power and status. In a gender-based society, women's involvement in various levels of human interactions and relationships are totally ignored. In every walk of life like social and physical mobility, allocation and distribution of cultural resources, religion, politics, education, law and caste, some sort of discrimination can be observed.

The world we live in is profoundly shaped by gender. Gender, not only influences who we are, how we live and what we have but also how we think and how we understand and explain the social world in which we live. Examining gender permits us to see how men-women relationship works in the world, how it is institutionalised, legitimated and reproduced and how gender hierarchy interacts with the other structural inequalities.

The notion seems to have gathered wide currency only with the coming into being of the sex-gender distinction. Sex is biological or genetic features taken to differentiate males from females, which is determined much before the birth of the child, over which outside factors have no control and gender is the socially constructed differences in character traits and role expectations for men and women, which is totally influenced by outside factors. Sex determines maleness and femaleness both of which are based on physical differences and have universal application. Gender determines masculinity and femininity both of which are based on cultural differences and does not have a universal application. People translate biological sex into gender, with one set of rules for females to think, feel and behave as women and different set of rules for males to be men. Parents, peers, media, literature, teachers and school influence gender identity formation.

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The struggle for women's equality with men is based on the recognition that gender inequality is caused by structural and institutional discrimination. Gender inequalities manifest themselves in disadvantages for women. Therefore, discussions about gender mainly concentrate on women.

Man-woman relationship is a tactic contract, which should be equally advantageous to both. In whatever situation women and men are socially constructed, in this contract, this ethics is of importance in every action and inter action. To make the meaning of equity or justice comprehensive, equality is an important notion. The Constitution promises formal equality of men and women but the structure and functions of the society through its institutions, norms and values act in a peculiar way that men are getting the privileges and women are underprivileged. If both are considered equal, unjust treatment of one to the other create crisis.

Equity is synonymous with fairness and justice and it is the means to attain the end-equality. Equity is not about treating everyone the same- it may also use positive action initiatives and measures to address existing inequities. Equity is distinct from the concept of equality in that it specially targets those groups, which are socially underprivileged or disadvantaged, for example, with respect to access to health, education, employment and income. Equity is the resolutions against inequalities, which are unnecessary, avoidable, and unjust. Gender equity is the principle and practice of fair and equitable allocation of resources and opportunities for females and males. Development affects men and women differently and so there must be special measures to achieve equity in access to resources. A primary goal of gender equity is to provide all individuals with access and opportunity to take part in a full range of activities. This enables them to benefit from, excel at and fulfil their human potential.

Achieving gender equity does not mean that women become the same as men. Women need different rights and entitlements with regard to their reproductive fiction. It simply means that both can exercise their rights irrespective of gender. It also means that men and women may arrive at equal results from different starting points, using different paths.

Gender justice aims at much more than mere absence of discrimination. The concept of gender justice is incorporated in the concept of social justice. It means a social order based on justice-social, economic and political-as visualized by Article 38 of the Constitution. The existence of a democratic social culture and liberal and secular polity must precede gender justice. Gender justice does not thrive in a fundamentalist regime.

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The HDR of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 1995 states that there is yet no country where women and men enjoy equal rights and opportunities. In all spheres, perfect equality between both the sexes is not possible or desirable in the present world. For a healthy society, harmony and complementarities are essential. But problem arises when one group is deprived of its basic privileges only because of gender over which one has no contro.

The preamble of United Nations (UN) Charter reaffirms faith in fundamental human rights, in the equal rights of men and women. International Covenant on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights provides equal right to all people to pursue development and prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex. Declaration on the elimination of discrimination against women expresses concern over continued existence of considerable discrimination against women. Ever since the UN Declaration of 1975 as year of woman, momentum has been gathering all over the world demanding gender equality. The UN conferences such as the International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in September 1994; the Social Summit at Copenhagen in March, 1995; the Fourth World Conference on Women which was held in Beijing in September, 1995 have all proclaimed the goals of gender equality and women's rights. These dimensions of development find international reinforcement in the series of Human Development Reports.

Governments, the world over, have sensitised to the issue of gender justice and have introduced statutory changes to achieve gender equity. India the land of hierarchy and holism also accept gender equity as a value. Constitution of India has laid emphasis on equality of men and women. In India, most of the disabilities of women still persisting in some other countries have been removed and even traditional inheritance laws have been modified in conformity with the principle of equality.

But, this is only one side of the coin. India is one of the large number of third world countries where females are still at a considerable disadvantage demographically, socially, culturally and economically. Inequality among men and women is found universal, but it is on fast decline in advanced countries compared to developing countries like India. India's achievements are very low both in Gender Related Development Index and also Gender Empowerment Measure, compared to developed countries like Canada, Norway and USA.

In India, there is a considerable difference in the level of attainments of people on various aspects of well being depending on the place of residence, the sex of person and the social group or segment of population that the person belongs to. In general most indicators show a lower level of attainment for women and for people residing in rural areas.

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The preference for sons is reflected in several ways, including female infanticide and the various constraints and inequities the surviving female children face later in life in respect of division of labour within the household, liberties that they are permitted to enjoy, opportunity to develop talents, education, medical care, health and nutrition, property rights based on Patrilineal system, drastic separation of female child from natal family, employment, marriage, divorce and remarriage of widows.

Gender disparity exists in getting chance, encouragement and participation in cultural, and social fields. Moreover, there is inequity in accessing health care utilities, obtaining educational facilities and participation in political fields. These negative indicators pose certain very pertinent questions against the gender equity prevailing in India.

**Conclusion**

Present paper concluded that Gender equity has many aspects. Equity in the labour market affects earnings, employment and the industrial and occupational division of labour. Equity in the social development relates to the fulfillment of such basic needs as health, education etc. Equity within the household affects women's control over resources and income and responsibilities for the work required to reproduce the household on a daily and generational basis. Although these three dimensions of gender equity are related to each other, growth patterns and government policies do not affect them in the same way.

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