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## **GENDER INEQUALITY IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA: CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES, AND PATHWAYS TO EQUITY**

**Dr. SHEETAL**

Assistant professor  
Department of Sociology  
N.K.B.M.G College Chandausi Sambhal, Uttar Pradesh.  
Email - [sheetalgoth7@gmail.com](mailto:sheetalgoth7@gmail.com)

### **ABSTRACT**

Gender inequality continues to be one of the most critical social issues in contemporary Indian society. Despite constitutional guarantees of equality and several government initiatives aimed at empowering women, disparities between men and women persist in education, employment, health, political participation, and social rights. Rooted in deep historical, cultural, and patriarchal traditions, these inequalities restrict women's opportunities and reinforce systemic discrimination. The gender gap is visible in wage differences, underrepresentation in decision-making positions, unequal access to resources, and the prevalence of gender-based violence. However, recent developments in legislation, awareness campaigns, and the growth of women's movements have contributed to gradual but significant changes in attitudes toward gender roles. This paper seeks to examine the causes, forms, and consequences of gender inequality in Indian society, while also exploring strategies and policy measures that can foster greater gender equity and social justice.

**Keywords:** Gender Inequality, Sex ,Indian Society, Patriarchy, gender parity, Women Empowerment & Disparities, Gender-based Violence, discrimination, Social Justice.

### **1. Introduction**

The study of gender inequality is no longer a subject limited to the problems arising within the boundaries of any one nation; rather it has become an international issue. The processes of globalization and liberalization have united the problems of all nations. Therefore, in a subject like sociology, the study of gender related inequality and problems becomes even more important. This topic emphasizes the fact that the natural inequalities existing between men and women on the

basis of physical structure can be accepted, but there is no justification for making differences between men and women on social, economic and political grounds. Doing so is completely contrary to the concept of humanity and human rights. According to the United Nations, "Although women worldwide represent half of the world's population and perform two-thirds of all work, they own only one-tenth of the world's wealth." Nowadays, the principle of good governance propounded by the World Bank is being strongly propagated and spread all over the world. The rule of law does not accept discrimination based on gender. It supports the idea of equality of all beings before the law. But the reality is that even today, all over the world, women are discriminated against in some form or the other on the basis of gender. This is the subjugation of women of Marxist feminists and the division of classes began with the development of private property, according to Frederic Engels, the domestic work of women with the emergence of private property became insignificant compared to men's productive labor. In place of meat, patriarchy became important and the transfer of property started to the boys. According to Marxist feminists, it is necessary to understand the structural change in the prohibition relations and the change in the division of labor to understand the condition of women. They argue that not only the biological capacity of women but also personal property and marriage, the economic and political dominance of men and the control of men, the result of men's control over men, patriarchy which is considered to be the main cause of gender inequality. The objective of the article presented is to explain the meaning of gender inequality by explaining the concept of gender. Then the types of gender inequality in India, types of gender inequality, gender inequality in India is gender in India due to gender inequality in India. In the end, some useful suggestions have also been given to remove gender inequality.

## **2. Explanation of the concepts of 'sex' and 'gender'**

In the 1950s and 1960s, British and American psychiatric and medical experts first discussed gender as a biological phenomenon and gender as its socio-cultural construct. Made a difference. Since then, feminist scholars have been raising their voice against gender discrimination. He is of the opinion that biology alone does not determine destiny, that is, being male or female is not the only fact that determines the fate line. Women can also perform all the social roles that men do. Therefore, discrimination on the basis of gender is indicative of injustice,

oppression and exploitation towards women. Feminist scholars oppose this exploitation and consider gender roles and any kind of discrimination on the basis of gender as unfair due to patriarchy.

