

Gender Equality in Punjab (India): Reality or Myth

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Abstract

Historically all civilizations, women have played very important role as their higher status and efforts done by them in whole world are considerable and indicates the national development. These efforts have created an atmosphere for women where women can take their own decisions as well as for their families. Women empowerment consists of social, economic, political and legal strength of women and Biasness on basis of gender can also affect the relationship between men and women in the society. Any type of discrimination in accessing the opportunities diminishes the chances of growth and its stability of growth. Gender discrimination can also deteriorate other development goals which, in turn, affect development. This paper attempts to situate the woman in empowered position through sex ratio and literacy rate and work participation scenario

Keywords—Gender biasness, Gender inequality, women work participation

I. INTRODUCTION

The renowned Swami Vivekananda quoted, “There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing.”

While talking about the role of gender equality regarding empowerment of women, it's natural that may be notable. The intrinsic value is relied on the thought that equality is a basic right of a human beings, and it will be totally unfair, unethical and immoral to treat women and men differently for assessing the opportunities, Equality among different genders should be carefully considered as a development goal in its own right. There should be abolition of all types of biasness against Women. Any type of discrimination in accessing the opportunities diminishes the chances of growth and its stability of growth. Gender discrimination can also deteriorate other development goals which, in turn, affect development. Past studies and empirical facts often proposed an inverse relationship between, higher gender inequality and growth rates. Gender inequality leads to underutilization of

resources. If a country will exclude women with suitable capabilities from the job market only because of her gender, then women cannot maximize their abilities, which in turn will lead to loss of output for the nation and costs economic development. Biasness on basis of gender can also affect the relationship between men and women in the society. Moreover, gender-based discrimination can have a long lasting impact on psychology of women, lowering women's confidence and productivity, and destroying families and marriages, with all the costs that children will ultimately have to bear. One more important link between gender inequality and economic development is its effect on child psychology. Talking about the case of Punjab, Men are dominating in every field in Punjab, be it on level of economy or on level of society. Therefore, it is leading to lopsided and discriminatory growth. In the history of Punjab, from the times of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Punjab has witnessed the discrimination against women. In this paper we tried to trace the equality in terms of three basic aspects a) Right to Birth) b) Right to education and c) Right to Work

In present scenario also women is far behind in all above mentioned the attributes of Equality.

Aim/Objectives

To find the gender equality in Punjab in context to: Right to take Birth, Right to attain education and Right to choose Work

Need and Scope of Study

Government and society's increasing efforts, awareness and modernization are not enough to achieve the gender equality. Despite the improvement in education, literacy rates, in health, women's improved capabilities do not seem to have been translated into equality between men and women. Males are dominating their counterparts in every field, be it economy or society. Therefore, it is leading to discriminatory Growth .In case of Punjab as per 2011 census is total population 27,743,338 of which male and female are 14,639,465 and 13,103,873 respectively. So nearly half of the population of Punjab is suffering from the evil of violence and struggling for making their place in the society from ages. In present study we are trying to find the gender equality and improvement in since 1981. At least Right to Birth, Right to get Education and Right to choose Work are minimum criteria to look into position of women.

This study will help to know the magnitude of problem all the districts of Punjab. After this we can further do research on the avenues that can help to improve sex ratio, literacy rates and work participation of women Punjab. And how our education system and social system can support this can be studied further.

Methodology

This paper attempts to situate the woman in empowered position through sex ratio and literacy rate and work participation scenario. A change in district wise sex ratio, literacy rate and work participation rates from 1981 to 2011 has been discussed. Further, the empirical results presented in

this paper are based on overall compound growth rates and inter census compound rates.

The present paper is based on 1981 to 2011 census, districts has been clubbed to take year 1981 as a base. The new districts that were separated from their other districts have been clubbed to their mother districts make them comparable. Another problem in comparing data was solved by clubbing the new districts with their mother districts. Data of Fatehgarh sahib has been clubbed with Patiala, Moga and Mukatsar with Faridkot, Mansa with Bathinda, Nawashahar with Jalandhar, TaranTaran with Amritsar, SAS Nagar with Rupnagar and Barnala with Sangrur district.

