

Gender Inequality in India

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Abstract: This paper deals with the gender inequality in India with respect to education and health, Gender-based violence etc., also factors leading to gender inequality and also the paper deals with the basics of PNDT Act 1994. There is a high degree of gender inequality all over the World—in education, personal autonomy, and more. This article discusses several mechanisms through which, as countries grow, gender gaps narrow. That while much of the GDP/gender-inequality relationship can be explained by the process of development, society-specific factors are also at play: Many countries that are poor today have cultural norms that exacerbate favoritism toward males. Norms such as patri-locality and concern for women's "purity" help explain the male-skewed sex ratio in India and China and low female employment in India, the Middle East, and North Africa, for example. The sex ratio has become more male-tilted with development.

Keywords: PNDT act, purity, inequality, women, patriarchal

I. INTRODUCTION

Gender gaps favoring males—in education, health, personal autonomy, and more—are systematically larger in poor countries than in rich countries. The root cause of gender inequality in poor countries is the higher level of gender inequality explained by underdevelopment itself and the countries that are poor today have certain characteristics and cultural beliefs that lead to the larger gender gaps. To begin by documenting some basic facts about how gender inequality correlates with the level of economic development several mechanisms through which the process of economic development theoretically could improve the relative outcomes of women and review recent evidence on these mechanisms. While much of the relationship between development and gender inequality can be explained by the process of development, society-specific factors are also at play. The countries that are poor today, or at least some of them, have cultural features that exacerbate favoritism toward males. Being poor is insufficient to explain parents' strong desire to have a son in China and India, for example in greater detail the problem of the male-skewed sex ratio at birth, which differs from most other manifestations of gender bias in that it has been intensifying, not lessening, with economic development. Finally, the lay out policy approaches to accelerate the narrowing of gender gaps.

OBJECTIVES

- To know about the gender inequality in society
- To study the factors contributing to gender inequality

HYPOTHESIS:

This study deals with gender inequality and about the women's participation in the labor force has led to an increase or decline of capital investment.

METHODOLOGY:

- Secondary source is used like research article, book and reports

SOURCES OF STUDY:

The secondary sources namely books, news paper, journals, research articles and e- sources at the time of study of the gender inequality and its influence on the society.

LIMITATIONS:

The researcher is unable to trace the primary sources of the Ministry of social justice and empowerment

CHAPTERIZATION

- The first chapter deals with the gender inequality in society in fields of Education and health, Gender-based violence etc.,

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- The Second chapter deals with Factors leading to gender inequality
- The Third chapter is the PNDT Act 1994 and the summary of all the chapters and conclusion

More gender inequality in poor countries:

Poor countries by no means have a monopoly on gender inequality. Men earn more than women in essentially all societies. However, disparities in health, education, and bargaining power within marriage tend to be larger in countries with low GDP per capita.²

Education and health:

The ratio of the male and female college enrollment rates plotted against GDP per capita for the several countries included in the World Bank's World Development Indicators (WDI) data set. The relationship is downward-sloping: The male bias in college-going falls (and in fact evaporates) as GDP increases. Although the correlation cannot be interpreted as a causal relationship, it is strong: A negative relationship between the schooling gender gap and GDP is also seen for primary and secondary school enrollment. As with many of the cross-country patterns show, the college-GDP relationship mirrors the time-series pattern seen within many countries as their economies grow. In China and India special attention both because they are large—together they are home to over one third of the world population—and because they are infamous for their strong son preference. In terms of school enrollment, neither China nor India is an outlier. Turning to health, in general women have a longer life expectancy than men, but this female advantage is somewhat smaller in poor countries. The pattern is not explained by the disease composition varying with the level of development; even for a given cause of death, women have higher age-adjusted mortality relative to men in poor countries than in rich ones. The HIV/AIDS epidemic has hit Africa hard and decreased female life expectancy disproportionately.³

Employment:

The male and female labor force participation rates versus GDP per capita. The correlation is essentially zero. India stands out for the underrepresentation of women in the labor force; men are three times as likely as women to be working. Female labor force participation is also abnormally low in the Middle East and North Africa. Even though actual female labor force participation is not systematically higher in rich countries, attitudes about women in the labor force are more progressive in rich countries. The World Values Survey (WVS), a set of nationally representative surveys fielded to both men and women. There is a general view among people that men make better business executives than women. The stated attitudes, an important caveat is that the pattern could partly just reflect a greater degree of political correctness in rich countries.

