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Research Papers Factors Responsible for Gender Inequality

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ABSTRACT

Across diverse global contexts—rural Ghana, post-Soviet Lithuania, and community forestry in India—gender inequality emerges as a persistent structural barrier impeding development, equity, and sustainability. In rural Kyebi, Ghana, despite initiatives by the government to redress disparities, entrenched cultural norms and socialization practices continue to marginalize women, denying them equitable access to social, physical, and economic capital; a qualitative study based on in-depth interviews with 25 participants under scores the urgent need for targeted research and robust policy interventions to bolster women's active participation in socio-economic development [1]. In Lithuania, although the Soviet legacy positioned women as equal contributors to economic production and yielded notably high female participation in managerial and professional sectors by 1990, this numerical parity did not extend uniformly across all domains; qualitative survey and interview data from 31 women architects reveal that despite the existence of critical mass, EU gender policies, and the formal emphasis on equality, women still confront pervasive sex discrimination, harassment, and constrained career advancement [2]. Meanwhile, Bina Agarwal's comprehensive examination of gender inequality within India's environmental governance illustrates that inequalities are both ideologically yembedded—rooted in differential economic endowments and normative perceptions—and institutionally produced through governance systems; these multifaceted inequalities compromise the nature and quality of cooperation (voluntary or otherwise) in local commons management, as evidenced by community forest case studies showing that greater inclusion of women in decision-making leads to enhanced rule formation and improved forest outcomes [3].

Together, these studies illuminate a constellation of themes: the disjunction between formal parity and substantive equality; the cultural and normative systems that sustain women's marginalization; and the critical impact of women's participation on governance, development, and sustainability. Policy implications across these contexts are profound: in Ghana, reforms must interrogate and transform cultural norms and resource access; in Lithuania, workplace equality needs reinforcement through measures that address discrimination and harassment in practice, not just policy; and in India, environmental and commons governance mechanisms must institutionalize women's agency and leadership to achieve both equity and ecological resilience. These comparative insights underscore that beyond legislative or constitutional declarations of equality, tangible progress hinges on dismantling entrenched socio-cultural barriers, reforming institutional structures, and forging inclusive governance that genuinely empowers women.

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Keywords: Gender inequality, cooperation, environmental sustainability, community, forestry, India

INTRODUCTION

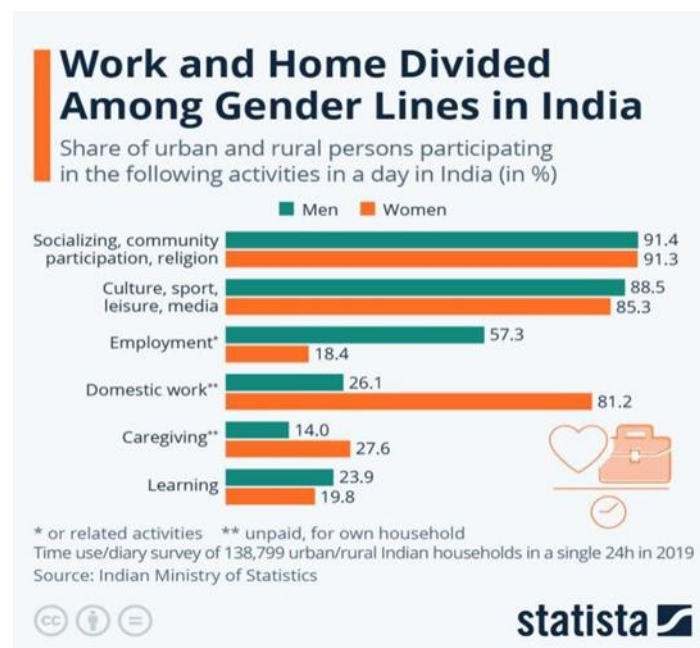
Among the numerous pressing issues faced by modern society, gender inequality continues to be one of the most pervasive and deeply rooted. Nature has created men and women as equals; any distinction between them is merely biological. Yet, social customs and cultural traditions across the world have institutionalized inequality between genders in various forms. Gender inequality, or gender discrimination, refers to the unequal treatment of individuals based solely on their gender. It manifests as differences in rights, responsibilities, and opportunities, resulting in a persistent imbalance in social and economic participation. Gender inequality acts as a significant barrier to a nation's progress and human development. It perpetuates social evils such as violence against women, femicide, rape, honour killings, misogynistic behaviour, sex-selective abortions, female genital mutilation, and human trafficking. These injustices not only violate basic human rights but also create demographic and social imbalances that hinder sustainable growth. Although the distinction between men and women is a natural, biological fact, gender inequality is a social construct, emerging from cultural norms and