Sex Ratio in Punjab

Sex ratio is ratio of men to women in population. It can be used as indicator of situation of women in a society at a point of time. Despite a good performance in field of economic development, Punjab today is far from being a problem free state. The sex ratio in the state continues to be one of the lowest in the country and literacy rate too is only marginally above the national average. More importantly the state is marked by stark intra state disparities, something which is rarely highlighted in literature of Punjab. Among the Indian states historically Punjab and Haryana in the Northwest have had the most imbalanced sex ratios.

Table shows, there was decline in Sex ratio in 2001 to 876 as it was 879 in 1981 and 882 in 1991. Now there is ray of hope, as per the Census 2011 Punjab has sex-ratio of 893 which is 14 points higher than the 2001. This increase in sex ratio has not only reversed the earlier registered dip in sex ratio in 2001 but also is surpassed the all prior decades. But this is not a sign of relief as it has offset by the deteriorating child sex ratio in the 0-6 age group, which will set the trends of future. National ranking of Punjab in terms of sex ratio is now 27th.

It would not be wrong to mention here that the sex ratio at birth should be between 943 to 952. The good physiological health of girl child, which ensures better chance of survival, should bring the sex ratio near to unity. Hoshiarpur and Jalandhar

(ShahidBhagat Singh Nagar) have highest Sex ratio i.e., 962 and 934 respectively. In addition, Bathinda and Ludhiana have lowest sex ratio i.e., 865 and 869 respectively.

Table-1: Sex Ratio in Punjab

| State/ District | State /District | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|------|------|------|------|
| | | 1981 | 1991 | 2001 | 2011 |
| | PUNJAB | 879 | 882 | 876 | 893 |
| 1 | Amritsar | 871 | 881 | 890 | 888 |
| 2 | Bathinda | 864 | 884 | 870 | 865 |
| 3 | Faridkot | 882 | 884 | 887 | 892 |
| 4 | Firozpur | 884 | 900 | 885 | 893 |
| 5 | Gurdaspur | 907 | 903 | 890 | 895 |
| 6 | Hoshiarpur | 915 | 946 | 935 | 962 |
| 7 | Jalandhar | 893 | 905 | 901 | 934 |
| 8 | Kapurthala | 898 | 904 | 888 | 912 |
| 9 | Ludhiana | 859 | 854 | 824 | 869 |
| 10 | Patiala | 863 | 894 | 865 | 880 |
| 11 | Rupnagar | 861 | 887 | 866 | 896 |
| 12 | Sangrur | 860 | 876 | 874 | 880 |

Source: Census of India, Primary Census Abstract; 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011

Table-2: Growth in Sex Ratio in Punjab

| State/ District | Districts | Growth From 1981 to 1991 | Growth From 1991 to 2001 | Growth From 2001to2011 | Overall growth rate from 1981 to 2011 |
|--------------------|------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| | PUNJAB | 0.13 | -2.22 | 0.37 | 0.34 |
| 1 | Amritsar | 0.29 | 0.28 | -2.08 | 0.37 |
| 2 | Bathinda | 0.39 | -2.34 | -2.20 | 0.00 |
| 3 | Faridkot | 0.08 | 0.13 | 0.20 | 0.29 |
| 4 | Firozpur | 0.36 | -2.35 | 0.26 | 0.28 |
| 5 | Gurdaspur | -2.17 | -2.33 | 0.20 | -2.32 |
| 6 | Hoshiarpur | 0.46 | -2.31 | 0.44 | 0.53 |
| 7 | Jalandhar | 0.32 | -2.17 | 0.47 | 0.51 |
| 8 | Kapurthala | 0.22 | -2.36 | 0.42 | 0.34 |
| 9 | Ludhiana | -2.20 | -2.46 | 0.53 | 0.29 |
| 10 | Patiala | 0.46 | -2.45 | 0.35 | 0.37 |
| 11 | Rupnagar | 0.44 | -2.40 | 0.46 | 0.48 |
| 12 | Sangrur | 0.36 | -2.08 | 0.22 | 0.39 |

Calculated from Table-1

From table-2, it is clear that in thirty years, there is only 0.34 percent growth in sex ratio, which has been witnessed by Punjab. Highest growth in sex ratio has been observed in Jalandhar i.e., 0.51 percent, and most amazing results have been seen in Gurdaspur, where sex ratio shows negative growth of -2.32 percent. If we look at inter-census growth than it has been observed that during 1991 to 2001 all districts were having negative growth rate except Amritsar and Faridkot. During 2001 to 2011 Amritsar and Bathinda show negative growth rates.