Gender-based violence:

The incidence of gender-based violence to make cross-country comparisons, attitudes toward gender-based violence vary systematically with economic development. Average tolerance for gender-based violence varies considerably across countries, from less than 1 percent to over 85 percent, but tends to be higher in poor countries.

Decision-making power & Freedom of choice and life satisfaction:

An aspect of gender inequality that receives a great deal of attention from academics and policymakers is decision-making power within the household. A woman's say in household decisions is one aspect of her well-being and thus an end in itself, but the keen interest in female empowerment is in large part because it is believed to be a means of improving children's outcomes. The model in the background is of a non-unitary household, that is, a household as a collective of individuals with different preferences who vary in how much they influence the household's decisions. The poorer the country, the less likely women are to influence the spending decisions and also the decision-making in other spheres such as whether to visit family and friends. The income gradient seen across countries also holds within countries. Women above the median wealth level for their country have more decision-making power and less tolerance for gender-based violence than those with below-median wealth. Women in developing countries have a relatively less control over their lives than those in developed countries. There is particularly little freedom of choice for women in India, the Middle East, and North Africa. These are also the places with very low female labor force participation. Women's life satisfaction, relative to men's, is positively correlated with economic development, however the relationship is weaker in relation with happiness, and there is no relationship between the gender gap in life satisfaction.

² <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3498638/>

³ www.ncpcr.gov.in/view_file.php?fid=434

Economic under-development:

Women in developing countries fare worse relative to men compared to women in developed countries on a variety of measures ranging from college enrollment to control over one's life. The development itself is the explanation for the positive correlation between gender equality and GDP per capita, that is, reasons that the correlation could reflect economic development causing gender equality. The characteristics in defining features of economic development: high household income, better physical infrastructure, more advanced technology, a larger share of the economy from services, and lower fertility.⁴

The appeal to cultural differences in today's poor countries, although the effect of these factors is in many cases compounded by poverty. Not all mechanisms and pieces of evidence fit neatly into this development-versus-culture taxonomy. However, despite its imperfections, the way of organizing the discussion helps shed light on whether the process of development will eradicate gender inequality. As countries grow, the sectoral mix shifts away from agriculture and manufacturing toward services. The transition over the course of development offers one explanation for the worse outcomes for women seen in developing countries. Agriculture and manufacturing generally require more physical strength, or "muscle," than services, and men have a comparative advantage in tasks requiring muscles. Thus, relative female labor productivity might increase with development. There are physically-intensive tasks and mentally-intensive tasks, and capital raises the relative returns to mentally-intensive tasks. Women have a comparative advantage in mentally intensive tasks. The process of development entails a growing capital stock and thus reduces the female-male wage gap, which in turn causes female labor force participation to increase. Moreover the higher female wage reduces fertility because the opportunity cost of having children has risen, which pushes up the capital-labor ratio further, accelerating growth. Lower labor productivity is a potential explanation of not just patterns of female labor force participation or earnings, but also gender gaps in other outcomes that are influenced by earnings potential. Agriculture, even though more power-based than other sectors, has significant returns to schooling. If men specialize in brawn-based occupations and women in brain-based occupations, then at early stages of development boys will receive more education than girls. As brain-based sectors grow, girls should catch up. In fact, if the returns to education are higher in brain-based than brawn-based occupations, girls' schooling could overtake boys. Thus, when the returns to education increase, men are tipped toward endorsing legal rights for women, both fathers and mothers care equally about children, and the driving forces are rising income and falling fertility rather than increasing returns to education. Some of the best evidence on the effects of gender differences in labor productivity comes from variation within agriculture.⁵