patriarchal ideologies rather than natural differences. In India, gender disparity remains a critical concern. According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2011 by the World Economic Forum, India ranked 113 out of 135 countries. Alarming, this position declined further in the Global Gender Gap Report 2022, where India stood at 135 among 146 nations, reflecting a worsening scenario. This inequality persists despite constitutional safeguards such as Article 15 of the Indian Constitution, which prohibits discrimination on the grounds of gender, religion, caste, or place of birth. The lived reality, however, reveals that a large section of women are still denied equal rights and opportunities. In many parts of India, the birth of a male child is celebrated, while the birth of a girl often goes unnoticed or even lamented. This preference for sons has historically led to gender-biased practices, from female infanticide to systemic neglect of women throughout their lives. The roots of gender inequality in India can be traced to the patriarchal structure of society, which privileges men and positions women as subordinate. As sociologist Sylvia Walby (1989) described, patriarchy is a system of social structures and practices through which men dominate, oppress, and exploit women. Furthermore, as Jayachandran (2015) notes, this discrimination is especially entrenched in developing countries like India, where economic, cultural, and educational disparities reinforce unequal gender relations. Gender inequality differs from other forms of inequality such as class, caste, or race in several ways. It not only exists in the public domain but also originates within the household— affecting decision-making, access to resources, and distribution of responsibilities. Traditional economic theories have often treated the household as a unified unit with shared interests, but empirical research challenges this assumption. Power dynamics and bargaining influence who controls resources and who benefits from them. Moreover, gender inequality is not solely rooted in material differences but also in social norms and ideologies that perpetuate the belief in male superiority. These gendered perceptions operate across social categories, intensifying other existing inequalities. In essence, gender inequality is both a cause and a consequence of social and institutional structures. It persists not only due to pre-existing disparities but also because of exclusionary practices embedded within governance, education, and economic systems. Addressing this issue, therefore, requires a comprehensive understanding of its multidimensional nature and a commitment to reforming both the material and ideological foundations of society.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Gender inequality remains a complex and multidimensional global issue that affects social, economic, cultural, and political domains. Studies across different countries reveal how historical, cultural, and institutional factors continue to perpetuate unequal gender relations. In Ghana, for instance, a qualitative study on Gender Inequality and Rural Development in Kyebi, Ashanti Region of Ghana highlights how deep-rooted cultural norms and social expectations restrict women's participation in rural development, calling for policy interventions to promote gender-inclusive growth. Similarly, research from India on Gender Inequality, Cooperation, and Environmental Sustainability emphasizes how women's limited involvement in community forestry weakens collective environmental management. In post-Soviet Lithuania, Gender Equality and the Status of Women Architects shows that despite legal equality, women still encounter discrimination and slower career advancement.

In the Indian context, multiple studies underscore persistent disparities across sectors. Gender Inequality and Its Multidimensional Impact on India's Economic and Social Development highlights inequalities in education, employment, health, and cultural domains, while Determinants of Women's Inadequacy Across Basic Development Indicators in India attributes these disparities to patriarchal norms that restrict women's empowerment. Cultural and religious legitimization also plays a key role, as discussed in Culture, Religion, and Legitimization of Women's Subordination in Hindu Society, which explores how traditional Hindu beliefs reinforce gender hierarchies. Cultural Norms and Gender-Based Discrimination in India and Patriarchy and Gender Inequality in Indian Society further argue that conventional gender roles and male dominance persist despite legal and social reforms, limiting women's social and economic freedom.



