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Exclusion, Discrimination & Deprivation of Women in India

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Abstract:

This article is analyse the situation of women in india whereas said that god lives where society does worship of women there(vedic literature)our oldest script says that.But now the scenario has changed .Now the male female disparities in development has increased .woman faced exclusion and discrimination by society.

1. Introduction

Our society is full of discrimination and has high degree of inter-group inequalities as well. Women as a whole are the worst victims of discrimination. Almost all indicators of human development, such as access to education and health, access to economic resources, participation in politics and civil services in contemporary India clearly show that women are more marginalized and deprived than men. The central purpose of this paper is to analyse the status of women in general with respect to male-female disparities in development. Since deprivation of women is closely linked with the process of gender-based exclusion and discrimination, this paper examines the societal processes (gender bias and discrimination) that are seen as causative factors for this deprivation.

This paper is divided into three parts. The first part deals with the concepts of exclusion and discrimination and their link with deprivation. The second part deals with the constitutional provisions and other safeguards that guarantee not only equal opportunities to women on par with men but also protect them from gender-based exclusion, discrimination and oppression. The last part presents the current status of women with special reference to their access to education, health and economic resources, participation in politics and civil services etc, on the basis of the latest available macro-level data.

2. Concepts of Social Exclusion & Discrimination

The concept of social exclusion is characterised by denial of equal opportunity by certain social groups to others, which leads to the inability of an individual to participate in the basic political, economic and social spheres of society.ⁱ The defining characteristics of exclusion are particularly relevant, namely, the deprivation caused through exclusion (or denial of equal opportunity) in multiple spheres-- showing its multi-dimensionality. The second feature is that, it is embedded in the societal relations and institutions-- the process through which an individual or a group is wholly or partially excluded from full social participation.ⁱⁱ Therefore, it is important to recognise the diverse ways in which social exclusion can cause deprivation. Consequences of exclusion, thus, depend crucially on how the institution functions, and how exclusionary and discriminatory they are in their orientation.ⁱⁱⁱ Therefore, exclusion and discrimination derives from social institutions/societal relations; and deprivation is the outcome of exclusion.

Amartya Sen draws attention to the various meanings and manifestations of the concept of social exclusion.^{iv} Drawing a clear distinction between the situation where some people are being kept out (at least left out), and where they are being included in deeply unfavourable terms, Sen describes the two situations as “unfavourable exclusion” and “unfavourable inclusion”. “Unfavourable inclusion” may carry same adverse effect as “unfavourable exclusion.”^v Sen also differentiates between “active and passive exclusions”. For a casual analysis and policy response, “it is important to distinguish between “active exclusion” which is fostering of exclusion through deliberate policy interventions by the government, or by any other wilful agents (to exclude some people from some opportunity); and “passive exclusion” that works through the social processes in which there are no deliberate attempts to exclude, but nevertheless, may results in exclusion from a set of circumstances.”

Thus, in case of passive exclusion if there is no deliberate attempts to exclude, anybody from any opportunity but if exclusion is deeply rooted in behaviour of the people, may result in exclusion. Thus, Exclusion could also manifest itself in diverse ways in terms of causes and outcomes. Exclusion could occur through direct exclusion, violating fair norms of exclusion, or through inclusion under unfavourable or discriminatory conditions, again violating fair norms of inclusion or through deliberate government policies leading to exclusion or self-exclusion caused by the inability of some persons to relate to other persons in society. These varieties of exclusions may operate in multiple spheres such as social, cultural, political and economic.^{vi} Therefore, different forms of exclusions may operate at different levels simultaneously, which are the causative factors behind deprivation of women.

The root of exclusion and discrimination lies in societal relations and societal institutions. However, the societal relations and institutions which determine the relation of women in society are much oppressive, barbaric and discriminatory against women. Their nature of oppression and discrimination can be seen in appendix-1.

3. Women and Constitution

The Constitution is the first document that provides equal opportunities to all citizens, including women. Before the implementation of the constitution, equal opportunity was limited to elite who are few in number. Therefore, while a minority enjoyed all the cream and fruits, majority was kept away from it. The soul of our Constitution is to create and develop equality, liberty and fraternity among all citizens.

Article 15 of the Constitution says:

“The State shall not discriminate any citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex and place of birth or any of them.” Further, the same Article in Sub-article (3) lays down that “Nothing in this Article shall prevent the State from making special provisions for women and children.”

Para IV of the Constitution, dealing with the Directive Principles of State Policy, states that the State shall ensure health and economic interests of women and other deprived groups of society. Articles 39, 42 and 44 refer to certain principles to be taken into account by the State in policy formation which increase the health and economic welfare of women and other deprived groups. Thus, the Constitution provides equal opportunities to all citizens irrespective of their religion, race, caste, or gender. Furthermore, it instructs the State that health and economic interests of women and other unprivileged groups of society must be ensured.