II. FACTORS LEADING TO GENDER INEQUALITY

Cultural factors:

When it comes to gender inequality, are the poor different from the rich only in that they have less money. The several mechanisms that do not lean on cultural differences between the rich and the poor, apart are also several contributors to gender inequality that do derive from context-specific features. Lack of development still remains relevant even when cultural factors are at play; poverty often exacerbates the cultural forces that lead to favoritism toward males. Many cultures practice patrilocality whereby a married couple lives near or with the husband's parents. When a woman gets married, she essentially ceases to be a member of her birth family and joins her husband's family. Under this system, parents potentially reap more of the returns to investments in a son's health and education because he will remain a part of their family, whereas a daughter will physically and financially leave the household upon marriage. Co-residence of adult sons and elderly parents is much more common in Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa than in Europe, sub-Saharan Africa, and the Americas. Within India, the northern region has a much stronger patrilocal (and patrilineal) system than the south, which is one explanation for why gender inequality is more pronounced in the north. The male-to-female sex ratio is positively correlated with the rate of co-residence between adult sons and their parents both across and within countries. If parents fully internalized their daughters' returns to nutrition, health care, and schooling, then patrilocality would not necessarily cause gender gaps in these inputs. In practice, though, the longer duration that parents will co-reside and pool financial resources with their sons seems to cause them to invest disproportionately in sons. The financial mindset about investing in daughters is encapsulated in an often quoted Indian saying that "raising a daughter is like watering your neighbors' garden." This sentiment is echoed in a Chinese proverb that describes raising a daughter as "ploughing someone else's field." Poverty could exacerbate the tendency to invest more in sons than daughters. If a family is liquidity-constrained, they might seek medical care only for their son, but with more available resources, they would seek care for both their son and daughter. (The same reasoning could apply if parents invest more in boys because boys have higher labor market returns to health, and not just when the gender gap is due to cultural practices. Closely

⁴ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3498638/>

⁵ www.ncpcr.gov.in/view_file.php?fid=434

linked to patrilocality is the fact that sons traditionally provide old-age support for their parents in societies such as China and India. This old-age support norm as a reason for the desire to have sons in India & China.⁶

Dowry system:

Dowry is a payment that a bride's parents make to the couple at the time of marriage. The dowry systems emerged mainly in societies where women played a lesser role in agriculture. Dowry has disappeared in many societies, notably in Europe, but it has persisted in, for example, South Asia. In fact, over the past several decades, the prevalence of dowry has increased in Bangladesh, and the real value of dowry payments has risen considerably in India. In addition, the property rights to dowry as practiced today differ from those seen historically in Europe. In ancient Rome and medieval western Europe, the bride held the rights to the dowry; it was her pre-mortem inheritance from her parents. In this formulation, the dowry system was intended to improve the financial well-being of females. However, in societies where dowry is used today, the groom typically controls the money—dowry is the price of a groom. Dowry is thus a financial cost to parents of having daughters. Evidence on the impacts of the dowry system on women's welfare is mostly anecdotal. This anecdotal evidence points to the dowry system causing pro-male bias. The prospect of paying dowry is often cited as a key factor in parents' desire to have sons rather than daughters in India. The financial burden of dowry indeed seems to loom large in prospective parents' minds. Having to pay a dowry for a daughter's marriage should decrease the desire to have daughters but should not necessarily reduce investments in daughters. In principle, parents could recoup their investment in their daughter's health and education in the form of lower dowry demands or a higher quality son-in-law. However, this idealized market solution where parents invest in their daughter's human capital and the groom later compensates them for the investment does not seem to work in practice, perhaps because investments are not fully observable by the groom. In addition, parents have reason to care more about the quality of their daughters-in-law than their sons-in-law because daughters-in-law will live with them under patrilocality and raise their heirs under patrilineality. Besides reducing human capital investments, the dowry system also results in newly married women sometimes being the victim of violence or, worse, "dowry deaths" as punishment for the dowry amount being deemed inadequate by the groom. Patrilineality In a patrilineal system, names and property pass to the next generation through male descendants. This system puts sons on a higher footing than daughters, and the specific feature of land inheritance is especially likely to have effects on gender gaps. For example, in India because widows traditionally do not inherit their husbands' ancestral property, they rely on their sons as their conduit for holding onto the family property and maintaining their standard of living in widowhood.

