Gender Equality: Issues and Problems

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Abstract:
The present research paper is based on gender issue in India, especially in modern India. The word gender makes discrimination between male and female. The Society is recognized with both, but male dominated society makes it difference. The government of India giving the equal rights to man and woman. The research study is based on the development of status of woman from ancient period till modern period. How the condition of woman always changes. Following points in research paper are going to discuss for that purpose:

1) Historical background of woman’s status.
2) Rights of woman
3) Suffering of inequality as a gender
4) Son preference and killing of girl child
5) Education of girls
6) Social inequality and awareness for status
7) Modern woman and changing scenario

There are lots of issues and problems related to female. Everyone in this country should be cautious for status of woman. Being a good citizen of India, every person should respect woman. It’s an attempt to put forward the points to give justice to woman.

This paper reviews on Gender equality and its step by step development in today’s India. The word gender itself plays important role. The word gender divides mainly into two categories-masculine gender and feminine gender. Here, the focus is on woman. The status, the position, the equality-woman gets from birth or even before the birth it starts discrimination.

The present research paper is based on “Gender Equality: Issue and problems” in India. The society is recognized with both, but male dominated society makes it difference. The government of India giving the equal rights to man and woman. The study is based on the development of status of woman from ancient period till modern period. The position and identity of woman always changes in India. India is facing many problems related to woman; likewise-education to girls, child marriages, unsafe, rapes, dowry, gender discrimination and the most burning issue is killing of girl child before birth. This paper will reveal whether the woman in India is having equal status?

What are the different issues and problems related to her?

Gender equality and its issues and problems are two different sides of same coin. It has a different dimension of each side. Gender involves variety of things. Sex-selective abortion, Patriarchal society, son preference, discrimination against girls, marriage laws, gender difference in education, employment status of male and female, household status of women etc.
When someone talks about gender equality, it starts with inequality. The global scenario is very changing. The world has reached to its highest technological achievement. India’s satellite reached to Mars successfully, that much fast technological development India is doing. But male mentality regarding woman is as it is like earlier days.

**Historical background of woman’s status:**
Before going to the main issue, it is necessary to look back the history regarding the status of woman in last year’s, mainly ancient period. In ancient India, the woman is treated with due respect. She had the equal status with male in society. Katayana suggested that women were educated in Vedic period. In great epics like Ramayana and Mahabhattara, it is mentioned that women herself selected her own husband. She got freedom from her families. This type of marriage is called swayamwar. Male (grooms) used to go the house of bride for marriage Sita herself selected her groom. Even polygamy is allowed in those days.( eg.Draupadi). Men also treated her as main part of their families. In earlier time woman was treated with respect. She was playing the role of wife, mother, and daughter-in-law etc .In short the woman enjoyed freedom. She got respectful status in social, familial and economic ways in ancient India. This is about Puranas .But after some years of Puranas, this freedom of women restricted. Indian women mostly never had liberty for anything or they didn’t have any equal status. Marriage and domestic life became compulsory for woman. And her only duty was to be devoted and loyal to her husband. They were tortured by husband and families if give birth to female child as if she herself is only responsible person for that. Even after taking the whole and sole care of her family, she is not allowed to express her opinions to outside matters and domestic affairs. The different religions put different conditions to women. Rajput gharana’s practiced jauhar, Muslims brought Purdah, and Hindu’s brought Sati pratha…etc

**Rights of woman:** Women in India are not aware of their rights. They are badly treated by husband. They are not fighting for their legal rights. The government of India has enacted many woman related legal rights. To protect woman from early marriage, dowry, rape etc, government has different laws. Also Indian government is cautious about woman discrimination in society. The ‘crime against woman’ is categorized in two ways: First, the crimes identified under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) which includes rape (sec.376 IPC); kidnapping and abduction for different purposes ( sec. 363-373); Homicide for dowry, dowry deaths and their attempts (Sec-302/304-B IPC );Torture both physical and mental(Sec-498-A IPC);Molestation(Sec-354 IPC);Sexual harassment(Sec-509 IPC);and importation of girls (up to 21 years of age).Secondly, the crimes identified under the special laws (SLL)which are though not gender specific, but some do have special provisions to safeguard woman and their interests. It includes the Employees State Insurance Act, 1948, The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 etc.