Masculine and feminine gender is a biological fact. If any kind of inequality is added to this fact then it becomes a social fact, which is called gender inequality, sexual inequality or gender inequality. In Hindi, the word 'Ling' is used for the English words sex and gender. Due to which they are often considered the same. In fact, there are many differences between the two. The term sex refers to those biological and physical characteristics of men and women (such as chromosomes, hormones, internal and external sex organs, etc.) which are determined by birth. When we talk about men or women, all over the world it means those physical characteristics that differentiate them from each other. Unlike sex, gender is a socio-cultural fact which we can also call a social construction of gender. It is not the result of any natural process but is a social creation of processes created by the social structure. Due to socio-cultural differences in different societies, this social construction of gender can be of different types. That is why differences are found in gender-related roles in different societies or in different eras of the same society. Therefore, gender is not a permanent and immutable social construct. Identity based on gender is dynamic and the continuous interaction of many factors is considered responsible for maintaining it. Prominent among these factors are social, political, gender, economic and historical. The basis of classification based on gender is the division of labor based on gender, on the basis of which it is defined which labor is desirable for women and which for men.

Gender being a social construct, gender refers to the behaviour, roles, expectations and actions performed in society as per gender. Every society expects different behavior from men and women, differences are also found in their roles, actions and activities. 'Gender' is a socio-cultural term. It relates to the social definition and defines the actions and behaviors of 'men' and 'women' in the society, whereas, the word 'gender' defines 'men' and 'women' which is a gender inequality in an Indian society. Sociological analysis is a biological and physical phenomenon. In its social, historical and cultural aspects, gender is a relationship of power between men and women where men are considered superior to women. In this way, 'gender' should be understood as a man-made concept, whereas 'sex' is a natural or biological characteristic of humans. In most societies,

traditionally there was a division of labor based on gender, according to which the role of women was limited within the four walls of the house. The role of men has been to go out and work. Thus, it can be said that in sociological language, gender-related role means the behavior patterns followed according to gender in different cultures.

From the above discussion it becomes clear that 'sex' and 'gender' are two different concepts. 'Sex' is a biological, natural or physical fact, whereas 'gender' is its social construct. The following two major differences are found between the two-

1. Sex is stable and based on nature, whereas social gender is unstable and based on culture. In other words, it can also be said that sex is a biological fact, whereas gender is a learned behavior, which keeps changing with time and its form may differ in different cultures.
2. The word 'gender' is relational, because it not only denotes man or woman, but also clarifies the relationships found in them, whereas this is not the case with gender, because it only signifies woman or man. Gender refers to the economic, social and cultural characteristics and opportunities associated with men or women at a particular time. In many societies, traditional gender based characteristics are also discriminated against. For example, being submissive is a feminine quality, while being strong is a masculine quality. Similarly, being emotional, being receptive, being shy, being passive or having a soft heart are considered feminine qualities; Whereas being logical, being persistent, being analytical, being brave, being active and having a hard heart are considered masculine qualities, which are linked to gender.

For centuries it was believed that the characteristics, roles and statuses associated with women and men in society are determined by biology (gender) and being natural, they cannot be changed. Due to this mentality, women have been victims of social prejudices and discrimination. Today, feminist scholars do not consider gender-based roles as natural and immutable and by saying this they oppose all types of discrimination against women. Feminist scholars believe that the beliefs that society imposes on men and women are the result of patriarchal thinking, due to which the ideals considered for men are different from those for women. Discrimination, exploitation and oppression of women on the basis of physical differences is an attempt to stop

them from progressing and devalues their capabilities. Today it has been proven that women are also capable of doing the most difficult tasks and considering them weak Manju Goyal on the basis of gender or not giving them opportunities to progress like men is a violation of women's rights, which everyone should oppose. Needed

### **3. Meaning of gender inequality**

Gender inequality can be defined in general terms as discrimination against women on the basis of gender. Women have traditionally been considered weak in society. That is why they are in a subordinate position to men. They suffer from exploitation, humiliation, degradation and discrimination both at home and in society. This strange type of discrimination against women is prevalent in every country and place in the world and its prevalence is very high in Indian society. Since this discrimination is done against women all over the world, this word is used in the same sense. Therefore, this is discrimination against women as a result of their gender.

