



Economic Growth and Gender Disparity in India

KEYWORDS

sex selective abortion, sex ratio, drop out rate

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ABSTRACT

Gender is a significant macroeconomic factor in studying liberalization of economy and economic growth. The ILO 'Gender, Poverty and Employment' (June 2000) report argues that gender, in particular, is a major determinant of rights, access and economic patterns of productive work. Economic growth in any country should defiantly diminish the gender disparity. Unfortunately India is country where discrimination against women is visible in matter related to birth, education, employment, wages, crime etc. Gender discrimination should matter not merely for the reason that we are care givers, but for the sake of well being & capabilities of women herself. Women bear almost all responsibility for meeting basic needs of the family, yet are systematically denied the resources, information, freedom of action, they need to fulfill this responsibility, and faces discrimination in being born. More predominant is the fact that even though there is law against sex determination and sex selective abortion the sex ratio in India is declining in almost all states. According to India's 2011 census, there is a serious drop in the number of girls, below age 7, between 2001-2011. It is believed that nearly 8 million of female fetuses have been aborted over past decade (Geeta, 2011). Conversely, some demographers reject the idea of foeticide and explain the decrease in the number of female babies, as result of unreported female birth (Johansson & Nygren, 1991). If there has not been much progress in India in promoting gender equity and considerable measures were not taken in coming years, women in India may continue to lag much behind men in many spheres and also continue to remain far behind the women in other developing countries. This paper tries to study the magnitude of sex selective abortion and the role of technology and economic growth in enhancing this trend.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To study the rate of economic growth in India and prevalent gender discrimination.
2. To evaluate the situation of sex selective abortion in India.
3. To observe the sex selective abortion in various states of India.
4. To study the policies of government related to abortion and its effectiveness.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on secondary data. Data sources like census, RBI bulletin, economic survey will be referred. The time period of study is 2001 to 2011. The study will also try to find out the correlation between economic growth and sex discrimination in India between the period 2001-2011 if the data for the same will be available.

GENDER DISPARITY

The vast majority of world's poor are women. Two third of the world's illiterate are female. According to the World Economic Forum's latest Gender Gap Index report released over the weak, India has been placed at the 114th position after taking into account economic political, educational and health parities among at total of 128 countries. In term of "economic participation and opportunity" alone India has fared even worse at 122nd position pushing it into bottom 10. (Hindustan Times 2007).

To measure Gender discrimination or Inequality UNDP has developed "Gender Development Index" which is a composite index measuring average achievement in the these basic dimensions captured in Human development index – a long healthy life, knowledge and decent standard of living adjusted to account for inequalities between men &

women. The great is the gender disparity in basic human development, the low is country's GDI. Looking at GDI Rank for India and other countries we find that India need to improve on GDI rank.

Table 1
INDIA'S GLOBEL POSITION ON GENDER DEVELOPMENT

Country	GDI Rank	
	2000	2005
Norway	3	3
Australia	1	2
Sri Lanka	70	89
China	77	73
India	105	113
Banqladesh	121	121

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 2002, 2007

Table shows that India ranks 113 out of 157 countries ranked on the basis of their GDI values. India has deteriorated its position in 2005 from 2000. China & Sri Lanka are at for better position. The parameters on which Gender disparity can analyzed are sex ratio, literacy rate. Life Expectancy, work participation rate.

Sex ratio is one of the existing crucial manifestations of the wide spread defined as number of females per thousand males sex ratio is a useful and position in society. Though there are remarkable variations in the FMR in different regions of the world, it averaged 933 in India, which is one of the lowest in the world. Ashish Bose and Agnihotri stated that 2001 census has revealed, a sharp decline in female-male ratio in several states & overall.

Table 2
Population & Overall Sex ratio in India (1951-2011)

Missing Female (million)	Census Year	Total Pop. (in million)	Sex Ratio (female per 1000 male)
-----	1951	361.09	946
13.4	1961	439.24	941
19.9	1971	548.16	930
22.9	1981	685.18	933
31.8	1991	844.33	927
35.5	2001	1027.02	933
-	2011	1210.9	940

Source – Census of India, 2011

India registered significant decline in FMR in few decades. It can be seen that with increase in population ratio of female is declining, males are preferred. It this sex ratio continued in future, it may lead to problems like marriage squeeze, "deterioration of family system", crime against women. Column showing missing females indicates that 2001 35 million females were missing compared to male population.

Discrimination prevails not only in giving birth but also in female education, health status etc. But biologically female fetus has few proved stronger than the male fetus. Hence there is every likelihood that women live longer than males and in last few decades overall life expectancy has improved.

Table 3
Life Expectancy at Birth in India (in year)

Period	Male	Female	Overall
1941-51	32.4	31.7	---
1951-61	41.9	40.6	41.2
1961-71	47.1	45.6	46.4
1971-81	54.1	54.7	54.0
2001	63.9	66.9	65.3
2011	62.6	64.2	63.5

Source – Census of India 1971,81,2001,2011

Figure above shows that Female are having more life than man but still in India overall life expectancy is low and one of the important factor in depressing life expectancy is high level of infant mortality. During the last two decades in infant mortality has shown a magnificent decline from 219 per thousand in 1916 to 57 per thousand in 2006. This may be due to various health measures taken by government for female welfare. Another important aspect in gender inequality is education attainment of female and male. In India we find discrepancy in literacy rate of male and female. This may be due to various health measures taken by Government for female welfare. Another important aspect in gender inequality education India we find discrepancy in female &

Table 4
Literacy rate in India

Year	Persons	Male	Female
1951	18.3	27.2	8.9
1961	28.3	40.4	---
1971	34.5	46.0	22.0
1981	43.7	56.5	29.5
1991	52.2	64.1	39.3
2001	65.4	75.8	52.1
2011	74.04	82.14	65.46

Source- Census of India 2011

Note:- Literacy rate for 1951, 61, 71 relate to population

aged 5 years above. The literacy rate for 1981, 1991, 2001 relate to population 7 years & above.

