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## FACTORS INFLUENCING GENDER EQUITY AND ITS EFFECT ON WOMEN'S STATUS

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper attempts to analyze the factors affecting gender inequity and their effect on women's status. 144 respondents are selected for the study working in various departments belonging to chittoor district. Factor analysis and ANOVA tests have been conducted to concise the various factors into limited number of factors and to test the hypothesis. Majorly four factors are identified namely women's role in the family, health issues of women, job opportunities and higher education. It is found that these factors show a major effect on women and plays an important role on the gender equity. Finally it is suggested that gender inequity has to be reduced to motivate women and avoid male domination.*

**KEY WORDS:** *Male domination, women's role, Health issues, Job opportunities, Higher education.*

### INTRODUCTION

Gender is one of the universal dimension on which the status differs from men and women. It is a social contract indicating the socially and culturally prejudiced roles that men and women are to follow.

Gender equity focus on gender relations with men above women, and women being regarded as inferior and less valuable solely by virtue of their sex. Gender equity is one of the millennium development goals set by Indian government. The issue of Gender equity can be observed in almost all developing countries and even in developed world. Reduction in existing gender inequity is a major concern for social scientists and economists. Gender inequity is affecting the fertility rate, infant mortality rate and has negative effect on children education and health.

Gender gap in employment can reduce the average ability of work force by reducing the pool of talent from which employees can draw. This affects

economic growth. Gender hierarchy is manifested in family relations, inheritance, laws and customs, variations of women's work and its gender invisibility, and the power to make decisions in society, the family, work place, religious and other cultural institutions.

Gender equity implies a society in which women and men enjoy the same opportunities, outcomes, rights and obligations in all spheres of life. A critical aspect of promoting gender equity is the empowerment of women with a focus on identifying and redressing power imbalances and given more autonomy to manage their own lives

### STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Gender equity is the major issue focused in the present day life. In our society majority of the women are suffering from the problem of Male dominance. In spite of equal earnings from male, female are facing serious problem of gender inequity. Gender inequality holds back the growth of

individuals, the development of countries and the evolution of societies, to the disadvantage of both men and women. "Gender issues" are not the same as "women's issues" and that understanding gender means "understanding opportunities, constraints and the impact of change as they affect both women and men." Gender inequality "fully into the light" and treating it as a matter of urgency as it affects both human rights and development priorities.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Global Gender report (2010)** found that the annual world economic forum monitors gender equality on 4 quantifiable dimensions namely education, health, participation in the economy and political empowerment.

**Hindin(2005)** used multivariate statistical analysis and examined the factors that influence decision making power of women in three countries namely Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi, and found that for women in urban areas their partners have final decision making power. Decisions regarding wealth are taken by men most commonly and less decision making priority is given to women regarding wealth or money related aspects.

**Hirut (2004)** quoted that women are docile, submissive, patient and tolerant of monotonous work and violence, for which culture is the major factor and it is used for justification.

**Jayachandran (2014)** found that parents in India strongly want to have one son in order to perform all Hindu rituals.

**Jensen (2012)** used random variation in the location of BPO recruitment drives and placement services to show that women, who would otherwise not have worked, take BPO jobs. He found that women lack job networks than men and so not channeled to traditional occupations.

**Lagerlof (2003)** identified that gender equity on female education has a positive impact on economic growth because of its effects on fertility and on the human capital of children. He proposed a model in which families play a coordination game against each other when deciding human capital level of the offspring.

**Mullally (2007)** examines the interface of feminism and multiculturalism and addresses the tension between traditional values and norms, and rights of women. She proposes that the search for a proportionate response in a democratic society to a pressing social need can lead to a satisfactory and just outcome, to

reviewing and renegotiating the roles of women in private and public spheres.

**Ramakrishnan et.al(2011)** in a study found that 405 parents in India have advised that their child need surgery to correct a congenital heart condition. After 1 year 70% of boys and 44% girls have undergone surgery. They reported that raising a daughter is like watering your neighbours garden.

**Stosky(2006)** adds that gender differences in behavior may influence aggregate consumption, savings and therefore macro economic performance. According to her analysis, giving more decision power to women affects aggregate productivity because women seems to have a stronger preference for goods and services that contribute to the human capital of children like education, nutrition and health as well as stronger preference for savings, a lower degree of risk aversion and a higher prosperity to invest in productivity projects.