Religious rituals:

The role of sons in religious rituals In certain belief systems, such as Confucianism in China and Hinduism in India, sons play a special role. Which encourages the patrilineal and patrilocal system in place in India, China, Vietnam, and elsewhere. But another part of the special role of sons is in rituals. Ancestor worship within which involves rituals where a son plays an essential part. Similarly, son preference is mentioned in the Vedas, the ancient Hindu texts. In addition, in Hindu societies, it is supposed to be a son who lights a deceased person's funeral pyre and brings him or her salvation. Hindu kinship norms are adhered to more strictly among upper castes than lower castes. The funeral-pyre underpinning of son preference specifically generates a strong desire for one son (with further sons perhaps serving as insurance in case the first son predeceases his parents). Other reasons for son preference such as wanting someone to carry on the family name or widows wanting to retain family land also make the first son especially valuable. And the parents in India strongly want to have one son and, once they have one son, prefer a balanced gender ratio.⁷

Desire to protect female safety and "purity"

Concern for women's and girls' safety and "purity" constrains their physical mobility in many developing countries. It is difficult to say how much of the limited mobility is out of genuine concern for women's welfare, aimed at protecting them from harassment and sexual violence, and how much is simply a way to stifle female autonomy. In a cross-country study of mate preferences, men put more weight on their spouse's sexual inexperience at marriage than on physical appearance in India, China, Indonesia, Taiwan, and Iran, while the opposite prioritization was seen in each of the European, North American, South American, and sub-Saharan African countries. Restrictions on female mobility often seem largely aimed at keeping unmarried women chaste and married women faithful. And the proximate cause of reduced female schooling and career opportunities. One reason parents cite for not educating their daughters is the distance to school. Besides distance to school, parents might also want their daughters segregated from male peers or teachers. Thus,

⁶ pndt.gov.in/index2.asp?slid=49&sublinked=31

⁷ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3498638/>

distance to school mattering more for females is not unique to today's developing countries. And the gender mismatch can explain the negative trend in girls' test scores as they progress to higher grades. Another consideration is that parents feel pressure to marry off their daughters early in societies where female chastity is prized by men, which leads to early school dropout. The risks associated with female mobility—both objective risk and socially constructed risk to family honor—might also explain the very low FLFP in India, the Middle East, and North Africa. One of the tenets of the Hindu caste system is that women should be protected from “pollution,” which includes men outside their families. Disallowing women from working outside the home is one way of maintaining their purity. Because these restrictions apply more stringently to upper caste women in India, lower caste women often have more professional flexibility and autonomy. Female seclusion (purdah) is also an important tenet of Islam, and Muslim women resemble Hindu women in their low labor force participation and low self-reported freedom of choice. A notable contrast is that many of the norms that underlie Hindu parents' desire for sons, such as dowry and bequests only to sons, are weaker or non-existent among Muslims. Correspondingly, within India the sex ratio at birth and child survival exhibit less pro-male bias among Muslims than Hindus.⁸