4. The Hindu-Code Bill

The Hindu Code Bill was supposed to be the first Bill passed by Parliament which could directly intervene in matters related to women’s marriage and property rights. Constitutional provisions and safeguards are limited only in public spheres. However, the Bill was intended to invest equal social position to women as that of men through direct intervention in family matters related to marriage, divorce and property rights.

5. Major Provisions in the Hindu Code Bill

- **Dowry shall be treated as a trust property:** Property, which is given as dowry to a girl on her marriage, shall be treated as a trust property. The use of which will insure to the woman and she is entitled to claim that property when she turns 18 so that neither her husband nor his relatives will have any interest in that property, nor will they have any opportunity to waste that property and make her helpless for the rest of her life.^{vii}
- **Claim of separate maintenance:** Under the provisions of the Hindu law, a wife is not entitled to claim maintenance from her husband if she does not live with him in his house. Under the following conditions a wife shall be entitled to claim separate maintenance from her husband: (1) if he is suffering from loathsome diseases, (2) if he keeps a concubine, (3) if he is guilty of cruelty, (4) if he has abandoned her for two years, and (5) any other cause justifying her living separately.
- **Divorce:** The Hindu law does not allow divorce for women until death. However, the Hindu Code Bill proposed to offer seven grounds on which a woman could seek divorce: (1) desertion, (2) conversion into another religion, (3) keeping a concubine or becoming a concubine, (4) incurably unsound mind, (5) incurable leprosy, (6) venereal diseases in communicable form, and (7) cruelty.

6. Equal Property Rights to Daughters in Inherited Property

Presenting the Bill in Parliament, the then Law Minister Ambedkar said that the law department examined every system of inheritance. “We examined the Muslim system of inheritance, we examined the Parsi system of inheritance and we also examined the British system of inheritance; and no where could we find any case where a daughter was excluded from a share. There is no system anywhere else in the world where a daughter has been excluded.”^{viii} During the discussion on the Hindu Code Bill, Dr. Ambedkar faced strong opposition and ultimately the Bill was rejected by Parliament, forcing him to send his resignation to Prime Minister Nehru on October 27, 1951.^{ix}

7. Present Status of Women

For more than one-and-a half decade, the annual Human Development Report has been advocating for a new perspective on human development. The first UN Human Development Report (UNHDR) released in 1990 applied a new perspective, which emphasised development assessment not only in terms of expansion of income but also in its stipulations towards the quality of well-being. It recognised that though higher per capita income was a pre-requisite for human development, income alone might not necessarily guarantee it. Defining well-being as the purpose of development and treating economic growth as its means have been at the core of HDRs published since 1990s. Summarising the shift in the focus, Mahbub Ul Haq observed in the first UNHDR that “for long, the recurrent question was how much a nation was producing? Interestingly, the question now being asked is, how are its people faring? Income is only one of the options and an extremely important one but it is not the sum total of human life. Health, education, physical environment and freedom may be just as important.”^x

Human Development Report (HDR) uses three indicators to prepare its assessment, namely education, health and access to economic resources. In addition to this, political participation of women is also considered as an indicator of gender

empowerment. Similar to the HDR, we have used four indicators, namely, education, health, access to means of resources and political participation of women to present the current status of women.

7.1. Education

Education is the core criterion for development. Human development report uses two indicators--literacy rate and enrolment rate in school to measure educational standards of people. Similar to the HDR, we use the educational standard of women in comparison to men to arrive at our conclusion.

7.1.1. Literacy Rate

According to Census 1901, female literacy rate was 0.6 percent as against 9.8 percent of men. It increased to 54 percent for women and to 76 percent for men by Census 2001 (Table 1a).

Census	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001
Total	5.3	5.9	7.2	9.5	16.1	16.7	24.0	29.5	43.7	52.2	65.4
Male	9.8	10.6	12.2	15.6	24.9	25.0	34.5	39.5	56.5	64.1	76.0
Female	0.6	1.1	1.8	2.9	7.3	7.9	12.9	18.7	29.9	39.3	54.3

Table 1(a): Literacy rate since Census 2001 (in percentage)

Source: Uttar Pradesh Human Development Report (computed from Census of India)

More than 99 percent illiteracy among women in 1901 indicates the historical impact of exclusion on women. Women as a whole were restricted (excluded) from acquiring knowledge. Further continuing disparity in the level of male-female literacy rate shows the prevalence of discrimination against women in contemporary India. Here one might argue that literacy rate was less for both males and females in 1901. During that period India was under British rule and the English policy was responsible for the high degree of illiteracy among Indians. But it's not true. High degree of illiteracy among women is due to the impact of educational barriers, imposed by Hindu religious scriptures against women. As a result, women were restricted (excluded) from acquiring knowledge. Even the paltry 0.6 percent literacy rate of women in 1901 became possible because of the great movement started by Mahatma Jyotirao Phule.^{xi} On the other hand, the comparatively higher degree of male literacy at 9.8 percent in 1901 was due to the impact of historical restrictions imposed on some group of people from acquiring knowledge. The Brahmins had the monopoly rights over education and the majority were restricted (excluded) from acquiring knowledge.^{xii} Consequently, illiteracy became the essential part of the life of the masses and knowledge went to the Brahmins, generation after generation. Thus, it can be summarised that the extremely higher degree of illiteracy in 1901 was due to the historical exclusion of women and common masses from acquiring knowledge.