Educational inequality also remains a major contributor to gender disparity. As noted in *Gender Inequality in Education: Causes and Consequences* and *Economic and Cultural Determinants of Gender Disparities in Schooling in India*, social norms, economic conditions, and gender bias often prevent girls from receiving equal access to quality education. On a broader scale, *Gender Inequality as a Global Social Discrimination Issue* and *Development, Culture, and Gender Inequality in Developing Countries* reveal that the roots of inequality lie in the intersection of culture and underdevelopment, which reproduce unequal gender norms across societies. Finally, studies such as *Women's Marginalization and Human Rights in India* and *Gender Equality, Democracy, and the Politics of Inclusion* emphasize that gender equality is not only a social or economic issue but also a democratic and human rights concern, requiring inclusive representation and egalitarian reforms.

Collectively, these studies demonstrate that gender inequality whether in Ghana, India, or Lithuania arises from a blend of cultural traditions, patriarchal norms, and socio-economic factors that shape women's opportunities and constrain their agency in both public and private spheres.

MAJOR PROBLEMS RESPONSIBLE FOR GENDER INEQUALITY

Among numerous hot issues in the world gender inequality is the utmost blazing issue. Nature has made men and women equal if there is any difference that's only natural. Both are equal indeed however, the customs of inequality on the base of gender is observed in each country of the world in one or the way. The term gender inequality or gender demarcation can be defined as demarcation against women grounded on their coitus. It can also be defined as uneven rights between men and women grounded on their part which leads to uneven treatment in life. In simple words gender inequality means the uneven treatment of existent on the base of gender. Gender inequality is like a hitch for progress of a country and for the development of mortal because it creates crimes against women. Violence, femicide, rape, honour payoff, misogynistic violence, womanish genital mutilation, coitus- picky revocation, mortal trafficking, and sexual exploitations. These are over said crimes against humanity and they produce demographic imbalances. Gender inequality came into actuality due to artistic differences of gender and these artistic differences are socially constructed. Nature has discerned the men and women on coitus bases. The difference in gender does n't show any demarcation. Gender inequality is a type of social demarcation. Due to this social demarcation ladies are floundering for equivalency and this is the most threatening issue for women far and wide in the world. India is also not lacking before in this issue according to Global gender indicator 2011 released by World Economic Forum ranking of India is 113 out of 135 countries. This is a worst ranking as India is the most fleetly developing country in the world the most dangerous effects is that this ranking is falling down time by time as India stands at position of 135 in gender difference in the list of 146 countries in global gender indicator 2022 according to the report of World Economic forum. Demarcation on the base of gender is generally traduced civil rights in our society which is violated every day. Though composition 15 of the Indian Constitution provides safety to all the citizens of India that nothing can distinguish them on the base of gender, religion, estate or place of birth but still maturity of women are unfit to get their rights duly

which are assured to them India struggles with gender inequality issues beyond just equal profitable growth and access to educational resource openings. Gender inequality exists in the form of socially constructed, predefined gender places forcefully anchored in India's sociocultural fabric that has deep artistic and literal roots. Sociocultural influences have spillover goods across all disciplines, including the organizational pool, and social and political surrounds. This irrefutable influence is still accepted as the norm within the societal and domestic fringe.

FACTORS AFFECTING THE GENDER INDIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Education System there are multitudinous and colorful links between gender equivalency and the realisation of the abecedarian right to education. Jha & Nagar(2015)(3) have examined the gender demarcation in India on the base of demographic, social, profitable and political environment. Women and girls are denied rights not only in India but in other countries as well the occasion to admit an education(*Gender Demarcation in Education*, 2012). Two of the main causes of a lack of education worldwide are poverty and insulation from other people. Geographic insulation can have an impact on a child's eligibility for an education. Children in pastoral areas might have to travel for hours to get to academy. pastoral seminaries do live in some areas, but they frequently offer a poor education. The child could have expressing their opinions in situations involving decision making. They were anticipated to follow the morals and opinions made by men because they reckoned on their stipend to support their living conditions. As a result, they educated demarcation and were denied access to some possibilities due to the dominance of traditional Perspectives. Traditional adolescent behaviours constantly have an impact on how girls learn to read and write. Certain traditional customs are more common in some pastoral communities, which can make it delicate for girls to pursue their education(Linda, 2014). Girls are averted from acquiring an education as well as achieving tone-independence due to the frequency of traditional ideas and perspectives. In other words, there are obstacles to carrying possibilities for commission. thus, it's essential to modify old stations and entitlement women and girls equal rights and chances in order to create opportunities for female empowerment.