Gender Inequality, in simple words, may be defined as discrimination against women based on their sex. Women are traditionally considered by society as the weaker sex. She has been accorded a subordinate position to men. She is exploited, degraded, violated and discriminated against both in our homes and in the outside world. This peculiar type of discrimination against women is prevalent everywhere in the world and more so in Indian society. They are discriminated against not only inside the home but also outside the home and they are more victims of exploitation and violence. This discrimination exists in some form or the other in all the countries of the world. Patriarchal social structures and institutions are reinforced by value systems and cultural norms that propagate women's inferiority complex. There are many examples of practices in every culture that reflect the low value and status given to women. Patriarchy makes women powerless in many ways. Among these, circumstances like women being inferior to men, preventing them from accessing resources and limiting their participation in decision-making positions are prominent. These forms of control help in keeping women away from social, economic and political processes. Women's subordination can be seen in terms of their socio-economic circumstances (e.g. their health, income and education level), their position or the degree of autonomy and control they have over their lives.

#### **4. Magnitude of gender inequality in India**

It is not difficult to ascertain the extent of gender inequality in India. In India, one rape incident occurs every two hours. Saviya Vegas rightly wrote that criminals get away with the crime due to “toothless laws and impotent Indian society”. According to the report of the United Nations Population Fund, 177 two-thirds of married women in India are victims of domestic violence. 70 percent of married women aged 15 to 49 experience incidents of assault, rape or forced sex. More such incidents were found in the states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and North India as compared to South India. If we look at global indices, India's ranking on gender inequality is very poor. According to UNDP's Gender Inequality Index 2025 (UNDP's Gender Inequality Index - 2025), India's position is at 129th position in the list of 148 countries.. According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index 2025 (World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index- 2025), India ranked 131<sup>st</sup> out of 148 countries.

Gender inequality in India manifests itself in various ways, the major ones being the following-

1. Female feticide
2. Female child murder
3. Sex ratio of children of 0-6 years 919 (according to 2011 census)
4. Sex ratio 943 (according to 2011 census) -
5. Female literacy 65.46% (as per 2011 census)
6. Maternal mortality rate 178 per 1,00,000 (for the year 2010-12).

Among the above mentioned methods of gender inequality, female feticide and female infanticide are the most inhuman and very shameful acts. Barbara D. Miller has rightly written that female-infanticide can take place in two forms: direct and indirect. Directly, murder is done by beating, poisoning or strangulation and indirectly, attempts are made to kill them by neglecting their upbringing, nutrition or care. Now there is a new method of sex determination or medical test

in the womb which is called Amniocentesis by which it is known whether the womb is a boy or a girl, and thousands of people, after finding out that the womb is a girl, get an abortion. The woman is murdered even before she is born.

Sex ratio is also considered a factor responsible for social change. If the ratio of women is less than men then such beliefs develop which elevate the status of women. On the other hand, if the ratio of men is more than that of women, then the prevalence of practices like polyandry becomes the cause of deterioration in the status of women. In some countries like China, South Korea and especially India, the male-female ratio is decreasing. For example, the male-female population ratio in India is revealing a continuous decline in the female population, which is a matter of concern among social scientists. In 1901 AD, the population was 972 women per thousand men, whereas in 2011 AD it had increased to 940. In terms of child sex ratio (0 to 6 years), it is 914 girls per 1000 boys.

In India in 1901, only 5.35 percent of people were literate. In 1951 AD, this percentage was 16.67, in 1981 AD it increased to 36.17, whereas in 1991 AD, it increased to 52.11 percent, in 2001 AD, it was 65.38 percent and in 2011 AD, it was 74.04 percent. This shows that after independence, the literacy rate has increased rapidly, but still more than one-fourth of the people in the country are still illiterate. Progress in literacy among women has been more notable. A total of 0.60 percent women were literate in 1901 AD, 7.93 percent in 1951 AD, 24.88 in 1981 AD, 39.42 percent in 1991 AD, 54.16 percent in 2001 AD and 65.46 percent in 2011 AD, but at the same time this It is also noteworthy that one-third of women are still illiterate. The literacy rate of males compared to females is 82.14 percent. It is very important to know the increase in literacy for the socio-economic development of the country.