Sex imbalance at birth

A particularly troubling form of gender bias is the sex imbalance at birth. The dearth of females materializes before birth and in early childhood but continues over the entire lifespan. The sex imbalance at birth is noteworthy because it has become much worse over the past fifty years in several countries. The sex ratio at birth for China and India; in both countries, it has increased sharply in recent decades. The mirroring the fact that the sex ratio has worsened over time in China and India, the sex ratio is worse in more developed countries. Moreover, India and China are outliers, with exceptionally male-skewed sex ratios. The distinction between desire for sons and higher investment in sons Parents' favoritism toward boys encompasses both wanting to have sons more than daughters and choosing to invest more in sons than daughters. These two dimensions of favoritism often go hand-in-hand, but they are not identical. Conceptually, parents could have a preference over their number of sons and daughters and that is distinct from their preference over the average quality of each. There are at least two important differences between the quantity and quality dimensions of son preference. First, the fact that India and China are large outliers for the sex ratio at birth but not for investment outcomes like schooling is prima facie evidence of a distinction between the two dimensions. More generally, there is stronger regional variation in the sex ratio at birth, with African countries generally exhibiting less skewed sex ratios at birth (conditional on GDP per capita) and Asia exhibiting more skewed ratios, while gender gaps in human capital exhibit less of this geographic clustering. While today's rich countries were historically similar to developing countries today in terms of generally having higher human capital investments in males than females, they did not exhibit as strong a desire to have sons as seen today in many developing countries. This fertility stopping behavior will mean that last-born children are disproportionately male. A skewed sex ratio of last births occurs even without infanticide, neglect, or sex-selective abortions—behaviors that lead to a skewed population sex ratio, or sex ratio of all births.⁹

While economic development could go a long way in explaining the gender gap in human capital investment, it does considerably less well in explaining the preference over the number of sons versus daughters. The desire to have a son appears to have strong cultural roots and thus might be slow to fade even as the economies of countries like India and China grow rapidly. Interestingly, one way the quantity and quality dimensions of gender bias are entangled is that the desire to have sons can cause gender gaps in investments even if parents derive the same utility from boys' and girls' quality. For example, son-biased stopping behavior means that girls will tend to grow up in larger families than boys. Given fixed financial resources, girls will thus be raised in families that have fewer resources to spend on each child. Women in India want to and are more likely to become pregnant again after a daughter is born, they stop breastfeeding girls sooner to regain their fecundity or as a result of the new pregnancy. Daughters will be breastfed for a shorter duration than boys, which is likely detrimental to their health, even without parents having an explicit preference to provide more health inputs to sons.

Distinction between desire for sons and sex imbalance is less skewed in poorer countries. In contrast, the desire to have more sons than daughters is more intense in poorer countries. The sex imbalance at birth is an aspect of gender inequality that seems to be aggravated by development even though the desire to have sons fades with development. One reason that the sex imbalance is worsening, even though son preference is not, is technological innovation. Infanticide and neglect of infant girls have long been (proximate) causes of missing women, but the ability to ascertain the sex of a fetus has given rise to sex-selective abortions and dramatically exacerbated the problem of the skewed sex ratio. The factor behind the worsening sex ratio is declining fertility.

⁸ pndt.gov.in/index2.asp?slid=49&sublinked=31

⁹ pndt.gov.in/index2.asp?slid=49&sublinked=31

For example, conventional wisdom is that the extremely skewed sex ratio in China is due to the One Child Policy; constrained to have only one (or two) children, couples use sex-selective abortions to ensure that they have at least one son. Consistent with this idea, in the parts of China where the penalties for violating the One Child Policy were more onerous, the sex ratio was more imbalanced. The desired sex ratio in India is more male-skewed at low fertility levels. Individuals express a strong preference to have at least one son, not a general preference to always have sons rather than daughters. When parents want to have three or four children, the likelihood of naturally ending up with no sons is relatively small, but this undesired scenario becomes more likely when couples want to have two or even just one child. Therefore, as couples' desired family size gets smaller, for example because of a higher female wage which raises the opportunity cost of having children, they are more likely to resort to sex-selective abortions in order to obtain their desired son. The conceptual upshot is that the sex ratio is not a measure of son preference per se; it is the realization of one's son preference combined with one's family-size preference. The message that son preference—the desire for sons—might decline with development, but the problem of the sex imbalance at birth appears to worsen with development, at least over a certain range.¹⁰

