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"To study the tissues of Gender inequality in India"

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ABSTRACT

Gender inequality has been a social issue in India for centuries. That in many parts of India, the birth of a girl child is not welcomed is a known fact. It is a known fact too, that discrimination starts from even before the girl child is born and sometimes she is killed as a fetus, and if she manages to see the light of day, she is killed as an infant, which makes up the highly skewed child sex ratio where for every 1000 boys in India, there are only 908 girls. In such a scenario, it is not obvious that for myriad reasons, many girls across the country are forced to drop out of school.

Patriarchal norms have marked women as inferior to men. A girl child is considered a burden and is often not even allowed to see the light of the world. It is hard to imagine this state of affairs in the 21st Century when women have proved to be strong leaders in every field possible. From wrestling to business, the world has been revolutionized by exceptional women leaders in fields that were until recently completely dominated by men.

But in spite of such progress, even today, the girl child is discriminated against in most Indian households. The birth of a baby boy is celebrated with great pomp and ardor, but the birth of a girl child is received with dismay. The practice of female feticide through sex selective abortion continues to be practiced in spite of the Prenatal Diagnostic Technique Act of 1994. In India the child sex ratio is at the lowest it has ever been with just 914 girls for every 1000 boys (Census, 2011).

And this discrimination continues in every aspect. Be it education, health, protection or participation, the girl child is always treated unequally. Indian society still hasn't been awakened to the importance of empowering the women. The statistics still narrate a grim story of female feticide, girl child discrimination and gender bias.

Introduction –

The need of the hour is to make a change in the mindset of the society and destroy the prejudices that damage the future of the girl child. What is required is a concerted effort to sensitize the society in eradicating this issue of gender inequality. It is high time that every child is treated equally and given every opportunity required to grow to his/her full potential.

10 Causes of Gender Inequality

Over the years, the world has gotten closer to achieving gender equality. There is better representation of women in politics, more economic opportunities, and better healthcare in many places of the world. However, the World Economic Forum estimates it will take another century before true gender equality becomes a reality. What drives the gap between genders? Here are 10 causes of gender inequality:

1. Uneven access to education

Around the world, women still have less access to education than men. 1/4 of young women between 15-

24 will not finish primary school. That group makes up 58% of the people not completing that basic education. Of all the illiterate people in the world, 2/3 are women. When girls are not educated on the same level as boys, it has a huge effect on their future and the kinds of opportunities they'll get.

2. Lack of employment equality

Only 6 countries in the world give women the same legal work rights as men. In fact, most economies give women only 3/4 the rights of men. Studies show that if employment became a more even playing field, it has a positive domino effect on other areas prone to gender inequality.

3. Job segregation

One of the causes for gender inequality within employment is the division of jobs. In most societies, there's an inherent belief that men are simply better equipped to handle certain jobs. Most of the time, those are the jobs that pay the best. This discrimination results in lower income for women. Women also take on the primary responsibility for unpaid labor, as even as they participate in the paid workforce, they have extra work that never gets recognized financially.

4. Lack of legal protections

According to research from World Bank, over one billion women don't have legal protection against domestic sexual violence or domestic economic violence. Both have a significant impact on women's ability to thrive and live in freedom. In many countries, there's also a lack of legal protections against harassment in the workplace, at school, and in public. These places become unsafe and without protection, women frequently have to make decisions that compromise and limit their goals.

5. Lack of bodily autonomy

Many women around the world do not have authority over their own bodies or when they become parents. Accessing birth control is frequently very difficult. According to the World Health Organization, over 200 million women who don't want to get pregnant are not using contraception. There are various reasons for this such as a lack of options, limited access, and cultural/religious opposition. On a global scale, about 40% of pregnancies are not planned and while 50% of them do end in abortion, 38% result in births. These mothers often become financially dependent on another person or the state, losing their freedom.

6. Poor medical care

In addition to limited access to contraception, women overall receive lower-quality medical care than men. This is linked to other gender inequality reasons such as a lack of education and job opportunities, which results in more women being in poverty. They are less likely to be able to afford good healthcare. There's also been less research into diseases that affect women more than men, such as autoimmune disorders and chronic pain conditions. Many women also experience discrimination and dismissal from their doctors, broadening the gender gap in healthcare quality.