Mortality was 49 (per thousand persons) in 1921, 31 in 1951, 12.5 in 1981, 9.8 in 1991, 8.49 in 2003 and 7.48 in 2011. The reason for this is the prevention of infectious diseases like cholerae, plague, tuberculosis, smallpox, malaria and also the mortality rate due to natural disasters like famine, flood, drought, earthquake etc. can be prevented. Public health and medical facilities have increased. In this way, through the expansion of more maternal and child welfare services, infant mortality and deaths of women during childbirth have been effectively reduced. Life



expectancy has increased due to a reduced death rate in India. The expected age was 19.4 years in 1921 AD, 42.1 years in 1951 AD, 54 years in 1981 AD, 60.8 years in 2001 AD (60.4 years for men and 61.2 years for women) and increased to 66.90 in 2011 AD. Life expectancy is slightly higher in women than in men. advanced societies; For example, we are still far behind America, Australia, France and Japan where it is 78.3, 81-2, 80-7 and 82-6 years respectively. There is also a huge problem of ill health and malnutrition among women. Right from childhood, girls are not given the same nutrients which are given to boys. They themselves pay very little attention to the safety and health of their own bodies.

All these indicators reflect India's dismal position in terms of gender equality and women's fundamental rights. Therefore, every year the Indian government implements various schemes and programs for the empowerment of women so that women can get their benefits, but the reality is that even after the implementation of so many programs, there is no significant change in the status of women. Have got. These changes will be seen only when the ideas and prejudices already ingrained in the minds of people in the society will be changed, when the society itself will not make any difference between boys and girls and girls will not be considered as any kind of burden.

## **5. Types of gender inequality**

Gender inequality exists in many forms in every society. According to Amartya Sen, Nobel laureate in economics, gender inequality is found in all countries of the world – from Japan to Zambia, Ukraine to the United States, but inequality between men and women takes many forms. This is not a homogeneous phenomenon but a phenomenon related to many interrelated problems. According to them, gender inequality generally results in more males in the total population. Mortality inequality is most visible in North Africa and Asia (including China and South Asia).

2. **Obstetric inequality** - The availability of modern methods to determine the sex of the child in the womb itself has given rise to this form of gender inequality. After finding out through a gender test that the unborn child is a girl, abortion is done. Natality inequality is increasing in many countries, especially in East Asia, China and South Korea, as well as in India and South Asia in addition to Singapore and Taiwan. This is inequality based on high technology.



3. **Basic facility inequality:** In terms of basic facilities, inequality between men and women can be clearly seen in many countries. Till a few years ago, there was a ban on girls' education in Afghanistan. In many countries of Asia and Africa, as well as in Latin America, girls have much less access to education than boys. Apart from this, due to lack of many other basic facilities, women do not get opportunities to showcase their talents nor can they participate in many programs in the community.
4. **Inequality of Special Opportunities** – Gender based bias can be clearly seen in higher education and vocational training in highly developed and rich countries like Europe and America as well as in most other countries. This is called special opportunity inequality.
5. **Professional inequality-** Professional inequality is also found in almost all societies. In a country like Japan, where the population has access to higher education and all other basic facilities, getting employment and business is considered a much more difficult task for women than for men.
6. **Ownership inequality** – In many societies, ownership of property is unequally distributed between men and women. Even in basic household and land ownership, women lag behind men. As a result of this, women are deprived of commercial, economic and some social activities. This is called ownership inequality.
7. **Domestic inequality** - Many types of fundamental inequalities are found in gender relations within the family or home. Women have the entire responsibility of taking care of the house and raising children. In most countries, men do not help women in any way in these tasks. Men's work is considered to be done outside the home. This is a division of labor that makes women subordinate to men. This is called household inequality.

#### 6. **Reasons for gender inequality in India**

The biggest root cause of gender inequality in Indian society lies in its patriarchal system. According to the famous sociologist Sylvia Valverde, 'Patriarchy is such a process and system of social structure, in which the man dominates the woman, suppresses and exploits her.' Exploitation of women is a centuries-old cultural phenomenon of Indian society. The system of patriarchy has

gained its bond and acceptance from our religious beliefs, be they Hindu, Muslim or any other religion.