· Structure in seminaries

The establishment of a suitable and affable literacy terrain and the pursuit of academic pretensions are considered to be significantly told by the academy structure. The staff of educational institutions are able of doing their duties in an systematized manner thanks to the provision of suitable infrastructural installations. also, the pupils are suitable to enjoy themselves in academy and come more motivated to learn. According to exploration, a lack of acceptable structure amenities causes scholars to constantly drop out before honing their academic bents. For girls in particular, this is true. Restrooms, public amenities, conveyance installations, playgrounds, classrooms, library installations, labs, and general academy terrain conditions include cabinetwork, outfit, accoutrements , and technology are among the pivotal academy structure installations that are necessary to ameliorate the educational system. The preceptors, workers, and scholars will feel happy and content in their working terrain when these structure amenities are well- maintained. It's egregious

that seminaries need to give suitable tutoring and literacy coffers, library coffers, wisdom-related labs, and computer installations centres in order to help literacy. Both preceptors and scholars will be able of conducting the educational processes in an systematized manner when they have access to these installations. In India, civic regions generally, have well- developed structure. These, still, are n't well established in pastoral areas. thus, it is pivotal to develop programs to enhance the physical amenities in pastoral seminaries. The vacuity of suitable structure installations would enhance pupil registration and ameliorate the retention rat.

· Discriminative geste towards the girls

According to research, girls and women continue to face discrimination in many parts of society, especially in poor and underprivileged communities. This discrimination can be seen in several ways — girls are often denied equal access to education, job opportunities, and property ownership. They are also excluded from taking part in important decision-making processes and are discouraged from sharing their opinions or participating in social and economic activities. In many rural areas, traditional beliefs and social customs play a major role in continuing these practices. Families often believe that educating girls or allowing them to grow older before marriage will make it harder to find a suitable husband for them. Because of this mindset, many parents marry their daughters at a very young age and train them for domestic responsibilities instead of sending them to school. This not only limits their personal growth but also affects the overall development of society. To reduce such practices, the Government of India introduced several laws and programs, the most important being the Child Marriage Prohibition Act of 2006. This law made child marriages illegal, increased penalties for those who conduct them, and allowed courts to take necessary action. It also made such marriages voidable at the request of the minor involved, within two years of reaching adulthood. According to the Act, the legal age of marriage in India is 21 years for men and 18 years for women. These steps were taken to protect young girls from early marriage and to ensure that they get proper education, freedom, and equal opportunities in life.

Child marriage

Child Marriage When a couple marries while they're under the age of 18, it is known as a child marriage. Child marriage has a dangerous impact on people, especially girls. youthful girls who get wedded are generally averted from pursuing an education, engaging in work prospects, and taking part in other nonage conditioning. All that's anticipated of them is that they stay in their houses, carry out ménage duties, and attend to other family members' solicitations and requirements. addition to these. These include pupil entrance, pupil retention, and academic achievement. The parents profession has a significant impact on these variables. There is a rise in the admission and retention rates of the pupils when the parents work by well- paying and estimable jobs also, they're suitable to get high marks on their systems and examinations. On the other side, there's a reduction in the admission and retention rate of the pupils as well as lapses in their academic performance when parents are employed in low- paying nonage employment or are unemployed. In order to cover their fiscal situation, it is pivotal for the folks to engage in work options.

ISSUES AND PROBLEMS FACED BY WOMEN IN INDIA Issues and Problems faced by Women in India

There are various issues and problems which women generally face in the society in India. Some of the problems are mentioned and described below:

1. Selective abortion and female infanticide: It is the most common practice for years in India in which abortion of female fetus is performed in the womb of mother after the fetal sex determination and sex selective abortion by the medical professionals.
2. Sexual harassment: It is the form of sexual exploitation of a girl child at home, streets, public places, transports, offices, etc by the family members, neighbors, friends or relatives.
3. Dowry and Bride burning: It is another problem generally faced by women of low or middle class family during or after the marriage. Parents of boys demand a lot of money from the bride's family to be rich in one time. Groom's family perform bride burning in case of lack of fulfilled dowry demand. In 2005, around 6787 dowry death cases were registered in India according to the Indian

National Crime Bureau reports.