7. Lack of religious freedom

When religious freedom is attacked, women suffer the most. According to the World Economic Forum, when extremist ideologies (such as ISIS) come into a community and restrict religious freedom, gender inequality gets worse. In a study performed by Georgetown University and Brigham Young University, researchers were also able to connect religious intolerance with women's ability to participate in the economy. When there's more religious freedom, an economy becomes more stable thanks to women's participation.

8. Lack of political representation

Of all national parliaments at the beginning of 2019, only 24.3% of seats were filled by women. As of June of 2019, 11 Heads of State were women. Despite progress in this area over the years, women are still grossly underrepresented in government and the political process. This means that certain issues that female politicians tend to bring up –

such as parental leave and childcare, pensions, gender equality laws and gender bias violence –are often neglected.

9. Racism

It would be impossible to talk about gender inequality without talking about racism. It affects what jobs women of color are able to get and how much they're paid, as well as how they are viewed by legal and healthcare systems. Gender inequality and racism have been closely-linked for a long time. According to Sally Ketch, a professor and author, European settlers in Virginia decided what work could be taxed based on the race of the woman performing the work. African women's work was "labor," so it was taxable, while work performed by English women was "domestic" and not taxable. The pay gaps between white women and women of color continue that legacy of discrimination and contribute to gender inequality.

10. Societal mindsets

It's less tangible than some of the other causes on this list, but the overall mindset of a society has a significant impact on gender inequality. How society determines the differences and value of men vs. women plays a starring role in every arena, whether it's employment or the legal system or healthcare. Beliefs about gender run deep and even though progress can be made through laws and structural changes, there's often a pushback following times of major change. It's also common for everyone (men and women) to ignore other areas of gender inequality when there's progress, such as better representation for women leadership. These types of mindsets prop up gender inequality and delay significant change.

Gender inequality "Gender imbalance" redirects here. For demographics, see Sex

selection abortion.

$$p(\♂) \neq p(\♀)$$

Gender inequality cropped

Gender inequality is the idea that men and women are not equal and that gender affects an individual's living experience. These differences arise from distinctions in biology, psychology, and cultural norms. Some of these types of distinctions are empirically grounded while others appear to be socially constructed. Studies show the different lived experience of genders across many domains including education, life expectancy, personality, interests, family life, careers, and political affiliations. Gender inequality is experienced differently across different cultures.

Biology

Natural differences exist between the sexes based on biological and anatomic factors, mostly differing reproductive roles. Biological differences include chromosomes and hormonal differences. There is a natural difference also in the relative physical strengths (on average) of the sexes, both in the lower body and more pronouncedly in the upper-

body, though this does not mean that any given man is stronger than any given woman. Men, on average, are taller, which provides both advantages and disadvantages. Women, on average, live significantly longer than men, though it is not clear to what extent this is a biological difference –

Life expectancy. Men have larger lung volumes and more circulating blood cells and clotting factors, while women have more circulating white blood cells and produce antibodies faster. Differences such as these are hypothesized to be an adaptation allowing for sexual specialization.

Objective -

1. To study the Issues due to inequality of gender.
2. To study the Causes due to inequality of gender.

Hypothesis –

1. The problems rise in society due to inequality of gender Issues.
2. The Causes Impact on society due to inequality of gender.

Research methodology –

Descriptive research definition: Descriptive research is defined as a research method that describes the characteristics of the population or phenomenon studied. This methodology focuses more on the “what” of the research subject than the “why” of the research subject.

The descriptive research method primarily focuses on describing the nature of a demographic segment, without focusing on “why” a particular phenomenon occurs. In other words, it “describes” the subject of the research, without covering “why” it happens.

Sampling -

Purposeful sampling is widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest. Although there are several different purposeful sampling strategies, criterion sampling appears to be used most commonly in implementation research. However, combining sampling strategies may be more appropriate to the aims of implementation research and more consistent

t with recent developments in quantitative methods. This paper reviews the principles and practice of purposeful sampling in implementation research, summarizes types and categories of purposeful sampling strategies and provides a set of recommendations for use of single strategy or multistage strategy designs, particularly for state implementation research.

Psychology

Prenatal hormone exposure influences extent one exhibits traditional masculine or feminine behavior. Negligible differences between males and females exist in general intelligence. Men are significantly more likely to take risks than women. Men are also more likely than women to be aggressive, a trait influenced by prenatal and possibly current androgen exposure. It has been theorized that these differences combined with physical differences are an adaptation representing sexual division of labour. A second theory proposes sex differences in intergroup aggression represent adaptations in male aggression to allow for territory, resource and mate acquisition. Females are (on average) more empathetic than males, though this does not mean that any given woman is more empathetic than any given man. Men and women have better visuospatial and verbal memory, respectively.