In almost all the societies of the world, the tradition of subordination of women to men is prevalent, which is called patriarchy. Due to this tradition, the head of the family is not an elderly man (grandfather, father or elder brother). Only he has the right to take all types of decisions regarding the family. Mostly he does not consider it necessary to take the opinion of the women in the family. It is the result of patriarchy that the public sector has been the domain of men, while women have been considered to belong to the private sector in the form of wife, daughter, mother, sister, whose primary responsibility is to maintain social relations, protect traditions, producing children, taking care of children and completing all the household tasks well. Women have to do all these tasks under the supervision and control of men. Men want the women in the family to live up to their aspirations.

Patriarchy is a social system in which the role of men is considered fundamentally linked to power. And in which men are considered to have rights over women, children and property. This implies power and privilege of men, as a result of which women are given a subordinate position. Most patriarchal societies are patrilineal, that is, power is transferred from father to sons. In other words, it can be said that patriarchy means the power and dominance of the father over all the members of the family. This is a social and ideological construct, in which men are considered superior to women. It can also be called a system of social structures and behaviors in which men dominate and men exploit women. Patriarchy is based on unequal power relations in which men control women's production, reproduction, and sexuality. In this system masculinity is glorified and all those rules and ideas are propagated and disseminated which help in maintaining unequal power relations between men and women.

Patriarchy is a kind of institutional system of male dominance, which is considered responsible for the oppression and exploitation of women. In this system, control over all resources is concentrated in the hands of men. The patriarchal thinking, which has led to the prevalence of division of labor based on gender, is not going to change so soon.

Another important reason for gender inequality is division of work and socialization based on gender. This gender discrimination manifests itself in sexual segregation. As boys and girls grow up, their areas become different. Their sports are also different, subjects of study are also different, values are also different and the entire preparation for life is different. The boy is considered a creature outside the home, he has to undergo professional preparation, he is prepared for the tough competition of life, whereas the girl's life is within the four walls of her home, she is involved in the kitchen, house maintenance and children. I am socialized to bring up children. He is made such a prisoner of the prison of the house that in future he starts loving his imprisonment and can live his life considering it as the goal of respect and chastity. It is clear that shame becomes her jewel and her husband God is not in her power to take risks in her ideal life, to face crisis, to oppose oppression, to raise voice against injustice. She becomes dependent and powerless. Educating a girl from childhood is still considered a bad investment because one day she will get married and will have to leave her father's house and go to another house.

Some other reasons for the low status of women due to gender inequality are extreme poverty and lack of education. Poverty and lack of education force many women to perform low-paid domestic work, engage in organized prostitution, or work as migrant labourers. Women are not only unequally paid or overworked, but also have access to low-skilled jobs with very low pay scales. This has become a major form of gender inequality. The situation of women in India is not good from the point of view of employment. Not only this, due to poverty and illiteracy they are unable to come out of stereotypes and cannot muster the courage to challenge patriarchal beliefs. That is why they play an important role in passing on gender inequality to the next generation through socialization from their own families. Not only this, due to poverty and unemployment, girls from many families start working as domestic servants at an early age instead of going to educational institutions or start helping their mothers in such work. .

On the basis of the above discussion, it can be said that women are treated unequally and discriminated against at various levels in the society, at home and outside the home.

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## **7. Legal and constitutional measures against gender inequality**

The Indian Constitution has taken many positive steps to remove gender inequality. The Preamble of the Constitution talks about providing equality of status and opportunity for all citizens with the goals of achieving social, economic and political justice for everyone. In the same sequence, women also have the right to vote. Article 15 of the Constitution also prohibits all discrimination on grounds of sex, religion, caste and place of birth. Article 15(3) empowers any State to make special provisions for children and women. Additionally, the Directive Principles of State Policy also provide for a number of provisions that help protect women and protect them from discrimination.

Apart from these constitutional and protective measures, various protective acts (legislation) have also been passed by the Parliament to eliminate the exploitation of women and to give them equal status in the society. For example, under the Sati Abolition Act 1987, the practice of Sati was abolished and this inhuman act was made a punishable offence. Separate Residence and Maintenance Act 1949, Hindu Marriage Act 1955, Hindu Succession Act 1956, Hindu Minor and Guardianship Act 1956, Prevention of Immoral Traffic of Women and Girls Act 1956, Maternity Benefit Act 1961 and 1976 are also important from this point of view.