7.1.2. Enrolment of Children in School

During 1999-2000, the national average of the enrolment of female children between 6 and 14 years was lower at 70.9 percent against the rate of their male counterparts at 80.5 percent. This lower enrolment of girls was seen across all the states during this period, with five states i.e Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh reporting even lower than the national average. Though states like Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal reported above average rates, when it came to girls, the rate of enrolment was lower than that of boys (Table 1b).

Major States	Rural			Urban			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Andhra Pradesh	78.8	67.5	73.3	86.6	81.2	84.1	81.2	71.4	76.5
Assam	80.7	76.4	78.7	93.9	81.4	88.0	82.0	76.9	79.6
Bihar	59.1	43.0	51.9	75.6	67.6	72.0	61.3	46.1	54.5
Gujarat	84.4	71.9	78.5	89.8	85.0	87.6	86.0	75.5	81.2
Haryana	88.9	81.9	85.7	87.5	86.2	86.9	88.6	83.0	86.0
Karnataka	78.3	73.3	76.0	88.2	87.1	87.6	80.8	76.6	78.7
Kerala	95.2	94.3	94.8	94.6	95.6	95.1	95.1	94.6	94.8
Madhya Pradesh	74.2	62.2	68.5	88.7	81.7	85.3	77.1	66.3	72.0
Maharashtra	88.1	82.9	85.6	94.6	91.7	93.2	90.4	86.2	88.4
Orissa	76.7	65.3	71.0	86.3	80.1	83.4	78.4	67.7	73.1
Punjab	86.5	83.5	85.0	91.0	87.9	89.6	86.8	84.7	86.3
Rajasthan	82.5	54.4	69.4	87.6	81.5	84.7	83.5	59.9	72.5
Tamil Nadu	90.7	86.5	88.7	90.8	90.2	90.5	90.8	87.8	89.4
Uttar Pradesh	79.1	62.9	71.6	80.2	75.6	78.0	79.3	65.5	72.8
West Bengal	77.2	70.8	74.1	84.6	77.4	81.0	78.5	71.9	75.2
India	78.4	67.2	73.1	87.3	82.9	85.2	80.5	70.9	75.9

Table 1 (b): School Enrolment Percentage of children (6-14 years) attending school in 1999-2000
Source: Uttar Pradesh HDR 2003 (computed from NSS 55th Round)

The male-female differentiation in school enrolment shows the discriminatory attitude of parents towards the girl child—in violation of human rights/equal opportunity for all from acquiring knowledge.

7.2. Health

The HDR uses mortality and life expectancy at birth to measure the health of the nation. Similar to the HDR, in this paper we have also used the infant mortality, child mortality and life expectancy at birth as indicators of health. Due to the non-availability of state-wise data, the national average has been used to make a comparison with Madhya Pradesh. MP has been chosen because it has highest infant and Child mortality rate.

7.2.1. Infant Mortality Rate

The IMR, that indicates the rate of deaths of infants less than one year, was 89.6 for boys and 89.5 for girls in Madhya Pradesh in 1999.^{xiii} The national average was 69.8 for the boy children and 70.8 for girls during the same period. (Table 2a).

States/UTs	Infant Mortality Rate								
	Rural			Urban			All-India		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	All
Madhya Pradesh	94.9	96.8	95.8	59.6	50.7	55.3	89.6	89.5	89.5
India	75.6	75.2	75.4	47.4	39.7	43.8	69.8	70.8	70.0

Table 2 (a): Infant Mortality Rate in 1999
Source: Madhya Pradesh Human Development Report, 2002

In case of Madhya Pradesh, the IMR is 0.1 higher for boys compared to girls, whereas the national average is 1.0 higher for girls. Thus, there is no significant difference in the level of IMR between male and female child either at the state or the national level.

7.2.2. Child Mortality Rate

The CMR, that covers the rate of deaths of children between 1 and 5 years, was 91 and 101 for boys and girls respectively in Madhya Pradesh during 1999.^{xiv} Data show similar incidents of child mortality between male and female child at the national level as well. The national average was 142 and 151 for male and female child respectively during the period under consideration. (Table 2b).

States/UTs	Child Mortality Rate		
	Male	Female	All-India
Madhya Pradesh	91	101	94
India	142	151	147

Table 2 (b): Child Mortality Rate in 1991

Source: Madhya Pradesh Human Development Report, 2002

Thus, it can be observed that there is a huge difference in CMR between male and female child and it is much unfavourable towards the girl child. This could be the result of the prevalence of gender discrimination against the girl child.^{xv}

7.2.3. Life Expectancy At Birth

The national average of life expectancy was 60.1 and 61.4 years for men and women respectively during the period under review.^{xvi} However, it was 55.1 and 54.7 for males and females respectively in case of Madhya Pradesh. (Table 2c).