Literacy rate

Literacy has a strong role in economic development of a country. India has done a lot to raise literacy rates in all the states and current literacy rate to 74.04 percent (2011) from twelve percent at time of independence in 1947. But still India is far behind the average literacy rate of the World, which is eighty four percent. Literacy is a key for socio economic progress. There is a wide gender disparity in the literacy rate in India and Punjab is no

exception. Female literacy rate in Punjab is increasing in every decade. Table 3.8 shows in 1981 female literacy rate was only 34.35 percent which was 16.88 percent lesser than the male literacy rate. In 2011 female rate goes up to 71.3 percent from 34.35 percent in 1981 and male literacy rate rises up to 81.5 percent in 2011 from 51.23 percent in 1981. No doubt rate of rise in female literacy is greater than male literacy rate, but still women are lagging behind the men by 10.2 percent.

Disparities in literacy rates were further widened if we consider these in rural and urban basis. In table 4, literacy rates in rural areas are found lower than the urban areas for both the sexes. Gender gap in literacy rate is still very wide in Punjab i.e., 10.20. Punjab covered only 4.76 percent gender gap in literacy rate in thirty years According to the census 2011 in Punjab, District Hoshiarpur has maximum female literacy rate i.e., 89.90 percent for male and 80.80 percent for female. In addition, lowest literacy rate in Punjab has been found in Sangrur District i.e., 71.90 for male and 61.13 percent for female.

Table-3: Literacy Rate In Punjab And Its Districts 1981-2011(In Percent)

| District code | Districts | Male | | | | Female | | | |
|---------------|------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| | | 1981 | 1991 | 2001 | 2011 | 1981 | 1991 | 2001 | 2011 |
| | PUNJAB | 53.33 | 65.66 | 75.20 | 81.50 | 38.37 | 50.41 | 63.40 | 71.30 |
| 1 | Amritsar | 53.20 | 65.07 | 70.90 | 78.30 | 39.37 | 50.10 | 58.75 | 67.85 |
| 2 | Bathinda | 38.80 | 50.55 | 67.80 | 75.30 | 23.31 | 34.51 | 53.70 | 62.90 |
| 3 | Faridkot | 44.86 | 56.43 | 67.17 | 74.70 | 30.73 | 41.50 | 54.60 | 64.07 |
| 4 | Firozpur | 45.29 | 56.88 | 68.70 | 76.70 | 28.06 | 38.11 | 51.70 | 62.20 |
| 5 | Gurdaspur | 57.21 | 69.56 | 79.80 | 85.90 | 41.06 | 53.33 | 67.10 | 75.70 |
| 6 | Hoshiarpur | 65.45 | 79.31 | 86.40 | 89.90 | 46.35 | 61.48 | 75.30 | 80.80 |
| 7 | Jalandhar | 61.90 | 74.87 | 82.70 | 86.15 | 47.80 | 61.33 | 71.30 | 76.30 |
| 8 | Kapurthala | 51.26 | 70.03 | 79.00 | 84.60 | 43.14 | 55.83 | 68.30 | 75.40 |
| 9 | Ludhiana | 62.79 | 72.47 | 80.30 | 86.30 | 49.91 | 61.23 | 71.90 | 78.20 |
| 10 | Patiala | 52.48 | 65.93 | 76.80 | 82.95 | 38.45 | 50.30 | 65.40 | 73.00 |
| 11 | Rupnagar | 62.73 | 76.45 | 83.05 | 89.05 | 44.18 | 58.54 | 70.10 | 78.60 |
| 12 | Sangrur | 40.05 | 53.37 | 63.43 | 71.90 | 25.77 | 37.86 | 50.90 | 61.13 |

Source- Census of India, Primary Census Abstract of Punjab; 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011

Table-4 shows that in Punjab female literacy rates during 1981 to 2011 have increased by 2.16 percent. Highest improvement in female literacy rate has been observed in Bathinda i.e., 3.48 and followed Sangrur i.e., 3.02 percent and minimum growth rate has been observed in Ludhiana i.e., 1.56 percent in last three decades. Inter census growth rates shows

that highest growth was during the period of 1981 to 1991 in all the districts except Bathinda. Lowest growth rate has been observed during the period of 2001 to 2011 in all the districts.

