

GENDER EQUALITY A PATH TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Dr. P. Firoz Babu,

Assistant Professor,

Department of Social Work, Sri Krishndevaraya University, Anantapuramu, Andhra Pradesh, India.

ABSTRACT

Sustainable Development is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs. Sustainable development encourages us to think about how to improve economies and societies without compromising the natural environment or the well-being of future generations. Gender Equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. The objectives of the paper is to study the need of gender equality for development, to study the importance of gender equality for sustainable development, role of education for empowering women and girls. Since Indian society is patriarchal in nature so in almost every sector women are tried to discriminate and dominated by the male counterparts. Therefore, it is very important to know about gender issues and how those issues can be solved. Education is one of the key element to empower women and girls and to bring parity in the society. For achieving sustainability of the nation the government must take initiatives in policy formulation, interaction and awareness programme should be organized, health care services etc. should be provided for the benefits of the society and humanity at large.

INTRODUCTION

GENDER EQUALITY

Equality or non-discrimination is that state where every individual gets equal opportunities and rights. Every individual of the society yearns for equal status, opportunity, and rights. However, it is a general observation that there exists lots of discrimination between humans. Discrimination exists because of cultural differences, geographical differences, and gender. Inequality based on gender is a concern that is prevalent in the entire world. Even in the 21st century, across globe men and women do not enjoy equal privileges. Gender equality means providing equal opportunities to both men and women in political, economic, education and health aspects.

In a society, everyone has the right to lead his/her life accordingly without any discrimination. When this state is achieved where all individuals are considered to be equal irrespective of their caste, gender, colour, profession, and status, we call it equality. Equality can also be defined as the situation where every individual has the same rights and equal opportunity to grow and prosper.

Every individual of society dreams for equal rights and access to resources available at their disposal, but there is a lot of discrimination. This discrimination can be due to cultural differences, geographical differences, the colour of the individual, social status and even gender. The most prevalent discrimination is gender inequality. It is not a localised issue and is limited to only certain spheres of life but is prevalent across the globe. Even in progressive societies and top organisations, we can see many examples of gender bias.

Gender equality can only be achieved when both male and female individuals are treated similarly. But discrimination is a social menace that creates division. We stop being together and stand together to tackle our problems. This social stigma has been creeping into the underbelly of all of society for many centuries. This has also been witnessed in gender-based cases. Gender inequality is the thing of the past as both men and women are creating history in all segments together.

The reality of gender inequality in India is very complex and diversified because it is present in many ways, many fields and many classes. Over the past decade, gender equality and women 's empowerment have been explicitly recognized as a key to the social and economic development of the nation.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable Development is the organizing principle for meeting the human development goals while at the same time sustaining the ability of natural systems to provide the natural resources and ecosystem services upon which the economy and society depends. Sustainable Development can also be defined as- Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is about equipping individuals, communities, groups, business and government to live and act sustainably as well as giving them an understanding of the environment, social and economic success. It is about preparing for the world in which we will live

in the next century and making sure that we are not found wanting. There are three aspects which sustainable development, they are Social Development, Economic Development and Environmental Development.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Social Development involves learning the values, knowledge and skills that enable children to relate other effectively and to contribute in positive ways to family, school and the community. As children develop socially, their relationship with others grow and create awareness of social values and expectations and they build a sense of who they are and play an active role in the society.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development is the process by which a nation improves the economic status of the people from low income to high income economy. It aims at economic and social well-being of the people by raising their standard of living.

ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENT

Environment is the sum total of all the living and non- living things that surround us. Environmental Development aims at preserving and conserving and equitable use of the natural resources of the environment without compromising the needs of the present and future generation.

OBJECTIVES

- To study the need of gender equality
- To study the importance of gender equality for sustainable development
- To study role of education for empowering women and girls.
- To study ways to promote gender equality

SIGNIFICANCE

Gender inequality is one of the important issues in present society which can be seen in different sectors of the society. Women are bullied and tried to dominate by their male counterparts in every aspects. Even the women are unaware of their own rights so it is only education which can make them aware of their rights and duties and provide opportunities to fight against the evil practices prevailing in the society. This paper will help us to understand the gender issues and how can we tackle the issues to achieve sustainable development.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used was descriptive method.

DATA COLLECTION

The data is collected from secondary sources like journals, articles, books and internet sources.

DISCUSSION

1. NEED FOR GENDER EQUALITY We need gender equality to

- End all forms of discriminations against women and girls everywhere.
- Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
- Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage
- Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate
- Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life
- Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights
- To promote the empowerment of women

- Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality.