4. Disparity in education: The level of women education is less than men still in the modern age. nFemale illiteracy id higher in the rural areas. Where over 63% or more women remain unlettered.
5. Domestic violence: nit is like endemic and widespread disease affects almost 70% of Indian women according to then women and child development official. It is performed by the husband, relative or other family member.
6. Child Marriages: Early marriage of the girls by their parents in order to be escaped from dowry. It is highly practiced in the rural India.
7. Inadequate Nutrition: Inadequate nutrition in the childhood affects women in their later life especially women belonging to the lower middle class and poor family

Objectives

The main objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To identify and analyze the major factors social, cultural, economic, and political that lead to gender inequality in society.

This study aims to explore how traditions, beliefs, and systems built over time still influence how men and women are treated. By studying these areas, the research hopes to uncover how different aspects of society combine to create visible and invisible barriers for women.

2. To examine the gap in educational and employment opportunities between men and women, and how it affects their economic independence.

Education and work opportunities are the foundation of empowerment. This objective focuses on understanding how the lack of equal access to learning and jobs can hold women back from achieving financial freedom and self-reliance.

3. To understand the role of traditional beliefs, stereotypes, and family structures in shaping gender roles.

From a very young age, both boys and girls are taught what's "expected" of them. This study seeks to understand how such ideas shape identity, confidence, and opportunities, and how they often lead to unequal treatment within families and communities.

4. To assess the level of awareness regarding gender equality laws and rights among the general public.

Laws exist to protect individuals, but they are only effective when people know about them. This objective aims to explore how aware people actually are of the rights and legal safeguards available to ensure equality and protect against discrimination.

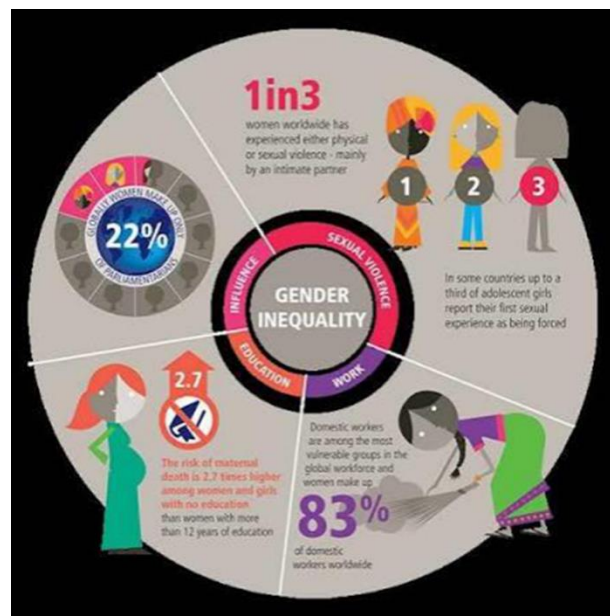
5. To explore the impact of government policies and programs designed to reduce gender inequality.

Governments and organizations have introduced several initiatives for women's education, employment, and safety. This research will look into how successful these programs have been in bringing real change in people's lives and mindsets.