**Tesch-Romer.C and et.al (2008)** reports an interesting finding that improving gender equity decreases difference in well-being between men and women only if gender equality is a desired social value. Controversially, there are no significant well being effects of further advancing gender equity in societies where it is no highly regarded. In most developed countries gender equality is a highly ranked societal goal, it is safe to assume that it will have positive effects on well being.

**WHO (2014)** reported that child bearing is only more common in developing countries. Nearly 90% of world's maternal mortality (deaths during and after pregnancy) is more due to various reasons like lack of proper treatment by men at home, mental stress, and lack of care during pregnancy and after pregnancy.

**World Bank (2001)** report concludes that growth alone does not deliver the desired results with respect to gender equality, and that it may be necessary not only to reform legal and economic institutions but also take active measures to correct the gender gaps in access and control of resources or political voice.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the present scenario of gender equity in the society.
2. To find out the factors influencing gender equity and its effect on women's status.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

**Sample:** Men and women working in various departments.

**Sample Size:** 144 respondents belonging to chittoor district.

**Data collection method:** Survey through Questionnaire.

**Instruments and Measures:**The questionnaire was prepared to measure factors related to gender equity. First few questions were related to demographic factors and then questions are confined to specific areas like women’s role in the family, health conditions of women, higher education and job opportunities for women. They were measured on 5 point Likert scale (1:very poor to 5: Excellent) using 25 statements.

**HYPOTHESIS**

1. H1: There is a significant relationship between gender and factors affecting gender equity.
2. H2: There is a significant relationship between age and factors affecting gender equity.

**STATISTICAL TOOLS**

Frequency distribution, Factor analysis and ANOVA.

**DATA ANALYSIS**

**Table: 1: The frequency distribution of the sample population**

		Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Male	98	68.1
	Female	46	31.9
<b>Age(in years)</b>	23-30	72	50
	31-40	68	47.2
	41 and above	4	2.8

**Factors influencing gender equity:-**

First, Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were used to measure the internal consistency of each identified dimension of construct, and items with adequate Cronbach’s alphas were retained for the scales. The general criteria for the Cronbach

coefficient alpha should be greater than 0.6. As all the 8 constructs have alpha value satisfying the criteria, all of the constructs were acceptable and a total of 25 items were retained for the five constructs in the study.

**Table: 2: Cronbach’s Alpha of constructs Reliability statistics**

Cronbach’s Alpha	Number of items
0.890	25

To determine the important factors influencing gender equity, the Principal Component Factor Analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation was performed for the 25 items measuring adoption. The result indicated that the Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity (Bartlett, 1954) was significant (Chi-Square 1500.681, p-value < 0.0001). The Kaiser-Mayer-

Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was high at 0.715. This KMO value of 0.715 is excellent since it exceeded the recommended value of 0.6 (Kaiser, 1974). The two results of (KMO and Bartlett’s) suggest that the data is appropriate to proceed with the factor analysis procedure.

**KMO and Bartlett’s test:-**

KMO Adequacy	Measure of sampling	0.715
Bartlett’s test of sphericity	Approx.Chi-square	1500.681
	Df	300
	Sig.	0.000

Further Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed and only those factors were retained which have an eigen value more than 1 since they are considered significant. An eigen value represents the amount of variance associated with the factor. The result was that there were a total of 4 factors, which

explained for 50.005% of the total variance. The factors considered should together account for more than 50% of the total variance (Malhotra 2010). One variable dealing with Career Planning have very low value and hence that is eliminated.