2 . IMPORTANCE OF GENDER EQUALITY:

Gender equality is rightfully an urgent mandate for all, as no society can develop-economically, politically, or socially-when half its population is sidelined. And this is universal reality. This impacts our present and future.

It is an undisputable fact that when girls and women enjoy equal participation, access and opportunities, they can transform their entire lives and that of the world.

A nation needs to value every gender equally to progress at the right place. A society attains better development in all aspects when both genders are entitled to similar opportunities. Equal rights in decision making, health, politics, infrastructure, profession, etc will surely advance our society to a new level. The social stigma of women staying inside the house has changed.

A nation can progress and attain higher development growth only when both men and women are entitled to equal opportunities. Women in the society are often cornered and are refrained from getting equal rights as men to health, education, decision-making and economic independence in terms of wages.

The social structure that prevails since long in such a way that girls do not get equal opportunities as men. Women generally are the caregivers in the family. Because of this, women are mostly involved in household activities. There is lesser participation of women in higher education, decision-making roles, and leadership roles. This gender disparity is a hindrance in the growth rate of a country. When women participate in the workforce increases the economic growth rate of the country increases. Gender equality increases the overall wellbeing of the nation along with economic prosperity.

Gender equality prevents violence against women and girls. It's essential for economic prosperity. Societies that value women and men as equal are safer and healthier.

Gender equality builds the nation. In this century, women and men enjoy the same privileges. The perception is changing slowly but steadily. People are now becoming more aware of their rights and what they can do in a free society. It has been found that when women and men hold the same position and participate equally, society progresses exclusively and creates a landmark. When a community reaches gender equality, everyone enjoys the same privileges and gets similar scopes in education, health, occupation, and political aspect. Even in the family, when both male and female members are treated in the same way, it is the best place to grow, learn, and add great value.

Nowadays, girls are equally competing with boys in school. They are also creating landmark development in their respective profession. Women are now seeking economic independence before they get married. It gives them the confidence to stand against oppression and make better decisions for themselves.

3. ROLE OF EDUCATION:

Education and literacy empowers women. Women empowerment is a global issue and discussion on women and political right are at the fore front of many formal and informal campaigns worldwide. The concept of women empowerment was introduced at the international women conference at Naroibi in 1985. Education is milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to response to the challenges , to confront their traditional role and changed their life. The only way a society or nation can move forward and aspire to growth and development is not just through education-but especially education among the women citizens. In order to provide equal status in the society women need to be empowered. Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom for development.

Education liberates the mind by opening up the mind to various sources of knowledge like places, people and possibilities. An educated women will also be a liberated women.

Education enables to break down all barriers – religious, linguistic, political, gender and geographical. An educated women will not discriminate others on the basis of these barriers and will treat everyone the same which ultimately helps to foster and integration.

Education helps to enlighten the women and gives them the right and strength to fight against social evils like dowry, brideburning, maritalrape, molestation and sexual harassment etc.

Today's intellectually liberated and an emancipated woman does not have to depend on a man to give her the basic needs of life. Education is enabling women to go beyond every profession and earn her own keep, buy her own house and feed herself. The contribution of women to the workforce will enhance the output and contribute greatly to the advancement of any society both culturally and economically and also help in its human development indicators. Through their work women can help to get rid of problems like higher maternal mortality rates, high rates of gender

violence, child's abuse, female feticide etc.

SUGGESTIONS

- Increasing the representation of the women by reserving seats in legislature.
- Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 must be strictly enforced to reduce the existing wage gap.
- Raising awareness about women rights and increasing access to education through schemes like beti-bachao and beti-padao.
- While formulating new policies government has to consider the needs and interest of women because women constitute half of the population and they contribute equally with men for the development of the nation. For example: Through „Make in India“ Project government is trying to encourage women by preserving their personal integrity.
- Even today most women are not aware of their basic rights. So, in order to create awareness among women campaigning, free workshops and seminars should be organized. Moreover to motivate the rural meritorious women and girls towards higher education, educational scholarships should be announced by the government.
- For motivating women the government with collaboration with different NGOs should try to arrange interaction programmes with other empowered women of the society so that the unprivileged women can take active participation in the mainstream society.
- The curriculum for Gender Studies in every discipline should include such topics which emphasizes on reducing gender disparity and encourage women empowerment.
- Government should provide women and girls better health care services and social services. Every girl child from their time of birth should be given proper nutritious food.

CONCLUSION

Since women constitute half of the population therefore ,it is important to emphasize the needs and interest of the women for the development of the society and nation at large. Empowering women through education is very essential to aware them about their rights and strengthen them to fight against the prevailing prejudices. Thus, gender equality is crucial to sustainable development and women are the central actors in pathways to sustainability.

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