States/UTs	Life Expectancy at Birth								
	Rural			Urban			All-India		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
MP	53.9	53.4	53.7	61.6	63.4	63.0	55.1	54.7	55.2
India	58.9	59.8	59.4	64.9	67.7	66.3	60.1	61.4	60.7

Table 2 (c): Life Expectancy at Birth 1992-96

Source: Madhya Pradesh Human Development Report, 2002. *MP has highest IMR and CMR

Regarding infant mortality, child mortality and life expectancy, two questions come up: Why there is no significant difference between boys and girls with respect to infant mortality and between men and women when it comes to life expectancy; and Why there is a wide gap between boys and girls in regard to child mortality rates? This paper argues that the death probability at birth may be equal for both boys and girls, which is why the data on IMR and life expectancy show no significant difference between the two genders. However, child mortality crucially depends on medical services. Higher child mortality rate in case of the female child leaves room for doubts of discrimination against the girl child. There may be discrimination against girls in providing medical services related to common but fatal childhood diseases such as cholera, diarrhoea, dysentery, diphtheria, polio etc.

7.3. Economic Criteria

The economic criteria remain as one of the leading criteria since long for measuring the development of a country. Income of a family crucially depends on two things:

- Number of days of employment, one works in a year (employment rate), and
- Daily wage rate for the work one does.

To explore the present economic status of women, the paper presents employment and daily wage rates for men and women respectively.

7.3.1. Employment Rate

The employment and unemployment rates are given for usual principal status (UPS), usual principal and subsidiary status (UPSS), current weekly status (CWS) and current daily status (CDS). The first two, (usual principal status and usual principal and subsidiary status) capture the open employment/unemployment and the last two (current weekly status and current daily status) capture the under employment of the rural households. Based on the UPS, employment rate was 60.98, 60.21, 54.40 and 50.90 for male and 24.98, 25.09, 21.20 and 15.50 for female workers during 1977-78, 1983, 1993-94 and 1999-2000, respectively. Based on the UPSS, it was 61.56, 55.60 and 52.0 for male workers and 35.75, 30.0 and 22.30 for female workers in 1983, 1993-94 and 1999-2000 correspondingly. Based on the CWS, it was 59.46, 58.78, 54.30 and 50.10 for male workers and 23.98, 23.32, 25.30 and 19.10 for female workers in 1977-78, 1983, 1993-94 and 1999-2000, respectively. Based on the CDS, it was 56.28, 55.75, 53.10 and 47.60 for male workers and 20.12, 20.42, 21.20 and 14.90 for female workers in 1977-78, 1983, 1993-94 and 1999-2000, correspondingly. (Table 3a).

Status	1977-78		1983		1993-94		1999-2000	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
UPS	60.98	24.98	60.21	25.09	54.40	21.20	50.90	15.50
UPSS	NA	NA	61.56	35.75	55.60	30.00	52.00	22.30
CWS	59.46	23.98	58.78	23.32	54.30	25.30	50.10	19.10
CDS	56.28	20.12	55.75	20.42	53.10	21.20	47.60	14.90

Table 3 (a): Employment rate (Participation rate)

Source: Employment/Unemployment Situation among social groups, compiled from the 32nd, 38th, 50th, and 55th round surveys of NSSO

Based on all the status (UPS, UPSS, CWS, and CDS), the employment rate for women is almost less than half that of men at the national level.

Based on the UPS and UPSS, employment rate of women has been lower than the national average in eight states--Assam, Bihar, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Orissa, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, while it has been higher in nine states-- Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu. (See Table 3b). However, it is much lower than that of men.

Major States	UPS		UPSS		CWS		CDS	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Andhra Pradesh	61.8	43.5	44.9	39.1	59.9	52.1	57.0	36.6
Assam	47.5	9.0	40.5	13.5	50.0	13.1	46.7	9.8
Bihar	49.1	9.1	39.9	11.2	48.8	9.9	46.6	8.7
Gujarat	56.4	21.5	39.1	33.5	56.0	30.9	53.9	23.1
Haryana	45.1	5.3	30.5	26.0	45.1	21.6	43.8	13.7
HP	50.2	37.2	39.9	51.1	53.3	46.7	50.8	36.4
J&K	50.7	9.5	34.4	40.4	50.8	29.3	50.2	19.2
Karnataka	59.1	31.2	47.5	35.3	59.2	35.6	56.1	29.4
Kerala	51.1	13.6	27.2	13.9	51.6	18.4	45.9	13.4
Madhya Pradesh	54.1	24.7	46.8	32.4	53.0	26.9	51.9	23.5
Maharashtra	53.4	39.5	40.8	42.9	52.4	39.3	50.0	34.5
Orissa	53.5	12.5	41.2	17.6	52.6	14.5	50.3	12.3
Punjab	55.8	2.8	40.0	21.4	55.9	20.7	55.6	11.6
Rajasthan	51.4	27.2	39.4	40.9	51.3	36.0	50.8	31.0
Tamil Nadu	58.7	37.8	35.2	33.2	56.7	38.9	51.6	31.8
Uttar Pradesh	50.0	11.3	39.3	17.0	49.9	15.0	48.6	11.9
West Bengal	53.0	5.8	33.2	7.3	53.0	11.3	49.9	7.4
All India	53.2	20.9	39.4	25.2	52.7	24.5	50.4	20.1