Dowry Prohibition Act 1961 (amended in 1986) was passed to end the practice of dowry, Special Marriage Act, 1954 to give legal status to the marriage of inter-caste or inter-religion married couples, giving equal rights to women as men. Equal Remuneration Act 1976 for paying salaries, Child Marriage Restraint Act 1978 to stop child marriages still happening in India, Factories (Amendment) Act 1976 for the safety of women and other employees in factories, Immoral Act 1976 to stop immoral acts like prostitution among women. Trade (Prevention) Act 1986, Prohibition of Indecent Representation of Women Act 1986 to ban semi-nude display of women in various media of mass communication, Muslim Women Divorce Act 1986 have been passed to provide divorce facilities to Muslim women.

The Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Bill, which was introduced in Parliament in 1991 to prevent female feticide and other similar acts, was passed in 1994. Apart from this, from time to time, Parliament keeps making many reforms in the

applicable rules as per the changing circumstances of the society, keeping in mind the safety of women. For example, Section 304B of the Indian Penal Code 1860 makes the death of a dowry bride or the evil act of burning the bride to death a special crime and punishable with life imprisonment. In 2005, the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 was passed to prevent violence against women within the home. In view of the increasing incidents of rape against women and girls, provision of very strict rules has been made. Which also includes the death penalty.

Although the above mentioned constitutional and protective measures have been adopted for women in India, their desired results have not been achieved. That is why even today the situation of women is very different from this. Despite all these provisions, women in the country are still treated like second class citizens, men consider them merely a means to fulfill their sexual desires, women are prohibited from being with them inside the house, at workplaces and other public places. The atrocities are at their dangerous level, the dowry system is still prevalent and every year many newlyweds are sacrificed for the sake of dowry. Despite strict legal provisions, female feticide is a norm in our homes and even educated couples do not hesitate in doing prenatal sex determination. It seems that even today the birth of a girl child is inauspicious for such people.

## **8. Suggestions to end gender inequality**

Gender inequality and women's problems are deeply linked to the Indian social structure. Unless structural changes are made in the patriarchal and male-dominated society, there will be no significant change in the status of women. To solve the problems related to gender inequality and women, Mahajan and Mahajan have presented the following suggestions -

- 1. Legal reforms** - With the participation and advice of women's organizations, an Indian Women's Act should be passed which provides clear orders on issues like marriage, inheritance, property, sex, procreation etc. Every adult woman of India should be given the right to adopt this Act and avail its benefits without any discrimination on the basis of religion, caste or community.

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2. **Spread of women's education:** Women's education should not only be made compulsory but scholarships should also be given to girls from poor families. Women hostels should be arranged. This education should be commercialized in the modern sense. It is even better if there is a production center along with schools. The objective of women's education should be to make women economically self-reliant.
  3. **Encouragement for employment and self-employment–** More and more employment should be encouraged among women. For this, the government should adopt a policy of reservation and protective discrimination. Women should get all the facilities which are available to backward classes or scheduled castes and tribes.
  4. **Fundamental right to motherhood–** Every woman should have the fundamental right to motherhood, whether within or outside marriage. This is his natural right, it should be made constitutional. Along with this, he should also have absolute physical rights and he should have ownership over his body. No one else, no matter who he is, has the right to physically use women against their will.
  5. **Encouragement and assistance to women's organizations:** Women should be encouraged to form their own organizations at the local level. Their organizations should be given assistance.
  6. **Front against symbols -** Gender discrimination exists deeply at the symbolic level. There are many examples of this; Such as - the compulsion to write Kumari or Shrimati before a woman's name, compulsion for married women to wear vermilion, bangles, nettles and mangalsutra, compulsion for married women to keep fast for their husband and son, etc. A campaign should be launched against this and these feudal or primitive remnants should be eliminated.
  7. **Women empowerment –** Women empowerment is considered a strong solution to remove gender inequality. Today special attention is being paid to this in all nations. For this empowerment, women will have to make the following efforts-
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- Women have to critically understand the reasons and processes that hinder their empowerment.
- Women will have to increase their self-esteem and change their perception of being powerless.
- Women must increase their access to natural, monetary and intellectual resources.
- Women must gain confidence, knowledge, information and capabilities to intervene in social, economic and political structures and processes.
- Women will have to increase their control and participation in decision making processes inside and outside the family and community.
- Women will have to move towards new roles which till now have been considered only the domain of men.

