

Gender Inequalities in Health, Education and Economic Opportunities in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, India

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Abstract - This paper is an attempt to analyze the various indicators of gender inequality in education, health and economic services in Jammu and Kashmir, one of the union territories of India. This study utilized Gender Inequality index and revealed that after taking education as a starting point, the literacy rate and education of the women of Jammu and Kashmir is far lower than their male counterparts and also lower than women at national level. The male-female gap in literacy rate has increased from 12.71 per cent in 1961 to 20.25 per cent in 2011. There is nearly 21% gap between males and females in case of literacy rate. One of the greatest concerns, as far as gender discrimination is concerned is that of male-female sex ratio. The sex ratio has declined from 892 in 2001 to 889 in 2011. The child sex ratio has also declined steeply from 941 in 2001 to 859 in 2011 losing 80 points. The Infant Mortality Rate has fallen from 51 in 2007 to 23 in 2017, however, it is higher for female child than in male child in India as well as in Jammu and Kashmir. The study also found that, only 18 percent of all women age 15-49 were employed in the 12 months preceding the survey; 75 percent of all men aged 15-49 were employed. Thirty-three percent of women and 81 percent of men age 15-49 own a house alone or jointly with someone else, and 27 percent of women and 73 percent of men own land alone or jointly with someone else.

Keywords: Gender Inequality, Literacy Rate, Gender Discrimination, Infant Mortality Rate, Jammu and Kashmir

I. INTRODUCTION

Gender inequalities are institutional inefficiencies that contribute to clogged health, worst educational pipelines, recruitment bottlenecks, attrition, and worker maldistribution in formal and non-formal health workforces. Fostering gender equality increases the likelihood of women and men having an equal chance of choosing a health occupation, acquiring requisite skills and knowledge, being hired and being fairly paid, and enjoying equal treatment and advancement opportunities. Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world.

There has been a progressive support over few past decades. More of the girls are going to school, fewer girls are forced into early marriage, more women are serving in parliament and positions of leadership and laws are being reformed to advance gender equality (Shazia and Rathod, 2014 and Seema, 2014). Despite a high growth rate and plentiful government measures to encourage gender equality, the

gender gap still remains and can have a widening effect if not checked properly (Hussain, 2011). The World Economic Forum (WEF) annually evaluates the world's progress toward gender inequality in economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment. World Economic Forum (2020) evaluated that gender inequality continues to be a persistent problem, with the gender gap in economic participation, opportunity and health survival is actually widening rather than getting better.

In the present study, indicators of gender inequality are typically designed to compare the status of women and men on particular characteristics of interest such as health, education and economic participation. Women in Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir suffer disproportionately in education relative to the men. They have low literacy rate, low enrolment ratio and exhibit high dropout ratio as against men. And this discrimination continues in health and participation too. The girl child is always treated unequally. The birth of a girl child is not welcomed is a known fact.

It is a known fact too, that discrimination starts from even before the girl child is born and sometimes, she is killed as a foetus, and if she manages to see the light of day, she is killed as an infant, which makes up the highly skewed child sex ratio where for every 1000 boys, there are only less girls (Gupta, 2014). The gender gap in the economic participation is rooted in challenges that working women across the union territory face, including juggling work and family responsibilities, unequal wage and unsafe work environments, lack of other facilities at work, and so on. The need of the hour is to make a change in the mindset of the society and destroy the prejudices that damage the future of the girl child. What is required is a concerted effort to sensitize the society in eradicating this issue of gender inequality. Therefore, an attempt has been made to analyze the various indicators of gender inequality in education, health and economic services in Jammu and Kashmir, one of the union territories of India.

II. DATA AND METHOD

The data set for this paper has been taken from Indian census, 2011 and various economic surveys and statistics