Policy approaches to reduce gender bias:

The existence of culturally-rooted gender norms means that even when India and China advance to today's level of U.S. GDP per capita, they might not advance in terms of their desire to have sons, the decision-making power of women, and so forth. Eliminating gender inequality might require explicit policy intervention. Moreover, one might not want to wait patiently as the problem of gender inequality resolves itself via economic growth. One type of gender-progressive policy is granting legal rights to women. A powerful example of this tool is India's move to reserve political seats for women. A fraction of seats at various levels of government are, by mandate, held by women. The most direct impact of the law change on women's welfare has been to close the gap in women's representation; female leaders implement policies that better reflect the policy preferences of their female constituent.. Moreover, this reform has begun to reshape attitudes toward women as leaders and raised the aspirations of and long-term investments in girls. A limitation of legal reforms is that enforcement is often weak. For example, the legal reform granting women rights to ancestral land in India that was described earlier has some bite, but it is far from universally enforced. Similarly, bans on prenatal sex determination, dowry, and child marriage are often minimally enforced. A second policy tool is financial incentives for parents to invest in or have girls. For example, many states in India offer incentives to have daughters. The shift of household financial resources to mothers based on the hypothesis have more influence in the household for women will help break the cycle of gender discrimination because women have less pro-boy bias than men do. There are several pieces of evidence that when women control a larger share of household income, girls' outcomes improve. An important caveat to this approach is that the differences between men and women in their gender attitudes are sometimes surprisingly small, or even go in the counterintuitive direction. The similar gender attitudes of men and women imply that more decision-making power for mothers might not necessarily translate into significantly better treatment of girls. Their views might be shaped by practical concerns. For example, women gain status in the household and enjoy greater well-being once they give birth to a son. In addition, the lack of role models for women means that they might simply fail to realize that equality for women is possible. Thus, another policy approach is to try to change women's attitudes, whether by creating a cadre of role models or by other means. Despite not having this explicit goal, commercial television appears to have reshaped women's views, for example about having a smaller family size. Changing men's attitudes might be equally important. On the one hand, mothers' gender attitudes appear to be more influential than those of fathers in shaping children's gender views. On the other hand, fathers typically have more say in the household about decisions affecting girls, such as how much to spend on their education.

III. PRE-NATAL DIAGNOSTIC TECHNIQUES (REGULATION AND PREVENTION OF MISUSE) ACT, 1994 (PNDT)

The ultrasound techniques gained widespread popularity in India in 1990s. In our country, there has been a tendency to produce children until a male heir is born. The misuse of ultrasound for prenatal sex determination gave rise to a flourishing industry worth thousands of crores. The technique has also promoted the social discrimination against women. The result was a dwindling Child Sex Ratio. In 2011, India's Child Sex Ratio was 919. It was 927 in 2001, 945 in 1991 and 962 in 1981. In the advanced societies of the world, there exists a healthy Child Sex Ratio. However, in India, it has declined rapidly and has potential to cause demographic nightmare and societal tensions.

¹⁰ pndt.gov.in/index2.asp?slid=49&sublinked=31

The PNDT Act 1994

The Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994 (PNDT) was passed in 1994 to stop female foeticides and arrest the declining sex ratio in the country. This act banned the use of sex selection techniques before or after conception. However, this was not followed up by effective implementation, mainly because it did not specify the techniques of sex selection and it did not bring all techniques within its ambit. Then, the need for smaller families – led to even more intensified misuse of such technologies, cutting across barriers of caste, class, religion and geography to ensure that at least one child, if not more, is a son. With the advent of new sophisticated pre-conception sex selection technologies like sperm separation, the girl child's elimination started becoming more subtle, refined and probably also more socially acceptable. With these happenings, a PIL was filed in the Supreme Court and the honourable Supreme Court directed the Government to provide the act more teeth by covering new pre-conception sex selection techniques (also known as sex pre-selection techniques). Thus the PNDT act was amended and thus the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act 2003 came into existence. With the enactment of this act, the use of prenatal diagnostic technique for sex selective abortion was made an offensive crime.