**Factors affecting gender equity:-**

<b>Factor:1: Women’s role in the family</b>	<b>F1</b>	<b>F2</b>	<b>F3</b>	<b>F4</b>
1. Major decision maker in the family	<b>0.620</b>			
2. Nominee for insurance plans	<b>0.713</b>			
3. Household purchases	<b>0.699</b>			
4. Eat food after serving the family	<b>0.435</b>			
<b>Factor:2: Health conditions</b>				
1. Consult doctor frequently		<b>0.776</b>		
2. Enjoy working at home		<b>0.703</b>		
3. Care taken during pregnancy		<b>0.638</b>		
4. Medical expenditure		<b>0.699</b>		
5. Personal health problems		<b>0.663</b>		
6. Feel Stress working at home		<b>0.686</b>		
<b>Factor:3: Higher education</b>				
1. Family support			<b>0.550</b>	
2. Education outside hometown			<b>0.584</b>	
3. Monetary help for education			<b>0.370</b>	
4. Neighbors and relatives support			<b>0.608</b>	
<b>Factor:4: Job Oppurtunities</b>				
1. Night shifts				<b>0.716</b>
2. Gender focused jobs				<b>0.743</b>
3. Collegues support				<b>0.438</b>

**Factor 1** loaded on four variables and can be labeled as **Women’s role in the family** as it comprises of dimensions related to major decision maker in the family, nominee for insurance plans, household purchases and eat food after serving the family. The items received a mean of 3.775 on a scale of 1-5.

**Factor 2** loaded on six variables and can be labeled as **Health conditions** as it comprises of dimensions related to consult doctor frequently, enjoy working at home, care taken during pregnancy, medical expenditure personal health problems and feel stress working at home. The items received a mean of 3.995 on a scale of 1-5.

**Factor 3** loaded on four variables and can be labeled as **Higher education** as it comprises of dimensions

related to family support, education outside home town, monetary help for education and neighbors and relatives support. The items received a mean of 3.89 on a scale of 1-5.

**Factor 4** loaded on three variables and can be labeled as **Job opportunities** as it comprises of dimensions related to night shift, gender focused jobs and colleagues support. The items received a mean of 3.85 on a scale of 1-5.

**Hypothesis Testing:-**

**One Way ANOVA** (Analysis of Variance) have been used to test the following two hypotheses:

**H1: There is a significant relationship between gender and factors affecting gender equity.**

ANOVA						
		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig
<b>Women's role in the family</b>	Between groups	5.918 1	1	5.918	14.170	.000
	Within groups	59.304	142	.418		
	Total	65.222	143			
<b>Health issues</b>	Between groups	3.578	1	3.578	5.395	.022
	Within groups	94.172	142	.663		
	Total	97.150	143			
<b>Job oppurtunities</b>	Between groups	4.494	1	4.494	6.684	.011
	Within groups	95.478	142	.672		
	Total	99.972	143			

It is evident from the table that three factors have p value less than 0.05 and hence null hypothesis can be rejected for those (women's role in the family, Health issues and Job oppurtunities) only. There was a statistically significant difference between groups

as determined by one-way ANOVA (F (1,142)) =5.198, p=0.000 and F(1,142)= 3.578, p = 0.022 and F(1,142)= 4.494 p =0.011.

**H2: There is a significant relationship between age and factors effecting gender equity.**

ANOVA						
		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig
<b>Women's role in the family</b>	Between groups	5.792	2	2.896	5.268	.006
	Within groups	77.513	141	.550		
	Total	83.306	143			
<b>Health issues</b>	Between groups	5.792	2	2.896	4.890	.009
	Within groups	83.513	141	.592		
	Total	89.306	143			
<b>Job oppurtunities</b>	Between groups	41.141	2	2.070	3.339	.038
	Within groups	87.415	141	.620		
	Total	91.556	143			
<b>Higher education</b>	Between groups	9.913	2	4.957	9.729	.000
	Within groups	71.837	141	.509		
	Total	81.750	143			

It is evident from the table that four factors have p value less than 0.05 and hence null hypothesis can be rejected for those (health issues, job opportunities and higher education) only. There was a statistically significant difference between groups as determined by one-way ANOVA ( $F(2,141) = 5.268, p = 0.006$  and  $F(2,141) = 4.890, p = 0.009$  and  $F(2,141) = 3.339, p = 0.038$  and  $F(2, 141) = 4.957, p = 0.000$ ).

## CONCLUSION

From the above discussion, there is no doubt that tensions still persist between feminists and the supporters of traditional patriarchal society. Feminism today is faced with the challenge of negotiating better prospects and greater gender inequalities. For this reason civil society must remain active in efforts to cultivate the promotion of human rights.

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