Income disparities linked to job stratification

Across the board, a number of industries are stratified across the genders. This is the result of a variety of factors. These include differences in education choices, preferred job and industry, work experience, number of hours worked, and breaks in employment (such as for bearing and raising children). Men also typically go in to higher paid and higher risk jobs when compared to women. These factors result in 60% to 75% difference between men's and women's average aggregate wages or salaries, depending on the source. Various explanations for the remaining 25% to 40% have been suggested, including women's lower willingness and ability to negotiate salary and sexual discrimination. According to the European Commission, direct discrimination only explains a small part of gender wage differences.

Men are reluctant to enter female-dominated occupations because of this and similarly resist the entrance of women into male-dominated occupations. In developing countries such as the Dominican Republic, female entrepreneurs are statistically more prone to failure in business. In the event of a business failure women often return to their domestic lifestyle despite the absence of income. On the other hand, men tend to search for other employment as the household is not a priority.

In 2014, a report by the International Labor Organization (ILO) reveals the wage gap between Cambodian women factory workers and other male counterparts. There was a US\$25 monthly pay difference conveying that women have a much lower power and being devalued not only at home but also in the workplace.

Professional education and careers

Additionally, with reliable birth control, young men and women had more reason to delay marriage. This meant that the marriage market available to any women who "delay marriage to pursue a career... would not be as depleted. Thus the Pill could have influenced women's careers, college majors, professional degrees, and the age at marriage."

Gender pay differences

Wage discrimination is when an employer pays different wages to two seemingly similar employees, usually on the basis of gender or race. Kampelmann and Rycx (2016) explain two different explanations for the differences observed in wages. They explain that employer tastes and preferences for foreign workers and/or customers can translate into having a lower demand for them as a whole and as a result offering them lower wages, as well as the differences in career dynamics, whereas, if there is large differences between immigrant workers and “native” workers, it could lead to wage discrimination for immigrant workers. Within the discrimination of domestic to foreign workers there is also discrimination among foreign workers based on gender. Female migrant workers are faced with a “triple-discrimination”. This “triple-discrimination” states that women foreign workers are more at risk to experience discrimination because they are women, unprotected workers, and migrant workers.

Gender roles in parenting and marriage

Gender roles are heavily influenced by biology, with male-female play styles correlating with sex hormones, sexual orientation, aggressive traits, and pain. Furthermore, females with congenital adrenal hyperplasia demonstrate increased masculinity and it has been shown that rhesus macaque children exhibit preferences for stereotypically male and female toys

Gender inequality in relationships

Gender equality in relationships has been growing over the years but for the majority of relationships, the power lies with the male. Even now men and women present themselves as divided along gender lines. A study done by Szymanowicz and Furnham, looked at the cultural stereotypes of intelligence in men and women, showing the gender inequality in self-presentation. This study showed that females thought if they revealed their intelligence to a potential partner, then it would diminish their chance with him. Men however would much more readily discuss their own intelligence with a potential partner. Also, women are aware of people's negative reactions to IQ, so they limit its disclosure to only trusted friends. Females would disclose IQ more often than men with the expectation that a real true friend would respond in a positive way. Intelligence continues to be viewed as a more masculine trait, than feminine trait. The article suggested that men might think women with a high IQ would lack traits that were desirable in a mate such as warmth, nurturance, sensitivity, or kindness. Another discovery was that females thought that friends should be told about one's IQ more so than males. However, males expressed doubts about the test's reliability and the importance of IQ in real life more so than women.

Attempts in equalizing household work

Despite the increase in women in the labor force since the mid-1900s, traditional gender roles are still prevalent in American society. Many women are expected to put their educational and career goals on hold in order to raise a family, while their husbands become primary breadwinners. However, some women choose to work and also fulfill a perceived gender role of cleaning the house and caring for children. Despite the fact that certain households might divide chores more evenly, there is evidence supporting the issue that women have continued

being the primary care-giver in family life even if they work full-time jobs. This evidence suggests that women who work outside the home often put an extra 18 hours a week doing household or childcare related chores as opposed to men who average 12 minutes a day in childcare activities. One study by van Hooff showed that modern couples, do not necessarily purposefully divide things like household chores along gender lines, but instead may rationalize it and make excuses. One excuse used is that women are more competent at household chores and have more motivation to do them, and some say the jobs men have are much more demanding.

