

Gender Equality And Economic Development: A New Dimension To The Society

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Today, in the fast-paced world, the countries are put in the race of developing their economic status at a rapid rate. There are various factors that the countries have realized, are the game-changers in this race. One of these important factors is gender equality. Not only in under-developed countries, but also developed countries have looked down upon the gender equality. But, lately, the countries are working towards the upliftment and empowerment of women, since they have realized that every citizen of their country is an asset to the country. With this upliftment, the "male-dominated" society has paved way for bringing gender equality. Whenever the women grab any opportunity, they have come up with flying colours and has shown results better than the men. This study aims to understand how the gender inequality underwent change to gender equality, contributing to the economic status of the country and further leading to a civilized world. This paper will be an asset to corporates, economists, activists, and academicians who want to understand how the gender equality evolved and how it can be enhanced further to gear up the economy.

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Since the human civilizations emerged, it has been a custom to underestimate the ultimate power of women, limiting them to the household chores. They were just confined to taking care of the husband, his family and children. The tasks allowed for her to perform was restricted to bringing portable water, cooking food, cleaning the house, and looking after the other household chores. The society was a “male-dominated” society. The order of a man was irreplaceable and any amendment to the order resulted in humiliation and even domestic violence. The woman of the house, thus, did not have any right to even question the order of the man of the house.

In this “male-dominated” society, the worst things were the rise in illiteracy, infanticide and domestic violence, among girls. There was always a want of a boy child who can carry on the name of the family. The shocking part for this that some of the royal families also followed these bad customs. Thus, there was a great injustice to women which paved the way to gender inequality.

Women were always kept backward. They were not given any academic knowledge, just for the people believed that all that women can do is just household chores. So, providing education to girl child was considered to be the act of spendthrift and the wastage of the money. This worsened the condition of gender inequality.

But with the advent of time, many people started teaching their girl child. The quote that made the people realize the value of providing education to the girl child was “Teaching a girl is teaching the whole society”. This led to the first step of the global revolution against gender inequality. The gender inequality faced the first storm in the neo-classical period.

With the increasing load of work in minimal time, the machines were a support. But the machines, too, need the human labour to be operated. This was the time when the women

were giving the opportunity to come forward and work in the industries. Since the output produced by the industries contributed to the economy of the country, more and more labour was set as the input to get more and more output from the industries. It was the next step that led women to get employment though it was marginally at a low rate at which they were employed. Now, it started becoming evident that the women can too contribute to the rise in the economy of the country.

Talking about India, it is 21st century, still there are 50-60% of the women who are either illiterate or have received only basic knowledge, probably till class 5th only. The ceiling was broken in India when women started studying, moving out of the household chores, working outside and some even turning entrepreneurs. This started contributing to the economy of India.

In the pre-independence period, the women getting education was relatively low. The post-independence period saw the rise of literacy among women. But this was not adequate.

It's 2018 and it's very well known that over 60% of the population of India lives in rural areas where the occupation of the people is agriculture. Though agriculture contributes a lot to the GDP of the country, the people from rural areas still think that the right place for the women is home, so the literacy rate among women in rural areas is less. But as the awareness is increasing, the literacy rate is also increasing, though at a slow pace.

Today, women can be seen excelling in all the fields, contributing to economy. The women have proven to be good managers, by managing professional as well as personal life effectively. They have not only emerged in jobs, sports, army but also as entrepreneurs. This gender equality has resulted in the upliftment of both the genders as well as the economic status of the country.

Gender Equality: A Buzzing Reality

The concept of gender equality has been emerging since last three decades. The meaning of gender equality is simply that both the genders, men as well as women, are equal in status and position, liable to equal payment and wages, equal before law, and equal in terms of holding responsibilities. Basically, it bridges the gap that was widened by discrimination of the society. The gender equality is mentioned here as “a buzzing reality”, because many people have to wake up to this fact that it’s high time that both the genders are respected equally. This will help to boost the social as well as economic power of the country.

The economic development is the development of each citizen. All the economic indicators are forecasted on the base of a single citizen, or technically, per capita income. So, it is obvious that every citizen has full right as well as responsibility to contribute to the country’s income.