“Women must challenge and change the unjust and inequitable beliefs, practices, structures and institutions that contribute to gender inequality.

Lastly, the biggest suggestion is that in today's era nothing is achieved without effort. That is why the woman herself will have to individually and collectively find a solution to the reasons responsible for her above mentioned situation and think seriously about their solution. No one can give anyone his rights. We have to take our own rights and protect them. This is not an easy task. It is not so easy to change the social institutions, systems and values that have been going on for centuries, but it is also not impossible to achieve this goal through collective efforts.

## **9. Conclusion**

Patriarchy is considered to be the biggest reason for gender inequality in the entire world including India. Patriarchy not only maintains itself through certain structures and actions, but the basis of its continuity is ideology. In fact, patriarchal ideology is the most hegemonic one, which applies in all areas of human interaction. This ideology transfers patriarchal culture from generation to generation and controls people's social and political intelligence, thinking ability and role performance. This ideology works through the duality of good-bad, moral-immoral, married-



unmarried, mother-unmarried, female prostitute, in which women have to compromise to maintain their identity and get the approval of the society. This duality in values and thoughts is reflected in the family. It is active in all areas like religion, state, education, marriage, law, economy, health etc., which values and ideals are considered appropriate for men, they are essentially

Not considered appropriate for women.

Patriarchy is not only an ideology, but it is also a method of behavior. The ideology of patriarchy flourishes through the process of institutionalization of social, cultural and religious behavior in the society. The political, legal and economic sub-systems of the society also give it a logical form. Women internalize patriarchal patterns of behavior and also help in transmitting patriarchal thinking and behavior from generation to generation through the process of socialization. This is such a complex system of behavior that considers women subordinate to men and justifies their exploitation, discrimination and oppression. Women get trapped in this vicious cycle of patriarchal behavior even without wanting to. They help in maintaining patriarchal behavior by distinguishing between boys and girls through the process of socialization.

Indian society is also a patriarchal society. In this, except the Vedic era, the status of women has been lower than that of men and the main reason for this is considered to be patriarchy. Patriarchal ideology and behavior patterns are prevalent in some form or the other from the post-Vedic period till today. Many examples of this still exist in Indian society. For example, traditionally the transfer of property to boys and girls not having rights over property is considered to be the result of the patriarchal system. Even today, girls are considered alien property, they are discriminated against in education and employment, they are becoming victims not only of domestic violence but also of various forms of violence outside the family. It is the result of patriarchal culture that the ideals which are considered appropriate for men are not for women. Due to this unequal social acceptance, it is easy for a man to remarry after becoming a widower, even if he has children. On the contrary, remarriage of a widow woman is very difficult. These dual beliefs have played an important role in Indian society in confining women to the four walls of the house for centuries. Even today, if a boy or a girl commits any wrongdoing, the girl and her family have to suffer defamation. It seems as if the boy has no fault at all. The preference for boys

is resulting in female feticide in the womb itself, as a result of which the male-female sex ratio in Indian society is continuously decreasing. Indian society has paid a huge price for this gender discrimination. The society has been deprived of the contribution of almost fifty percent of these women. Even children raised in the laps of frustrated and unhappy mothers cannot be brave and progressive.

If anyone thinks that the goal of gender equality will be achieved in just a few years, he is delusional. The patriarchal system that has been going on for centuries is not going to change suddenly. As a result of women's education and employment and government and non-government efforts, this structure is changing, but the pace of change is very slow. It is natural for this to happen because being a system of thousands of years, its roots are so deep that they will weaken with time. Therefore, we should abandon the pessimistic approach and continuously strive for gender equality.

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