Table 3 (b): Employment rate (Participation rate) – 1993-94 Rural

Source: Calculated by Thorat (from Rural Labour Enquiry Report, Ministry of Labour, Shimla) 2003.

Based on the CWS and CDS, women's employment rate has been lower than the national average in eight states i.e. Assam, Bihar, Haryana, Kerala, Orissa, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, while it has been higher in nine states Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu. (See Table 3C). But it is much lower when compared with men.

Status	1977-78		1983		1987-88		1993-94		1999-2000	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
UPS	1.57	1.53	1.30	0.43	1.70	0.48	1.20	0.44	1.60	0.50
UPSS	NA	NA	1.90	0.29	1.10	0.70	0.90	NA	1.20	0.50
CWS	2.15	0.97	2.15	0.91	NA	NA	1.60	0.80	2.50	1.20
CDS	3.90	0.97	4.03	1.72	NA	NA	2.70	1.11	3.50	1.40

Table 3 (c): Unemployment

Source: - Employment/Unemployment Situation among social groups compiled from 32nd, 38th, 50th, and 55th round surveys of NSSO.

Major States	UPS		UPSS		CWS		CDS	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Andhra Pradesh	0.7	0.1	0.5	0.1	1.0	1.0	3.4	2.3
Assam	3.3	1.4	2.5	1.3	3.0	1.7	3.0	1.4
Bihar	1.4	0.1	1.2	0.1	1.8	0.2	3.1	0.4
Gujarat	0.7	1.1	0.7	0.1	1.4	0.4	2.9	1.0
Haryana	1.4	0.3	0.9	0.2	2.1	2.0	2.8	0.2
HP	1.3	0.3	0.6	0.1	0.8	0.2	1.4	0.2
J&K	0.6	0.3	0.4	0.2	1.0	0.3	1.0	0.3
Karnataka	0.8	0.2	0.6	0.2	1.0	0.4	2.4	1.0
Kerala	4.2	2.9	3.3	2.6	4.1	2.9	6.7	3.2
Madhya Pradesh	0.5	0.1	0.5	0.1	1.1	0.5	1.4	0.7
Maharashtra	1.0	0.3	0.7	0.2	1.0	0.7	2.3	1.3
Orissa	1.7	0.4	1.2	0.3	2.2	0.6	3.3	0.6
Punjab	0.5	0.4	0.7	0.4	0.8	0.4	0.1	0.4
Rajasthan	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.5	0.1	0.6	0.1
Tamil Nadu	1.4	0.5	1.0	0.4	2.6	1.2	6.1	3.3
Uttar Pradesh	0.7	0.1	0.5	0.1	1.0	0.8	1.3	0.5
West Bengal	1.8	0.4	1.2	0.4	2.1	0.6	4.1	0.7
All India	1.2	0.4	0.9	0.3	1.6	0.5	2.7	1.1

Table 3 (d): Unemployment rate 1993-94 Rural

Source: Calculated by Thorat (from Rural Labour Enquiry report, Ministry of Labour, Shimla) 2003

Majority of the women are engaged in domestic chores like fuel collection, cooking, caring the children etc which come under the category of non-economic activities. Therefore, their participation in productive economic activities is less than that of men. Higher participation of women in domestic activities is the result of gender-based division of labour, which violates equal opportunity of women and results in less participation of women in economic activities.

7.3.2. Wage Rates

At the national level, the average wage rate for women in agricultural activities was Rs. 17.1, 24.1 and 28.6 as against Rs. 24.4, 34.3 and 40.1 for male workers in 1983, 1993-94 and 1999-2000 respectively, for almost similar kinds of work. In case of female workers, it was lower in all the states. During 1983 and 1993-94, the women's wage rate was lower in 7 out of the 15 selected major states than the national average for women. These states include Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa and Tamil Nadu among others. In 1999-2000 it was lower in 5 states i.e. Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Orissa. Women's wage was higher in 8 out of the 15 major states i.e. Assam, Gujarat, Haryana, Kerala, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal in 1983 and 1993-94. In 1999-2000 it was higher in 10 out of the 15 major states, including Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Kerala, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. (See Table 4a). But it was much lower compared to that of men. Now let's look at state-wise real rural wages (at 1999-2000 prices) in agricultural operations, as majority of the workforce are still employed in the agrarian sector.