The literacy rate of boys and girls should be equal so as to make the country 100 percent literate. There have been various reasons for the country unable to provide equal education to every child. Some of the basic reasons include poverty, unemployment, corruption, increasing crimes and lack of international education standards. These reasons are unavoidable to a great extent because they, somewhere or the other, are related to each other.

Whenever a piece of historical text is read, the word “he” was used. But the gender equality has forced the text to write “he/she”, showing the increasing prominence given to women as well. This is the best example which can be quoted, how gender equality has taken over the society to be “male-dominated”.

Coming to equality in status and position, the candidates, be it men or women, are provided the job position on the basis of their qualifications and talent, irrespective of their gender. Today, it’s very common that the male employees work under the guidance of a female boss. There is a

simple and logical reason behind this, that is, the female boss is much more qualified and talented than those male employees.

According to the Constitution, every man and woman is liable to equal wages and salary. But, this definition was realized way back in 80’s. Before 80’s, there was discrimination in paying the wages and salary, on the basis of the gender. It was seen that men were paid more than women, irrespective of the same amount of work done. But, with the concept of gender equality, now men and women are paid according to their tasks and not on the basis of their gender.

Last, but not the least, men and women are equal in front of law now. Decades back, women were not allowed to step out of house, even if any injustice was being done to them. The women were taught to accept that any injustice to them was their fate. But, with the increase in literacy rate, women are being aware of their rights. They are not bearing any injustice. They are raising their voice before the law, and the law is held responsible to grant them justice. The law is above the gender discrimination, and hence it is proved.

Thus, it’s the gender equality that has helped women to see and accomplish those dreams, in the very same way, that men accomplish their dreams.

A New Sustainable Society

A society is made up of men and women. To make the society sustainable, the welfare of both the genders is necessary. This welfare includes the welfare at all the levels, be it social, economic, cultural, legal or political level. From the basic necessities of food, cloth and shelter to the higher necessities of a luxurious life, all the necessities have to be fulfilled to make the society sustainable. Bringing all the people of the society up from BPL should be the aim of the country.

The most sustainable society which can exist is where both the genders hold the equal status. Today, gender equality is the need of the hour. This can contribute positively to the

sustainable society. As it is known and already discussed, if gender equality persists in the society, it can make the whole society a developed one by working at all the levels. If the women are suppressed and discouraged, then the development will be reduced by 50%, as women constitute 50% of the population of the society. The logic is very clear, one person can't do all the things, there is always a need of a second person. The women, if educated and employed, can make the opportunities work for them, instead if the women are threatened. There have been very crucial inventions by women. One of the best examples is Marie Curie who conducted research on one of the major topics of Physics, that is, radioactivity. She went on to discover radium and potassium. It is the finest example of history that how women can bring revolution, if given chance. Lately, women empowerment has gained popularity in India too. With the rise in women empowerment, many initiatives have been undertaken by the government of India. These initiatives include education and employment opportunities, equal to those that are provided to men. These initiatives have been a boon for the women, but still are inaccessible to a great part of women, especially that of rural areas. Apart from this, women empowerment has contributed a lot to sustainable society.

Next on the board is the economical factor that can lead to a sustainable society. It is obvious that higher the economic status of the country, higher is the living standard of its citizens. The employment opportunities, be it in job or an independent business, contribute to the economy of the country. The revenue coming from the taxes is also a source of income to enhance the economic status. The import and export also contribute to the welfare to the economy in the country. So, there are diverse yet essential sources that cures the economic status and enhances the per capita income.

Connecting gender equality and economic status of the country, if both the genders are given

equal opportunities to study and to work, then the GDP which counts the most among other economic indicators, will rapidly grow up.

Suggestions :

Any country to be progressive needs to optimally use all the factors that contribute to its overall growth. These factors include social factors, economic factors, political factors, technological factors and additionally, happiness factor (derived from the concept of Gross Domestic Happiness). All these factors require contribution from both the parts of the population, that is, both men and women. Both men and women are equal today in roles, responsibilities, position and status. They both have the equal ability to make the country a developed and progressive one. Thus, with gender equality, men and women, together, can enhance the economic status of the country, leading to the economic development, further leading to a sustainable society.

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