Gender inequalities in relation to technology

One survey showed that men rate their technological skills in activities such as basic computer functions and online participatory communication higher than women. However, this study was a self-reporting study, where men evaluate themselves on their own perceived capabilities. It thus is not data based on actual ability, but merely perceived ability, as participants' ability was not assessed. Additionally, this study is inevitably subject to the significant bias associated with self-reported data.

Women are often drastically underrepresented within university technology and ICT focused programs while being overrepresented within social programs and humanities. Although data has shown women in western society generally outperform men in higher education, the labor markets of women often provide less opportunity and lower wages than that of men. Gender stereotypes and expectations may have an influence on the underrepresentation of women within technology and ICT focused programs and careers.

Property inheritance

Many countries have laws that give less inheritance of the ancestral property for women compared to men.

Structural marginalization

Gender inequalities often stem from social structures that have institutionalized conceptions of gender differences.

Marginalization occurs on an individual level when someone feels as if they are on the fringes or margins of their respective society. This is a social process and displays how current policies in place can affect people. For example, media advertisements display young girls with easy bake ovens (promoting being a housewife) as well as with dolls that they can feed and change the diaper of (promoting being a mother).

Gender stereotypes

Cultural stereotypes, which can dictate specific roles, are engrained in both men and women and these stereotypes are a possible explanation for gender inequality and the resulting gendered wage disparity. Women have traditionally been viewed as being caring and nurturing and are designated to occupations which require such skills¹ While these skills are culturally valued, they were typically associated with domesticity, so occupations requiring these same skills are not economically valued. Men have traditionally been viewed as the main worker in the home, so jobs held by men have been historically economically valued and occupations predominated by men continue to be economically valued and earn higher wages.

Sexism and discrimination

Gender inequality can further be understood through the mechanisms of sexism. Discrimination takes place due to the prejudiced treatment of men and women based on gender alone. Sexism occurs when men and women are framed within two dimensions of social cognition.

Discrimination also plays out with networking and in preferential treatment within the economic market. Men typically occupy positions of power in society. Due to socially accepted gender roles or preference to other men, males in power are more likely to hire or promote other men, thus discriminating against women.

Addressing gender inequality through social protection programmes designed to increase equality would be an effective way of reducing gender inequality, according to the Overseas Development Institute (ODI). Researchers at the ODI argue for the need to develop the following in social protection in order to reduce gender inequality and increase growth:

- Community childcare to give women greater opportunities to seek employment
- Support parents with the care costs (e.g. South African child/disability grants)
- Education stipends for girls (e.g. Bangladesh's Girls Education Stipend scheme)
- Awareness-raising regarding gender biased violence, and other preventive measures, such as financial support for women and children escaping abusive environments (e.g. NGO pilot initiatives in Ghana)
- Inclusion of programme participants (women and men) in designing and evaluating social protection programmes
- Gender-awareness and analysis training for programme staff
- Collect and distribute information on coordinated care and service facilities (e.g. access to micro-credit and micro-entrepreneurial training for women)
- Developing monitoring and evaluation systems that include sex-disaggregated data

The ODI maintains that society limits governments' ability to act on economic incentives.

The Gender gap index world map for 2013.

Gender inequality is a result of the persistent discrimination of one group of people based upon gender and it manifests itself differently according to race, culture, politics, country, and economic situation. It is furthermore considered a causal factor of violence against women. While gender discrimination happens to both men and women in individual situations, discrimination against women is an entrenched, global pandemic. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, rape and violence against women and girls is used as a tool of war. In Afghanistan, girls have had acid thrown in their faces for attending school. Considerable focus has been given to the issue of gender inequality at the international level by organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the World Bank, particularly in developing countries. The causes and effects of gender inequality vary geographically, as do methods for combating it.

Asia

One example of the continued existence of gender inequality in Asia is the "Missing girls" phenomenon. "Many families desire male children in order to ensure an extra source of income. In China, females are perceived as less valuable for labor and unable to provide sustenance." Moreover, gender inequality is also reflected in the educational aspect of rural China. Gender inequality exists because of gender stereotypes in rural China. For example, families may consider that it is useless for girls to acquire knowledge at school because they will marry someone eventually, and their major responsibility is to take care of housework.