Salient Provisions PCPNDT Act 2003

The act not only prohibits determination and disclosure of the sex of the foetus but also bans advertisements related to preconception and pre-natal determination of sex. All the technologies of sex determination, including the new chromosome separation technique have come under the ambit of the Act. It regulates the use of pre-natal diagnostic techniques such as ultrasound and amniocentesis. They sonographers are allowed only to use ultrasound for the following diagnostics: genetic abnormalities metabolic disorders chromosomal abnormalities certain congenital malformations haemoglobinopathies sex linked disorders. The Act has also made mandatory in all ultrasonography units, the prominent display of a signboard that clearly indicates that detection/revelation of the sex of the foetus is illegal. Further, all ultrasound scanning machines have to be registered and the manufacturers are required to furnish information about the clinics and practitioners to whom the ultrasound machinery has been sold. The act empowered the appropriate authorities with the power of civil court for search, seizure and sealing the machines and equipments of the violators. The act mentions that no person, including the one who is conducting the procedure as per the law, will communicate the sex of the foetus to the pregnant woman or her relatives by words, signs or any other method. Any person who puts an advertisement for pre-natal and pre-conception sex determination facilities in the form of a notice, circular, label, wrapper or any document, or advertises through interior or other media in electronic or print form or engages in any visible representation made by means of hoarding, wall painting, signal, light, sound, smoke or gas, can be imprisoned for up to three years and fined Rs. 10,000. The PCPNDT act mandates compulsory registration of all diagnostic laboratories, all genetic counselling centres, genetic laboratories, genetic clinics and ultrasound clinics.

Critical Assessment of PCPNDT Act

The Act has the relevant provisions to end sex determination but the problem is that it is not implemented effectively. This is evident from the poor rate of conviction of the offenders. According to the written reply provided by the former Union health minister Ghulam Nabi Azad to the Rajya Sabha in 2013, only 143 people have been punished for conducting sex determination tests and medical licenses of only 65 doctors was suspended for the whole country since the enforcement of PC&PNDT Act, in 1996. Had the law been enforced effectively the child sex ratio should have improved, but on contrary it has reached its lowest level as per the census 2011 data. This clearly shows the gap in the implementation of the PC&PNDT act. The Government was planning to amend the current act to provide it more effective implementation. For this, a bill was introduced in 2012 to establish Fast Track Courts to quickly and efficiently deliver justice and convict those who commit the horrendous crime of female foeticide. Other Government initiatives to address declining sex ratio.¹¹

IV. CONCLUSION

The hypothesis is proved that there is greater gender inequality in poor countries than in rich ones. The skewed sex ratio at birth has been getting worse with economic development due to the advent of prenatal sex-diagnostic technologies and declining desired fertility. While gender inequality in developing countries will likely diminish with economic growth, policymakers have several options to hasten the process. The gender gaps in several domains are large in developing countries. That these gender gaps to shrink and disappear over time, several mechanisms through which, as countries grow, women's lot should improve. First, a sectoral shift

¹¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3498638/>

away from agriculture toward services occurs. Second, technological advances reduce the time needed for household chores. Third, the frequency and risk of childbearing declines. Each of these factors increases women's participation in the labor force, which in turn increases human capital investment in girls and women's personal autonomy. However, there are certain cultural practices that could make gender inequality in today's poor countries persist even in the face of economic growth, such as patrilocality and male-centered funeral rituals. These cultural norms help explain the extremely maleskewed sex ratio in India and China, for example. Similarly, the anomalously low female labor force participation rate in India, the Middle East, and North Africa is likely rooted in the high value these cultures place on women's "purity." The cultural institutions favoring males might themselves fade naturally with economic modernization, enabling gender gaps to close, but there is also scope for policymakers to expedite the process.

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