6. To collect and evaluate public perception about gender equality in the modern era.

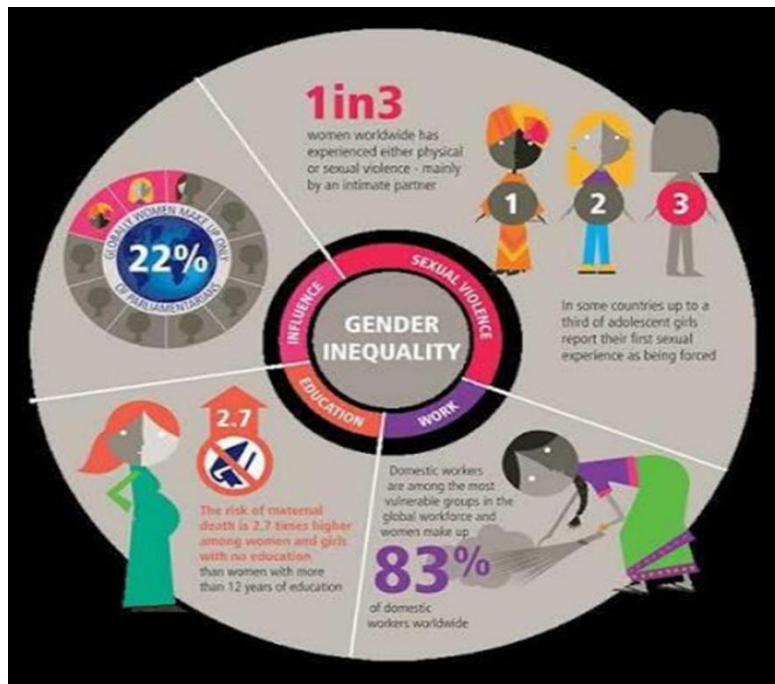
Society's attitude plays a major role in change. This objective seeks to understand how people today view gender equality — whether they feel the situation is improving, and what challenges still remain in achieving true balance.

To recommend possible solutions and strategies for reducing gender-based disparities in various sectors. Finally, based on the findings, the research aims to suggest practical and human-centered steps that can help reduce inequality — improving education

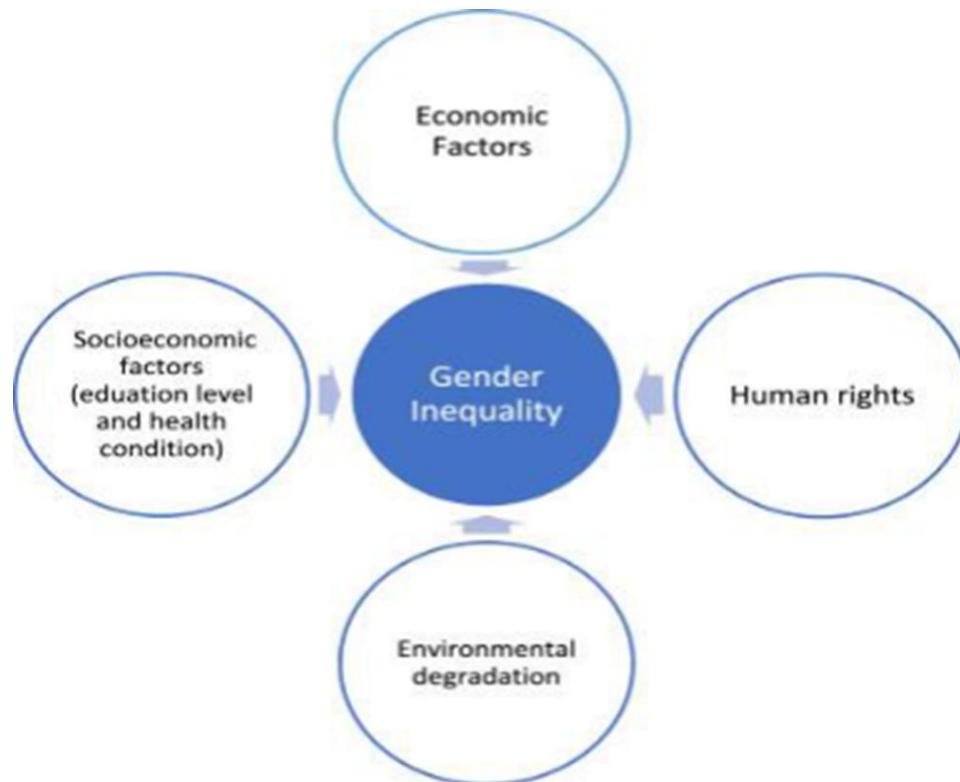


Findings

The findings highlight the key factors contributing to gender inequality across social, economic, and political areas. They show how differences in education, health, and employment impact women's empowerment and opportunities, emphasising the need for stronger equality measures and awareness.