China

Gender inequality in China derives from deeply rooted Confucian beliefs about gender roles in society. However, despite the existence of state programs, women still face discrimination in China. According to the United Nations Development Programme, China was ranked 39 out of 162 countries on the Gender Inequality Index in 2018, while it was ranked 91 out of 187 in 2014. According to the World Economic Forum global gender gap index, China's gap has widened and its rank has dropped to 106 out of 153 countries in 2020. It ranked last in terms of health and survival. According to Human Rights Watch, job discrimination remains a significant issue as 11% of postings specify a preference or requirement of men. In fact, Chinese women are often asked whether they expect to have children during interview as it is considered an obstacle to the job application, and as women generally retire around 40, it is difficult for them to advance. In addition, Chinese women earn 78.2% for every dollar paid to a man in 2019, according to a study conducted by Boss Zipping.

South Korea
Gender inequality in South Korea is derived from deeply rooted patriarchal ideologies with specifically defined Gender roles the gender-based stereotypes are often unchallenged and even encouraged by the government. South Korea has the lowest rank among OECD countries in the Economist's "Glass Ceiling Index", which evaluates women's higher education, number of women in managerial positions and in parliament.

Africa

Although African nations have made considerable strides towards improving gender parity, the World Economic Forum's 2018 Global Gender Gap Index reported that sub-

Saharan African and North African countries have only bridged 66% and 60% of their gender inequality. Women face considerable barriers to attaining equal status to men in terms of property ownership, gainful employment, political power, credit, education, and health outcomes.

Europe

The Global Gender Gap Report put out by the World Economic Forum (WEF) in 2013 ranks nations on a scale of 0 to 1, with a score of 1.0 indicating full gender equality. A nation with 35 women and 65 men in political office would get a score of 0.538 as the WEF is measuring the gap between the two figures and not the actual percentage of women in a given category. While Europe holds the top four spots for gender equality, with Iceland, Finland, Norway, and Sweden ranking 1st through 4th respectively, it also contains two nations ranked in the bottom 30 countries, Albania at 108 and Turkey at 120. The Nordic Countries, for several years,

have been at the forefront of bridging the gap in gender inequality. Every Nordic country, aside from Denmark which is at 0.778, has reached above a 0.800 score. In contrast to the Nordic nations, the countries of Albania and Turkey continue to struggle with gender inequality. Albania and Turkey failed to break the top 100 nations in 2 of 4 and 3 of 4 factors, respectively. However, despite the disparity, European nations continue to make advances in the many factors that are used to determine a nation's gender gap score.

Western Europe

Western Europe, a region most often described as comprising the non-communist members of post-WWII Europe, has, for the most part been doing well in eliminating the gender gap. Western Europe holds 12 of the top 20 spots on the Global Gender Gap Report for overall score. While remaining mostly in the top 50 nations, four Western European nations fall below that benchmark. Portugal is just outside of the top 50 at number 51 with score of 0.706 while Italy (71), Greece (81) and Malta (84) received scores of 0.689, 0.678 and 0.676, respectively.

Eastern Europe

A large portion of Eastern Europe, a region most often described as the former communist members of post-WWII Europe, resides between 40th and 100th place in the Global Gender Gap Report. A few outlier countries include Lithuania, which jumped nine places (37th to 28th) from 2011 to 2013, Latvia, which has held the 12th spot for two consecutive years, Albania and Turkey.

Russia

, Russia gender inequality ratio is 0.255, ranking it 54 out of 162 countries in 2018. Women hold 16.1% of parliamentary seats and 96.3% have reached at least a secondary level of education. Researchers calculate the loss to the annual budget due to gender segregation to be roughly 40-50%. Although women hold prominent positions in Russia's government, traditional gender roles are still prevalent, and there is room for improvement when dealing with gender pay gap, domestic violence and sexual harassment.

India

India ranking remains low in gender equality measures by the World Economic Forum, although the rank has been improving in recent years. When broken down into components that contribute the rank, India performs well on political empowerment, but is scored near the bottom with China on Sex Selective abortion. India also scores poorly on overall female to male Literacy and health rankings. India with a 2013 ranking of 101 out of 136 countries had an overall score of 0.6551; while Iceland, the nation that topped the list, had an overall score of 0.8731 (no gender gap would yield a score of 1.0). Gender inequalities impact India's sex ratio, women's health over their lifetimes, their educational attainment, and economic conditions. It is a multifaceted issue that concerns men and women alike.

