GENDER INEQUALITY: IT'S IMPACT

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ABSTRACT

Gender is a common word used and can be defined as a term that is not determined biologically, as a result of sexual characteristics of either women or men, but is constructed socially (FAO, 1997). It is the practices of what it is to be female or male. Across the world, almost half (*49.75% as per https://www.cia.gov/library/reports/index.html 2012) of the population is female. Females perform two-thirds of the total work world wide but receive only one-tenth of the world’s total income and own less than 1% of the world’s property. (World Development Indicators, 1997, Womankind Worldwide). Nearly two-third of the women across the world are illiterate (3 out of 5 women in Southern Asia and an estimated 50% of all women in Africa and in the Arab region are still illiterate http://www.undp.org.in/webbook/Enlrg-spc-wmn-india.htm). These statistics just go to prove that women, who are almost equal to men in number, are dominated by their male counterparts and even though they work much harder, they are unjustly compensated. The discriminations are not just restricted to money, assets or education but include female foeticide, infanticide, neglect of nutrition needs of the female child, denial of proper healthcare, child marriages, dowry system, prostitution, rape, sexual harassment and many others. These factors along with religious beliefs, culture and customs, caste and attitudes make it very difficult for women to live active lives in society leading ultimately to being dominated by male counterparts and gender discrimination.

In India, like some other countries in the world, according to its 2011 sex ratio of 940 females per 1000 males, males outnumber females in its population. There has been a 7 point increase from the sex ratio of 933 per 1000 males in 2001. But the net deficit of the number of females less than their male counterparts has been increasing from 3.2 million in 1901 to 35 million in 2001 to a little over 37 million in 2011. In this paper, we will try to understand the reasons behind this gap and ways to try and overcome this problem.

KEY WORDS: Gender inequality, discrimination of women in India