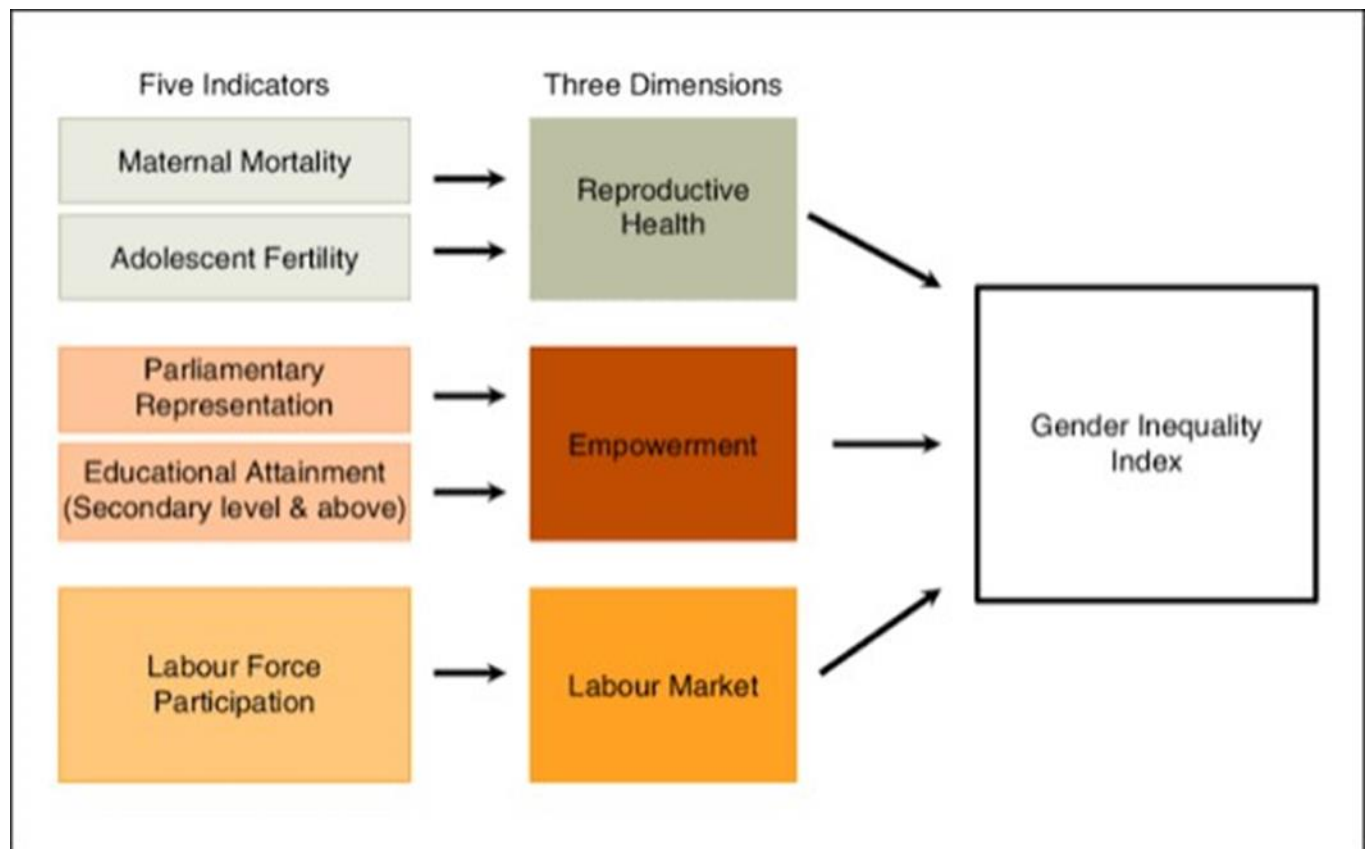


This graph highlights the persistent and widespread nature of gender inequality across various sectors. It reveals that one in three women globally has experienced physical or sexual violence, often from an intimate partner. Only 22% of parliamentary seats are occupied by women, showing limited female representation in decision-making positions. Moreover, the risk of maternal death is 2.7 times higher among uneducated women, linking educational inequality directly with poor health outcomes. The statistic that 83% of domestic workers are women reflects gender-based occupational segregation, where women are often confined to informal and low-paying jobs. The data also uncovers the alarming reality that many adolescent girls experience forced sexual encounters. Altogether, the graph underscores that gender inequality is deeply embedded in social, political, and economic systems, demanding stronger global efforts in education, empowerment, and gender-sensitive policy-making.