It is obvious that female's very low literacy rate than males and the gap is huge. Nearly half of the women are literate whereas three-fourth males are literate. Though this gap has narrowed down with time but still it is surprisingly high.

Irrespective of educational status females nowadays are contributing in economic activities. In general the total work participation rate has increased, but still is biased towards males.

Table 5
Labor force and workforce Participation

	1983	1993-94	1999-2000	2004-05
Labour force participation rates (LFPR)				
Rural Male	52.7	53.4	51.5	53.1
Rural Female	21.9	23.2	22.0	23.7
Urban Male	52.7	53.2	52.8	56.1
Urban Female	12.1	13.2	12.3	15.0
Work force participation rates (WFPR)				
Rural Male	48.2	50.4	47.8	48.8
Rural Female	19.8	21.9	20.4	21.6
Urban Male	47.3	49.6	49.0	51.9
Urban Female	10.6	12.0	11.1	13.3

Source: Various rounds of USSD survey on employment & unemployment planning commission.

Male participation remained high both in labour & workforce, throughout the period from 1983 and 2004-05 female participation is highest in rural areas than urban area. The reason for that may be that families are involved in various agriculture and allied activities in rural area. There also exists disparity in wages. If we see Gender disparity in wages we find that it is not only high but ratio of female wages to male wages has remain unchanged at about 0.70. 1993-94 up to 2004-05, indicating that male wages are 1.4 times the female wages (NSS, 50th, 55th & 61st Round for 1993-94, 1999-00 & 2004-05).

In Urban India also we find significant disparity in WFPR in Male & female. In urban sector work opportunities for women exist in services manufacturing sector but there is need for facilitating and improving their work participation rate through better education skill development and removal of gender associated hurdles like lack of crèches etc.

Thus, the Low literacy rate and enrolment ratio of female, low like expect any, poor work participation ratio disparity in wages are through reasons to believe that these exist gender disparity in India.

Moreover the evidences also clearly indicates that the progress in prompting gender equality and empowering women in the area of education, employment income seats in parliament has been slow in India.

Table 6
Progress in Promoting Gender Equality and Empowering Women in India and other selected countries.

	India	Pakistan	Bangladesh	China
1) Ratio of girls to boys in Primary				
1990-91	0.71	0.55	0.81	0.86
2000-01	0.71	0.68	0.96	0.92
% change in 2000- 01 over 90-91	8.4	14.55	18.52	6.98
2) Ratio of literate female to male (Age 15 –24)				
1990	0.74	0.49	0.65	0.95
2001	0.82	0.60	0.71	0.98
% change in 2001 over 1991	10.81	22.45	9.23	3.16
3) Females share in Non-Agri wage employment (%)				
1990	13	7	18	38
2001	17	8	23	39
% change in 2001 over 90-91	30.77	14.29	27.78	2.63
4) Seats in Parliament held by women (As % of Total)				
1990	5	10	10	21
2003	9	22	2	22

Source: *Ibid* as used by K.D. Saxena

The data above shows that Ratio of Girls to Boys in Primary education in India has changed only marginally from 0.71 in 1990-91 to 0.77 in 2001 (8.45%), in Pakistan it changed from 0.55 to 0.63 (14.55%) in Bangladesh 0.81 to 0.96 (18.52%). The Ratio of literate female to males also changed less in comparison to other countries. The female share in Non agriculture wage employment increased from 13% to 17%. Seats held by women in Parliament from 5% in 1990 to 9 percent in 2003.

SEX SELECTIVE ABORTION IN INDIA

Sex selective abortion means determination of sex in fetus and abort it if it is a girl child. Historical background of India has wide examples of such practices. Birth of a daughter was considered to be most serious calamity and she was seldom allowed to live (Miller 1981). Subsequent census report showed no improvement in abnormal sex ratio despite various attempts to ensure the all women were reported. Some of the sikh villages have ratio as low as 31 female per 100 male. In modern india with the development of methods of prenatal sex determination methods and machines this practice has increased.

Reasons of sex selective abortion

- There exist a culture basis of sons preference in india .
- Indian society is patrilineal, patriarchal and patrilocal. son carry family name
- Men are responsible for funeral rites
- Son is considered an asset and daughter a liability
- It is believed that women have low earning potential.

ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF SEX SELECTIVE ABORTION

- There is marked decline in sex ratio
- Existence of paucity of brides to marry
- Surplus unmarried man increases the risk of sexual violence and crimes
- Polygamy prevails as there are less brides.

It is exhibited from the above matter that gender inequality is very high in India. Gender inequality index based on reproductive health , employment and economic activity India ranked 127 out of 152 countries in 2013. it has GII value of 0.563 in 2013 index. In india 10.9% parliamentary seats are held by women and 26.6 of adult women have reached at least some secondary education compare to 50.4% of male counterpart. Female participation in labour is 28.8% compared to 80.9% of men .All these figures are enough to show gender disparity in India . Government should take some steps to minimize gender disparity ion India.

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