Either woman is unknown about these legal rights about her or she is not taking the benefit of these rights because of fear. She
always has the fear about her life. What will happen if her husband removed her from his house? What will she do? What society will say about her? Etc. For all these reasons she prefers to be silent. And male is taking the advantage of this. Its hundred percent facts that Indian government is fully focusing on women’s development continuously. Only the obstacle should be removed from government as well as women.

Suffering of inequality as a gender:
Starting to this point, the woman is not safe as female gender. The incident of Nirbhaya on 16th December 2012 tells a lot. It was a gang rape of 23 year old girl, which imbalanced the whole India. So many questions were raised in the mind of people. What is male mentality? Where is the law of protection of woman? Is woman safe in such circumstances? Why not laws implemented strictly?

The UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon issued this statement: ‘Violence against women must never be accepted, never excused, never tolerated’. The UN entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Woman called on the Indian Government to do everything in their power to take up radical reforms, ensure justice and robust public services to help women. Responses have led to Indians questioning cultural mindset and the effectiveness of the state’s legal status to protect woman.

Amartya Sen expressed this burning issue for the effectiveness of woman’s rights in very apt manner: ‘gender inequality in India is not one homogeneous phenomenon but a collection of desperate and interlinked problems’.

India ranks 132 on gender inequality index among 187 countries lower than Pakistan (123), according to United Nations Development Program’s Human Development Report 2013.

Education of girls:
“Educate a man and you educate an individual.
Educate a woman and you educate a family”

This is well-known saying. Education is the main source of developing society. Education changes the personality and mind setup of human beings. It gives better future to everyone. The Nation’s progress is based on the percentage of woman educated in its country. India is approaching to technological development. There is drastic change in scientific development in every part of India. Youth is the power of Country. Our former President, Dr Kalam said that Indian Youths will fully developed India till 2020. In some parts of India, girls are not given education by their parents. Son is preferable. Woman is secondary still. There should be lots of changes related to female which must be focused. Woman should get proper education for her identity. If she is educated automatically she will fight for her rights. Even after the 67 years of freedom, India’s female literacy rate is one of the lowest in Asia, even Indian government signed contract to education to all. But that is not hundred percent fulfilled. In 1991, less than 40 percent of 330 million women aged 7 and over were literate, which means today there are over 200 million illiterate women in India.
The education of woman plays an important role in India. If woman is educated, her children will also educate. She can give proper guidance to her children. She can improve the status of her family as well as society. Educated woman can reduce infant mortality. She can stop killing of girl child.

**Modern woman and changing scenario:**
Earlier time women are restricted to house boundaries. To maintain house, cooking and taking care of her family was the only task related to her. That was the way of her living. As time moves, women know the importance of education and her ability. She began to get education and acquire even higher education and starts to work shoulder to shoulder with men in every field like social and political fields. There are women’s names in the freedom fighter struggle of India. Today’s women are working in every field and got name and fame in every field. Pratibhatai Patil, Sonia Gandhi, Megha Patkar, Mary Kom, Kalpana Chawala, Lata Mangeshkar, Sushma Swaraj etc. are few of them. For middle class family, the income of husband is not sufficient to run the house. So woman can help her family financially if she works. Even she works outside, she has to maintain her household duties—i.e. cleaning the house, cooking, taking care of children, husband, elders in family etc. In these ways women suffers big problems to balance official duties and home duties. Indian society is still male dominated society. Working women is no exception. Working women’s are facing problems at her workplace also, harassment by colleagues and superiors. This the dual condition of today’s working woman. If husband co-operates her, supports her mentally, socially then only it will be beneficial for their family as well as society. Husband should help in household things to reduce his wife’s burden. Then the things will be more enjoyable and happy.

**Conclusion:** Women in modern India are shining in every field but fact is that still male dominated society considers her secondary. She is struggling for her own identity. There are lots of issues and problems related to female. Everyone in this country should be cautious for status of woman. Being a good citizen of India, every person should respect woman. It’s an attempt to put forward the points to give justice to woman.
Concluding with the lines of Jawaharlal Nehru-
“You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of women”

Works Cited:

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