The second graph categorizes the major contributors to gender inequality into four key dimensions—economic, human rights, environmental, and socioeconomic factors. Economic inequality arises from wage gaps, unemployment, and unequal access to financial resources. Human rights violations persist when women are denied political participation, education, or freedom of choice. Environmental degradation disproportionately affects women, particularly in rural areas where they rely on natural resources for survival. Socioeconomic factors, including low

literacy and poor health, further restrict women's ability to achieve equality. The graph emphasizes that these issues are interconnected; improving one area without addressing the others cannot achieve sustainable equality. Thus, collective action through education, fair employment, and women-centric laws is necessary to eliminate these deeply rooted disparities.



The third graph explains the structure of the Gender Inequality Index (GII), which measures disparities through three dimensions—reproductive health, empowerment, and labor participation. Reproductive health is assessed through maternal mortality and adolescent fertility rates, reflecting women's access to healthcare. Empowerment is measured by women's representation in parliament and higher education, showing their influence and independence. The labor market participation rate highlights the gap between men and women in employment. Together, these indicators present a comprehensive picture of inequality in different societies. A higher GII value signifies greater inequality and limited access to opportunities for women. The framework helps policymakers identify priority areas and develop targeted strategies to reduce inequality, promote inclusive growth, and empower women across all sectors.

Solutions and Recommendations

To effectively reduce gender inequality, it is important to address the root causes—social, cultural, economic, and political—that were identified in the study. The following solutions aim to create equal opportunities and a fair environment for all genders:

1. Promote Equal Education Opportunities:

Ensuring equal access to quality education for girls and boys is one of the strongest ways to close the gender gap. Scholarships, awareness drives, and community-based programs should be implemented to encourage families to educate girls, especially in rural areas.

2. Encourage Women's Economic Participation:

Governments and private organisations should promote women's employment through skill development programs, equal pay policies, and support for women entrepreneurs. Financial independence empowers women to make their own life choices.

3. Challenge Social Norms and Stereotypes:

Awareness campaigns, school programs, and media representation should focus on breaking gender stereotypes. Promoting shared household responsibilities and gender-sensitive education can help change traditional mindsets.

4. Strengthen Legal Awareness and Implementation:

Laws promoting gender equality already exist, but many people are unaware of them. Regular workshops, community legal aid, and stricter enforcement are needed to ensure that women know their rights and can seek justice confidently.

5. Increase Political and Leadership Participation:

Encouraging women to take part in decision-making roles—through reservations, mentorship, and training—will ensure that women’s perspectives are represented in governance and policy-making.

6. Promote Health and Safety Initiatives:

Equal access to healthcare, reproductive rights, and workplace safety must be ensured. Awareness programs on health and rights can improve women’s quality of life and independence.

7. Encourage Male Participation in Equality Efforts:

Men must be part of the conversation. Promoting empathy, respect, and shared responsibilities among both genders helps build balanced relationships and a more inclusive society.

Conclusion

Gender inequality remains one of the most pressing social challenges of our time, deeply rooted in cultural traditions, economic systems, and institutional structures. Despite progressive laws, policies, and awareness programs, the gap between men and women continues to persist, particularly in areas of education, employment, health, and political representation. The findings of this study make it clear that inequality is not merely a result of economic imbalance but is also shaped by long-standing societal norms and stereotypes that limit women’s potential.

To achieve true equality, change must begin at multiple levels — within families, communities, and institutions. Equal education, fair employment opportunities, and the active participation of women in leadership and decision-making roles are essential steps toward empowerment. Furthermore, both men and women must work together to challenge discriminatory practices and redefine gender roles in a way that values cooperation and respect.

In essence, gender equality is not just a women’s issue; it is a human issue — one that determines the overall progress, justice, and harmony of society. Sustainable development, therefore, depends on building a world where every individual, regardless of gender, has equal access to rights, resources, and opportunities to shape their own future.

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