Major factor contributing to low literacy rate is usefulness of education and non availability of schools in rural areas and nearby rural areas. Inadequacy of schools results in non-standardized school system with differing literacy levels.

Table-4: Compound Growth Rates of Female Literacy Rate (In Percent)

| State/ District | Districts | Growth From 1981 to 1991 | Growth From 1991 to 2001 | Growth From 2001to2011 | Overall growth rate from 1981 to 2011 |
|--------------------|------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| | PUNJAB | 3.08 | 2.58 | 1.31 | 2.16 |
| 1 | Amritsar | 2.71 | 1.79 | 1.61 | 1.89 |
| 2 | Bathinda | 4.46 | 5.04 | 1.77 | 3.48 |
| 3 | Faridkot | 3.39 | 3.10 | 1.79 | 2.57 |
| 4 | Firozpur | 3.46 | 3.45 | 2.08 | 2.78 |
| 5 | Gurdaspur | 2.95 | 2.58 | 1.35 | 2.13 |
| 6 | Hoshiarpur | 3.19 | 2.28 | 0.79 | 1.93 |
| 7 | Jalandhar | 2.81 | 1.69 | 0.76 | 1.63 |
| 8 | Kapurthala | 2.91 | 2.27 | 1.10 | 1.94 |
| 9 | Ludhiana | 2.30 | 1.80 | 0.94 | 1.56 |
| 10 | Patiala | 3.03 | 2.96 | 1.23 | 2.24 |
| 11 | Rupnagar | 3.18 | 2.02 | 1.28 | 2.01 |
| 12 | Sangrur | 4.37 | 3.34 | 2.06 | 3.02 |

Source-Calculated From Table-3

Work Participation Rate

If we take case of women work participation then in Punjab, women have negligible participation in workforce. Definitions of 'work' are based on money-making concepts; these definitions have portrayed the women to non economic entities. This is a main reason that women's work in household and even in agricultural allied activities does not have direct link with marketable goods or services. This concept of work has tremendously diluted women's involvement to the economic activities, ensuing in the lack of acknowledgment of women as important participant in economic activities. While

females work for longer hours and contribute significantly to the income of family, very often they are the major earners of bread and butter as the work performed by them is not measurable in terms of money; they are not considered as workers even by the women themselves. This is a major reason of not acknowledging the multi-dimensional functions which females carry out both as productive and reproductive efforts. The reasons of less work participation rate of women is repeatedly recognized in terms of the invisibility of work done by women, and all the tasks performed by women are viewed as part of a cultural/traditional attitude. In our society men are considered as the primary bread-winners. Punjab has the lowest women work participation

rate in the India after Delhi and Lakshadweep. Highest work participation of women in India is 44.82 in Himachal Pradesh.

According to census of Punjab in 2011, work participation of males is 55.15 percent and 13.91 of

female workers. Highest female work participation is in Bathinda i.e., 22.61 and Sangrur has lowest female work participation i.e., 10.99. Almost in all districts of Punjab female work participation has decreased and gender gap has also increased.

Table-5: Work Participation Rate in Punjab and its Districts (In Percent)

| State/ District | Districts | Male WPR | | | | Female WPR | | | |
|--------------------|------------|----------|-------|-------|-------|------------|------|-------|-------|
| | | 1981 | 1991 | 2001 | 2011 | 1981 | 1991 | 2001 | 2011 |
| | PUNJAB | 53.76 | 53.34 | 54.10 | 55.15 | 6.61 | 6.78 | 18.70 | 13.91 |
| 1 | Amritsar | 53.97 | 54.25 | 53.20 | 54.49 | 4.53 | 6.01 | 16.30 | 14.11 |
| 2 | Bathinda | 56.65 | 56.08 | 54.90 | 57.36 | 10.81 | 8.02 | 26.05 | 22.61 |
| 3 | Faridkot | 55.80 | 55.51 | 56.33 | 56.53 | 8.81 | 9.56 | 23.17 | 13.82 |
| 4 | Ferozpur | 56.06 | 54.50 | 53.60 | 55.65 | 7.78 | 7.50 | 18.50 | 16.74 |
| 5 | Gurdaspur | 49.68 | 48.52 | 51.90 | 52.58 | 3.20 | 7.35 | 12.70 | 11.01 |
| 6 | Hoshiarpur | 49.84 | 49.60 | 51.00 | 50.99 | 6.93 | 5.53 | 17.30 | 11.23 |
| 7 | Jalandhar | 51.21 | 52.56 | 54.85 | 55.52 | 4.75 | 5.70 | 22.65 | 12.55 |
| 8 | Kapurthala | 52.39 | 53.73 | 53.40 | 55.26 | 4.34 | 7.93 | 14.10 | 12.50 |
| 9 | Ludhiana | 54.65 | 54.12 | 55.90 | 56.41 | 5.03 | 5.38 | 15.70 | 14.18 |
| 10 | Patiala | 53.97 | 51.65 | 54.60 | 55.90 | 4.68 | 8.13 | 17.95 | 11.92 |
| 11 | Rupnagar | 51.88 | 52.99 | 53.80 | 52.91 | 5.64 | 5.56 | 23.80 | 14.95 |
| 12 | Sangrur | 57.60 | 55.98 | 54.90 | 55.48 | 8.55 | 5.68 | 24.10 | 10.88 |