Major States	1983		1993-94		1999-2000	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Andhra Pradesh	23.8	15.9	31.4	22.1	39.7	26.7
Assam	31.9	28.6	40.7	35.5	41.8	35.8
Bihar	20.0	16.4	27.4	23.6	35.4	32.1
Gujarat	28.2	25.2	31.8	30.7	39.1	34.2
Haryana	47.3	47.5	52.3	43.5	57.2	50.8
Karnataka	21.3	15.0	32.5	23.1	40.1	27.2
Kerala	54.6	38.1	63.2	46.7	91.2	61.9
Madhya Pradesh	18.3	15.5	27.9	22.9	28.8	24.7
Maharashtra	23.3	13.9	32.0	20.4	38.1	25.0
Orissa	17.9	13.4	27.4	20.1	29.4	23.0
Punjab	49.6	38.7	64.1	57.6	63.1	54.0
Rajasthan	33.4	22.4	43.4	39.3	50.5	38.1
Tamil Nadu	23.2	13.4	41.0	23.9	52.5	30.2
Uttar Pradesh	25.0	19.9	34.3	25.9	39.6	29.9
West Bengal	33.0	28.5	50.0	42.5	44.0	37.3
India	24.4	17.1	34.3	24.1	40.1	28.6

Table 4 (a): Wage rates

Source: Calculated by Ravi Srivastava and Richa Singh, 2006

The national average wage for women in non-agricultural activities was Rs. 18.3, 28.0 and 37.7 as against Rs. 30.6, 44.9 and 55.4 for male workers in 1983, 1993-94 and 1999-2000 respectively. In 1983, the average wage rate for women was lower in 5 out of the 15 major states than the national average, including Bihar, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Orissa and Tamil Nadu. The same was also lower in 6 out of the 15 major states than the national average which includes Bihar, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Orissa and Tamil Nadu 1993-94. In 1999-2000, it was lower in 9 out of the 15 major states, which include Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. Women's wage rate was less than the national average wage in 10 out of the 15 major states, for 9 out of the 15 and for 6 out of the 15 major states in 1983, 1993-94 and 1999-2000 respectively. However, it is much lower when compared with men's average wage rate. (Table 4b).

Major States	1983		1993-94		1999-2000	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Andhra Pradesh	27.8	19.8	36.8	24.0	50.6	29.8
Assam	37.5	23.3	50.7	31.9	50.3	33.1
Bihar	25.4	17.2	39.0	30.2	44.4	36.9
Gujarat	39.9	27.0	47.1	31.1	51.6	36.9
Haryana	45.7	33.0	58.1	33.8	67.7	56.5
Karnataka	30.6	15.6	43.8	27.4	59.2	36.7
Kerala	48.6	25.0	69.1	36.1	88.6	51.6
Madhya Pradesh	27.9	20.2	36.0	25.2	40.1	31.9
Maharashtra	27.7	16.9	43.7	25.8	54.3	39.3
Orissa	20.9	17.2	32.4	25.4	39.3	27.4

	1983		1993-94		1999-2000	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Punjab	50.7	18.5	63.5	31.2	68.1	51.2
Rajasthan	33.9	22.8	44.4	32.1	55.7	40.0
Tamil Nadu	27.4	13.4	45.1	25.1	69.2	34.4
Uttar Pradesh	33.9	20.6	43.3	33.2	48.1	42.6
West Bengal	35.1	20.3	55.3	37.7	48.1	32.2
India	30.6	18.3	44.9	28.0	55.4	37.7

Table 4 (b): State-wise real rural wages (at 1999-2000 prices) in non- agricultural activities

Source: Calculated by Ravi Srivastava and Richa Singh, 2006

After having analysed the lower employment and wage rates for women, now we will try to assess their consequences on the economic paucity of women. Lower employment and wage rates result in lower earnings by women and compel them to become economically dependent on family members in general and on husband in particular.

8. Political Participation of Women

8.1. Representation of women in Lok Sabha

The first Lok Sabha (1952) had only a paltry 4.4 percent representation of women. It almost doubled to 8.08 percent in the 14th Lok Sabha (2004). In the second Lok Sabha elections in 1957, out of the 45 women contested, 27 won, while in the 11th Lok Sabha elections in 1996, as many as 599 women contested but only 40 could make it. However, in the 13th Lok Sabha elections in 1999, though only 277 women contested, 47 won the polls. (Table 5a).