The labor force participation rate of women was 80.7% in 2013. Nancy Lockwood of the Society of Human Resource Management, the world's largest human resources association with members in 140 countries, in a 2009 report wrote that female labor participation is lower than men, but has been rapidly increasing since the 1990s. Out of India's 397 million workers in 2001, 124 million were women, st

ates Lockwood.

India is on target to meet its Millennium Development Goals of gender parity in education before 2016. UNICEF's measures of attendance rate and Gender Equality in Education Index (GEEI) attempt to capture the quality of education. Despite some gains, India needs to triple its rate of improvement to reach GEEI score of 95% by 2015 under the Millennium Development Goals. A 1998 report stated that rural India girls continue to be less educated than the boys.

United States

The World Economic Forum measures gender equity through a series of economic, educational, and political benchmarks. It has ranked the United States as 19th (up from 31st in 2009) in terms of achieving gender equity. The US Department of Labor has indicated that in 2009, "the median weekly earnings of women who were full-

time wage and salary workers was... 80 percent of men's". The Department of Justice found that in 2009, "the percentage of female victims (26%) of intimate partner violence was about 5 times that of male victims (5%)". "The United States ranks 41st in a ranking of 184 countries on maternal deaths during pregnancy and childbirth, below all other industrialized nations and a number of developing countries" and women only represent 20% of members of Congress.

Political affiliations and behaviors

Existing research on the topic of gender/sex and politics has found differences in political affiliation, beliefs, and voting behavior between men and women, although these differences vary across cultures. Gender is omnipresent in every culture, and while there are many factors to consider when labeling people "Democrat" or "Republican"—such as race and religion—

gender is especially prominent in politics. Studying gender and political behavior poses challenges, as it can be difficult to determine if men and women actually differ in substantial ways in their political views and voting behavior, or if biases and stereotypes about gender cause people to make assumptions. However, trends in voting behavior among men and women have been proven through research.

Challenges to women in politics

Overall, politics in United States is dominated by men, which can pose many challenges to women who decide to enter the political sphere. As the number of women participants in politics continue to increase around the world, the gender of female candidates serves as both a benefit and a hindrance within their campaign themes and advertising practices. The overarching challenge seems to be that—no matter their actions—

women are unable to win in the political sphere as different standards are used to judge them when compared to their male counterparts.

Steps needed for change

Several forms of action have been taken to combat institutionalized sexism. People are beginning to speak up or "talk back" in a constructive way to expose gender inequality in politics, as well as gender inequality and underrepresentation in other institutions. Researchers who have delved into the topic of institutionalized sexism in politics have introduced the term "undoing gender." This term focuses on education and an overarching understanding of gender by encouraging "social interactions that reduce gender difference." Some feminists argue

that "undoing gender" is problematic because it is context-dependent and may actually reinforce gender. For this reason, researchers suggest "doing gender differently" by dismantling Gender norms and expectations in politics, but this can also depend on culture and level of government (e.g. local versus federal).

Conclusion –

Accelerating progress and opportunities across India for every girl and every boy Every child deserves to reach her or his full potential, but gender inequalities in their lives and in the lives of those who care for them hinder this reality. Wherever they live in India girls and boys see gender inequality in their homes and communities every day –

in textbooks, in movies, in the media and among the men and women who provide their care and support. Across India gender inequality results in unequal opportunities, and while it impacts on the lives of both genders, statistically it is girls that are the most disadvantaged. Globally girls have higher survival rates at birth, are more likely to be developmentally on track, and just as likely to participate in preschool, but **India is the only large country where more girls die than boys**. Girls are also more likely to drop out of school. In India girls and boys experience adolescence differently. While boys tend to experience greater freedom, girls tend to face extensive limitations on their ability to move freely and to make decisions affecting their work, education, marriage and social relationships. As girls and boys age the gender barriers continue to expand and continue into adulthood where we see only a quarter of women in the formal workplace. Some Indian women are global leaders and powerful voices in diverse fields but most women and girls in India do not fully enjoy many of their rights due to deeply entrenched patriarchal views, norms, traditions and structures.

India will not fully develop unless both girls and boys are equally supported to reach their full potential.

