

Gender Inequality in India: Saga of Contradictions

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Abstract

This paper discusses the nature of gender inequality and its various dimensions in India. Based on the secondary data from different censuses and indexes from 2001 to 2020, it assesses the reasons behind gender discrimination in Indian societies, it analyses the panel data on socio-economic condition indicators such as Female - Male Ratio (FMR), Child Sex Ratio (CSR), Infant Mortality Ratio (IMR), Literacy Rate (LR), Gender Employment Ratio (GER) Property Rights (PR) Access to Credit (AC), etc. from the prominent states of India. It also examines the cross-state similarities and disparities concerning gender discrimination through regression analysis. This work will determine the trends in various areas of discrimination through convergence tests. It analyzes the cross-time and cross-state pattern of gender discrimination and tries to develop a composite gender discrimination index. The prime objective of this paper is to develop a composite gender discrimination index that enhances the clarity of gender discrimination status in India. This might help policymakers in drafting better policies, plans, and procedures for mitigating gender inequality in India.

Keywords: Gender equality, Gender discrimination, Interstate gender disparity, Women empowerment, Composite gender discrimination index

Introduction

Gender inequality is ubiquitous in nearly all societies. Gender equality does not mean that men and women should be the same, but that they should have equal access to opportunities and life changes (Hidrise, 2020). Not only in India but in most countries of the world, women are victims of discrimination (Himabindu et al., 2014). They are kept out of the decision-making process at all levels (Mendelberg & Karpowitz, 2016). They have been deprived and even up to the level of disenfranchisement (Manza & Uggen, 2008). The reason for this is the prevalence of patriarchy, which is a social system in which men are considered superior to women, leading to men having control over the decision-making process, ideology, and resources (Sultana, 2010). In a patriarchal society, violence against women is very common (Johnson, M. P. 2017). Women are controlled through violence or threats. According to the United Nations report, globally, one in every

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three women is a victim of violence (UNR, 2018). The biggest fight going on all over the world, and the saddest thing is that most of these battles are fought within the family (Hunnicut, 2009). To measure the status and stature of women, several indices have been developed by different agencies (Schuler, 2006), in which the Gender Development Index (GDI) is considered the most reliable and inclusive (Bardhan & Klasen, 1999). Although the GDI has increased attention to gender equality in human development, it suffers from several limitations (Klasen & Schuler, 2011). A major problem is that it conflates relative gender equality with absolute levels of human development and thus gives no information on comparative gender

inequality among countries (Dijkstra & Hanmer, 2000).

The female population in India has a heterogeneous structure as they belong to different classes, castes, religions, and communities (Uddin et al., 2020). Due to this, it is a difficult task to make any general estimate about them. Despite this, it can be said that most women suffer due to patriarchal norms and ideologies (Adisha et al., 2019). They have to face gender discrimination and subordination. Women lag behind men in all the dimensions of social and human development (Banu, 2016). Some of the Indian regions have the world's most unfavorable sex ratio for women. The health, nutrition, and educational levels of women are much lower than those of men (Kautzky et al., 2012). Women are confined to low-skill and low-remuneration jobs. They receive lower wages and salaries than men and have less ownership of property and means of production (Hirschon, 2023). Women also have to suffer in matters of health. Most women neither have the time, nor the thought, nor the facilities to take care of their health (Lenneis, & Pfister 2017). Rural women do not even have basic health facilities like sanitary pads. That is why women's health has become a priority in government policies (Pachauri, 2014). To move towards achieving equality between women and men, we have to empower them. Women's lack of control over property and other productive resources is an important reason for their subordinate status. Now, the government and societies are becoming more sensitive to bridging the gap between men and women (Hausmann et al. 2008). In India, the principle of gender equality is in the Preamble of the Indian Constitution. There are many provisions in the Fundamental Rights, Directive Principles, and Fundamental Duties about women's empowerment and their socio-economic development. The Constitution not only provides equality to women but also gives the right to the states to act in favor of women. To empower women and nurture children, keeping in mind the

principles of equality and inclusive development.