Lok Sabha	Year	Total Seats	No. of Women Contested	No. of Women Elected	Percentage to the total.
First	1952	499	NA	22	4.4
Second	1957	500	45	27	5.7
Third	1962	503	70	34	6.7
Fourth	1967	523	67	31	5.9
Fifth	1971	521	86	22	4.2
Sixth	1977	544	70	19	3.4
Seventh	1980	544	142	28	5.1
Eighth	1984	544	164	44	8.1
Ninth	1989	517	198	27	5.2
Tenth	1991	544	325	39	7.18
Eleventh	1996	544	599	40	7.18
Twelfth	1998	544	271	44	8.08
Thirteenth	1999	544	277	47	8.63
Fourteenth	2004	544	NA	44	8.08

Table 5 (a): Political participation of women (Lok Sabha)

Source: Computed by Neera Desai and Usha Thakkar, 2001 and www.indiastat.com

The data of women's representation in the Lok Sabha show that during the long period between 1952 and 2004, women's representation has not touched even to a decimal digit. The most striking fact is that in 1996 (11th Lok Sabha elections), as many as 599 women contested the polls but only 40 could win. In 1999 (13th Lok Sabha election), 277 women contested but 47 won. In case of women candidates, the data shows no relationship between the number of contestants and the number of winners. This shows the discriminatory attitude of the patriarchal society against women candidates.

8.2. Representation of women in Rajya Sabha

Data shows women's representation in Rajya Sabha too. (Table 5b).

Year	Total Seats	Total No. of Women members	Percentage
1952	219	16	7.3
1957	237	18	7.5
1962	238	18	7.6
1967	240	20	8.3
1971	243	17	7.0
1977	244	25	10.2
1980	244	24	9.8
1985	244	28	11.4
1990	245	24	9.7
1991	245	38	15.5
1998	245	18	??
2004	245	28	??

Table 5 (b): Representation of women in Rajya Sabha

Source: Computed by Neera Desai and Usha Thakkar, 2001 and www.indiastat.com

8.3. Representation of Women in the Union Cabinet

There are three types of ministers in the Union Cabinet—the Cabinet Ministers, Ministers of State, and Deputy Ministers. The Cabinet Ministers are the top ones among all three grades of ministers, followed by the Ministers of State and Deputy Ministers in that order. The facts related to the lower representation of women in the Union Cabinet are shocking. In 1985, there was only one woman Cabinet Minister out of the 15 Cabinet Ministers. The poor representation of women in the Union Council of Ministers became worst in 2004 with just one woman being selected as a Cabinet Minister out of the 29 Cabinet Ministers.

When it comes to Ministers of State too, the picture is not great, as there were only three women Ministers of State out of the 25 in 1985. However, the number of women increased from three to six out of the 39 Ministers of State in 2004. (Table 5c).

Date	Number of Ministers				Number of Women Ministers			
	Cabinet Minister	Minister of State	Deputy Minister	Total	Cabinet Minister	Ministers of State	Deputy Minister	Total
4.2.1985	15	25	0	40	1	3	0	4
31.8.1990	17	17	5	39	0	1	1	2
31.1.1995	12	37	3	52	1	4	1	6
5.8.1996	18	21	0	39	0	1	0	1
10.6.1997	20	24	0	44	0	5	0	5
19.3.1998	21	21	0	42	1	3	0	4
4.1.2000	29	45	0	74	1	7	0	8
2002	32	41	0	73	2	6	0	8
25.5.2004	29	39	0	68	1	6	0	7

Table 5 (c): Representation of women in Union Cabinet

Source: www.indiastat.com

8.4. Participation of Women in State Assemblies

The national average of women's representation in State Assemblies was only 5.96 percent in 2000. Data show similar low representation of women in the state levels as well. (Table 5d).

States/UTs	Women's political participation			
	Legislative Assemblies (2000)		Panchayati Raj Institutions (1991-1997)	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
India	229	3,838	8,13,676	17,84,134
Andhra Pradesh	28	266	83,783	1,62,483
Arunachal Pradesh	1	59	125	6,890
Assam	6	116	8,203	19,143
Bihar	19	305	NA	NA
Goa	2	38	468	863
Gujarat	4	178	42,708	85,337
Haryana	4	86	18,836	38,044
Himachal Pradesh	6	62	6,655	13,516
Jammu & Kashmir	2	85	NA	NA
Karnataka	6	218	35,640	49,246
Kerala	13	127	4,050	8,067
Madhya Pradesh	26	294	1,59,609	3,24,785
Maharashtra	12	276	1,01,943	2,06,888
Manipur	1	59	598	1,019
Meghalaya	3	57	Nil	Nil
Mizoram	0	40	Nil	Nil
Nagaland	0	60	Nil	Nil
Orissa	13	134	30,759	56,432
Punjab	7	110	31,468	59,089
Rajasthan	14	186	40,862	84,811
Sikkim	1	31	115	860
Tamil Nadu	9	225	35,315	69,230
Tripura	2	58	1,900	3,793
Uttar Pradesh	20	404	1,89,060	5,54,326
West Bengal	20	274	21,168	38,479
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	-	-	296	493
Chandigarh	-	-	27	98
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	-	-	50	101
Daman & Diu	-	-	30	48
Delhi	9	61	NA	NA
Lakshadweep	-	-	8	93
Puducherry	1	29	Nil	Nil

Table 5 (d): Political participation of Women in State Assemblies and Panchayati Raj Institutions
Source: www.indiastat.com

8.5. Participation of Women in Administration

At the national level, the representation of women in the top administrative services (such as the IAS, IPS and IFS) was 11.57 percent in the IAS and 3.44 percent in the IPS in 2000. Data shows similar trends in the states too. (Table 6). In states like Kerala, which is one of the most developed states, the representation of women in the IPS is very low as the state had only two women IPS officers out of 114 in 2000. What is more shocking is that this is far lower than that of Bihar and Orissa which are considered the most backward states. While Bihar had 14 women IPS officers out of the total 233 in the state, in Orissa their number stood at seven out of 129 IPS officers in 2000. Table 6.