Source- Primary Census Abstract of Punjab; 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011.

From table-5, it is clear that Punjab witnessed an overall growth of 0.25 percent. Highest growth in has been observed in Bathinda i.e., 0.32 percent only, and lowest been seen in Sangrur i.e., 0.10 percent. If we look at inter-census growth than it has been observed that during 1981 to 1991, only three

districts Amritsar, Gurdspur and Patiala were having positive growth rate and all other districts witnessed negative growth rates.

Table-6: Growth in Work Participation Rate (In Percent)

| State/ District | Districts | Growth From 1981 to 1991 | Growth From 1991 to 2001 | Growth From 2001to 2011 | Overall growth rate from 1981 to 2011 |
|--------------------|------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| | PUNJAB | -0.18 | 0.32 | -2.19 | 0.25 |
| 1 | Amritsar | 0.04 | 0.30 | -2.09 | 0.29 |
| 2 | Bathinda | -2.12 | 0.38 | -2.15 | 0.32 |
| 3 | Faridkot | -0.03 | 0.34 | -2.28 | 0.20 |
| 4 | Firozpur | -1.87 | 0.31 | -2.06 | 0.28 |
| 5 | Gurdaspur | 0.17 | 0.20 | -2.06 | 0.26 |
| 6 | Hoshiarpur | -2.04 | 0.32 | -2.22 | 0.18 |
| 7 | Jalandhar | -0.01 | 0.37 | -2.29 | 0.26 |
| 8 | Kapurthala | 0.15 | 0.22 | -2.05 | 0.26 |
| 9 | Ludhiana | -0.11 | 0.30 | -2.05 | 0.28 |
| 10 | Patiala | 0.15 | 0.29 | -2.22 | 0.25 |
| 11 | Rupnagar | -1.76 | 0.38 | -2.27 | 0.28 |
| 12 | Sangrur | -2.12 | 0.38 | -2.33 | 0.10 |

Calculated from table-5

It is worth mentioning here that this was the period of terrorism which effected women work participation badly in 1981-1991, from 1991-2001 all districts had positive growth rate and highest growth was 0.38 witnessed by Bathinda, Rupnagar and Sangrur. In Punjab, most of the women work in agricultural and allied activities, with industrial and real estate development in state size of land holdings decreased. As a result growth rate got hampered and all districts faced negative growth rates from 2001 to 2011. Work done by women in family business goes unrecorded and unnoticed.

CONCLUSION/FINDINGS

The main findings of the paper are that the Work Participation Rate and sex ratio has failed to increase with same pace as literacy rate in the state. None of the district has higher Work Participation Rate of women than the men. This shows that in Indian society, women have fewer opportunities to work. On the supply side, reproductive work and domestic works prove to be important variables in influencing women work force participation. If this tendency continues for some longer period of time, then there will be serious consequences to the society we left for generations to come. It can be concluded that increase in literacy rate alone cannot help to uplift the status of women and gender equality in Punjab. There is need of change in psychology of people. Grass root level social

reforms are needed to improve the position of women.

Increase in literacy rate alone cannot help to attain gender equality in Punjab. Increase in literacy rate is not leading to increase in sex ratio and work participation rates in state.

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