

Looking at Women's Status in India through Different Lenses: Evidence from Second Wave of IHDS Data

Authors : Vidya Yadav

Abstract : In every society, males and females are expected to behave in certain ways, and in every culture, those expectation, values and norms are different and vary accordingly. Many of the inequalities between men and women are rooted in institutional structure such as in educational field, labour market, wages, decision-making power, access to services as well as in accessing the health and well-being care also. The marriage and kinship pattern shape both men's and women's lives. Earlier many studies have highlighted the gender disparities which vary tremendously between regions, social classes, and communities. This study will try to explore the prominent indicators to show the status of women and well-being condition in Indian society. Primarily this paper concern with firstly identification of indicators related to gender in each area like education, work status, mobility, women participation in public and private decision making, autonomy and domestic violence etc. And once the indicators are identified next task is to define them. The indicators which are selected here are for a comparison of women's status across Indian states. Recent Indian Human Development Survey, 2011-12 has been procured to show the current situation of women. Result shows that in spite of rising levels of education and images of growing westernization in India, love marriages remain in rarity even among urban elite. In India marriage is universal, and most of the men and women marry at relatively young age. Even though the legal age of marriage is 18, but more than 60 percent are married before the legal age. Not surprisingly, but Bihar and Rajasthan are the states with earliest age at marriage. Most of them reported that they have very limited contact with their husband before marriages. Around 69 percent of women met their husbands on the day of the wedding or shortly before. In spite of decline in fertility, still childbearing remains essential to women's lives. Mostly women aged 25 and older had at least one child. Women's control over household resources, physical space and mobility is also limited. Indian women's, mostly rely on men to purchase day to day necessities, as well as medicines, as well as other necessary items. This ultimately reduces the likelihood that women have cash in hand for such purchases. The story is quite different when it comes to have control over decision over purchasing household assets such as TVs or refrigerator, names on the bank account, and home ownership papers. However, the likelihood of ownership rises among urbanite educated women's. Women's still have to the cultural norms and the practice of purdah or ghunghat, familial control over women's physical movement. Wife beating and domestic violence still remain pervasive, and beaten for minor transgression like going out without permission. Development of India cannot be realized without the very significant component of gender. Therefore detailed examinations of different indicators are required to understand, strategize, plan and formulate programmes.

Keywords : autonomy, empowerment, gender, violence

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