States/UTs	IAS (as on 01.06.2000)		IPS (as on 01.04.2000)	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
India	4,624	535	3,191	110
Andhra Pradesh	281	33	179	11
Arunachal Pradesh	194	38	147	9
Assam	216	10	134	2
Bihar	360	33	233	14
Goa	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
Gujarat	225	23	133	3
Haryana	180	32	100	4
Himachal Pradesh	109	17	73	1
Jammu & Kashmir	109	3	80	1
Karnataka	213	35	137	4
Kerala	157	21	114	2
Madhya Pradesh	342	54	273	9
Maharashtra	311	40	201	6
Manipur	193	5	98	3
Meghalaya	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
Mizoram	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
Nagaland	63	1	39	1
Orissa	185	17	129	7
Punjab	165	28	144	6
Rajasthan	231	29	141	6
Sikkim	45	5	24	Nil
Tamil Nadu	288	37	176	7
Tripura	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
Uttar Pradesh	484	51	381	10
West Bengal	273	23	255	4
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
Chandigarh	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
Daman & Diu	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
Delhi	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
Lakshadweep	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
Puducherry	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX

Table 6: Participation of Women in Public Administration

Source: www.indiastat.com

Women constitute nearly half of the population. However the facts related to their representation in the top rung of democratic institutions, which are seen as foundation of women empowerment (such as the Lok Sabha, the Rajya Sabha, the Union Council of Ministers and State Assemblies) are shocking. Discriminatory patriarchal mind-set against women is responsible for the above-mentioned facts. Behind this poor participation, the traditional argument is that women are not capable enough to manage political affairs. But experience and history proves that it is wrong. Indira Gandhi was the first and the only women Prime Minister the country ever had. Arguments against women have been made to stand on their head when she came to power and proved that she was no less capable than men in her administrative and political acumen.

As we move to other spheres that are equally important to politics like the top constitutional posts of the Chief Justices of the Supreme Court and High Courts, Chief Election Commissioner and Lok Sabha Speaker, the representation of women has been abysmal. But, the election of Ms. Meira Kumar as the first Lok Sabha speaker and Pratibha Devi Singh Patil as the first woman president of India is a good sign of empowerment of women.

9. Concluding Remarks

It's scientifically proved that if we provide equal opportunities and environment to men and women, there would not be any difference in the level of their capabilities, intelligence and achievements. Thus, in the light of these facts, any difference between male and female should be regarded as the result of gender discrimination. Till the beginning of the 19th century, women were excluded from almost every public sphere which was essential for a decent and meaningful life. Thus, high degree of illiteracy, high incidence of child marriages, frequent cases of Sati system, meagre participation of women in academics, administration, and politics till the beginning of the 20th century are the result of gender exclusion. However, male-female differences (lower literacy rate, lower enrolment rate in school, lower attendance rate in school, higher child mortality rate, lower employment and wage rate,

lower participation in academics, administration, and politics) in contemporary India are the result of continuing gender discrimination against women.

10. References

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11. Mahatma Jotirao Phooley was the first Indian to start a girls' school. In 1848 he started first school for girls with his wife (Savitribai Phooley) by Dhananjay Keer, (2002), Mahatma Jotirao Phooley, father of Indian social revolution, Bombay, Popular Prakashan.
12. On educational barriers Ambedkar writes "The ancient world may be said to have been guilty for failing to take the responsibility for the education of the masses. But never has any society been guilty for closing to the generality of the people the study of the books of its religion. Never has society made any attempt to declare that an attempt made by the common man to acquire knowledge shall be punishable as a crime. Manu is the only divine law giver who has denied the common man the right to knowledge" Original source is unknown, quoted by Thorat (2004), "Caste system and economic inequality Untouchables carry the burden" working paper DFID.
13. Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) is calculated by dividing the number of Infant deaths during the year by number of live births during the year and multiplying by 1000. Cited in, Madhya Pradesh Human Development Report, (2002), pp. 464.
14. Child Mortality Rate is the number of deaths among children age 1-5 years per 1000 children in the same age group. Cited in, Madhya Pradesh Human Development Report (2002), pp. 464.
15. For example see Sethuraman and Duvvury (2007), study shows that gender discrimination and malnutrition are inextricably linked.
16. Life Expectancy is the number of years a newborn child would live if the current mortality conditions (i.e. age-specific mortality rate) prevailed throughout its life. Cited in, Madhya Pradesh Human Development Report, (2002), pp. 464.
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