There are risks, violations and vulnerabilities girls face just because they are girls. Most of these risks are directly linked to the economic, political, social and cultural disadvantages girls deal with in their daily lives. This becomes acute during crisis and disasters. With the prevalence of gender discrimination, and social norms and practices, girls become exposed to the possibility of child marriage, teenage pregnancy, child domestic work, poor education and health, sexual abuse, exploitation and violence. Many of these manifestations will not change unless girls are valued more.

The solution It is critical to enhance the value of girls by investing in and empowering them, with education, life skills, sport and much more. By increasing the value of girls we can collectively contribute to the achievement of specific results, some short-

term (increasing access to education, reducing anemia), others medium-term (ending child marriage) and others long-term (eliminating gender-biased sex selection).

Changing the value of girls has to include men, women and boys. It has to mobilize many sectors in society. Only when society's perception changes, will the rights of all the girls and all the boys in India be fulfilled. Empowering girls requires focused investment and collaboration. Providing girls with the s

ervices and safety, education and skills they need in daily life can reduce the risks they face and enable them to fully develop and contribute to India's growth. Girls have an especially difficult time accessing life-saving resources, information and social networks in their daily life. Access to programmes specifically tailored to the needs of girls – with a focus on education and developing life skills, ending violence and incorporating the needs and contributions of girls from vulnerable groups, including those with disabilities, can strengthen the resilience of millions of girls. Long-term solutions designed with and for girls can further strengthen this resilience and be a pathway of transformational and lifelong opportunity for girls. All girls, especially adolescent girls, need platforms to voice the challenges they face in every day life and explore the solutions that work for them so they can build better futures for themselves and their communities. UNICEF India's 2018-2022 Country Programme has been developed in response to the identification of deprivations that Indian children face, including gender based deprivations. Each programmatic outcome is committed to a gender priority that is noted explicitly in its programme, budget and results. These include:

- **Health:** Reducing excess female mortality under five and supporting equal care-seeking behaviour for girls and boys. (Example: front-line workers encourage families to take sick baby girls to the hospital immediately)
- **Nutrition:** Improving nutrition of women and girls, especially by promoting more equitable eating practices (Example: women cooperatives develop and implement their own micro-plans for improved nutrition in their villages)
- **Education:** Gender responsive support to enable out-of-school girls and boys to learn and enabling more gender-responsive curricula and pedagogy (Example: implementing new strategies for identifying vulnerable out of school girls and boys, overhaul of textbooks so that the language, images and messages do not perpetuate gender stereotypes)
- **Child protection:** Ending child and early marriage (Example: supporting panchayats to become “child-marriage free”, facilitating girls and boys clubs that teach girls sports, photography, journalism and other non-traditional activities)
- **WASH:** Improving girls' access to menstrual hygiene management, including through well-equipped separate toilets in schools (Example: developing gender guidelines from Swacch Bharat Mission, supporting states to implement MHM policy)
- **Social policy:** Supporting state governments to develop gender-responsive cash transfer programmes and supporting women's leadership in local governance (Example: cash transfer programme in West Bengal to enable girls to stay in school, a Resource Centre for women panchayat leaders in Jharkhand)
- **Disaster risk reduction:** Enabling greater gender disaggregation of information management for disaster risk reduction and more leadership and participation of women and girls (Example: greater women's leadership and participation in Village Disaster Management Committees)
- **Joint C4D-Gender strategy:** UNICEF's Communication for Development (C4D) team deve

lops social and behaviour change communication to support each outcome. These communications prioritize efforts to change negative gender norms like unequal feeding, unequal investment in young girls and boys, harmful MHM practices and perpetuation of lower value of girls than boys through wedding dowry.

- **Advocating for and promoting equal value of girls:** UNICEF's Communications, Advocacy and Partnerships team works with media, influencers and game changers to advocate for UNICEF priorities, which, in the 2018-2022 programme, includes Equal Value of Girls and Boys.
- **Increasing and improving girls' and women's safe mobility:** UNICEF India has begun work in some states to work on new programmes with new partners to improve the ability and freedom of women and girls, including to access government services like schools and hospitals.

Strategic partnerships

Key partners include the Ministry of Women and Child Development, especially its leadership of the Beti Bachao, Beti Pado, Programme, which UNICEF India is supporting at the national and state level. UNICEF India works closely with other UN agencies to support gender equality, especially with United Nations Population Fund and UN Women. Civil society organizations, including gender experts and activities are also key partners.

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