Literature Review

One of the main obstacles that Indian policymakers must overcome to achieve quicker, more inclusive, and sustainable growth is gender inequality (Khera, P. 2016). While "sex" refers to a biological and physiological trait, "gender" is a sociocultural term that refers to socially defined roles and behaviors allocated to "males" and "females" in a specific community (Bolin et al., 2018). The occurrence that defines men and women, gender is a social, historical, and cultural construct based on the power dynamics between men and women, where men are viewed as superior to women. Gender, thus, can be viewed as a construct created by humans, whereas "sex" refers to a person's intrinsic or biological traits (Wood & Eagly, 2012). A straightforward definition of gender inequality would be discrimination against women based on their sex (Heise et al. 2019). Society has historically viewed women as the weaker sex. Men now hold a position of subordination over her (Whyte, 2015). In India, while the birth of a girl is painful, the birth of a son is praised (Rich, 2021). Girls are encouraged to be quiet and home-boding, while boys are pushed to be rough and gregarious. These variations are all due to gender, and society is what creates them (Amutha, D., 2017). It hinders development objectives and, as a result, slows down economic progress. Because they prevent women from engaging in social, political, and economic activities (Kakati & Kakoty, 2022). activities can hurt society as a whole (True, 2012), it undermine overall well-being. Both in our houses, she is taken advantage of, humiliated, violated, and treated unfairly. In India, the problem of gender inequality is not only concerned with equal economic growth (Gupta et al., 2020) and access to educational resources (Tripathi & Tripathi, 2019), but it is also deeply rooted in India's sociocultural fabric (Mukhopadhyay, 2021). resulting in gender disparity. Sociocultural influences have spillover

effects across all domains, including the organizational workforce and social and political contexts. Women are also facing dual-role stress in the family as they need to manage work life with family life (Traymbak et al., 2016). This unquestionable influence is still accepted as the norm within the societal and familial periphery (Batra, 2016). High levels of socioeconomic inequality affect Indian women (Dhar et al., 2019), which can be partially attributed to socially imposed gender norms with ingrained religious, cultural, and historical origins (Barcellos et al., 2014). Given that the percentage of women in the labor force in India fell from 31.8 to 20.3 percent between 2005 and 2020 (Sundari, 2020), underscoring the disparity between economic growth and women's economic agency and empowerment, the country presents an intriguing case study. In addition to the fact that women's financial empowerment is diminished by this low and falling labor market participation rate, research

shows that a significant portion of women—between 17% and 41%—also experience significant kinds of everyday discrimination and abuse, such as domestic violence (Menon, 2020).

Research Methodology

This study is entirely constructed on the secondary data compiled from various census reports and similarly from several SRS Bulletins of the GOI. To search and verify the correlates of cross-state differentials in gender inequality (FMR), which is the utmost conventional parameter of gender inequality, the researcher made a cross-state inter-temporal regression analysis, such that we regressed FMR on FMR about literacy and FMR on employment, and we estimated the relevant coefficients by using the conventional least squares technique. For this determination, fit a log-linear model to the data, which is as follows:

Data Analysis and Findings

Table 1: Female –Male Ratio (FMR) and Child Sex-Ratio in major states of India during 1991-2011

States	Sex – Ratio			Child Sex Ratio		
	1991	2001	2011	1991	2001	2011
A.P.	0.972	0.978	0.993	0.975	0.961	0.939
Assam	0.923	0.935	0.938	0.975	0.965	0.962
Bihar	0.907	0.919	0.918	0.953	0.942	0.935
Gujarat	0.934	0.920	0.919	0.928	0.883	0.890
Haryana	0.865	0.861	0.879	0.879	0.819	0.834
H. P	0.976	0.968	0.972	0.951	0.896	0.909
Karnataka	0.960	0.965	0.973	0.960	0.946	0.948
Kerala	1.036	1.058	1.084	0.958	0.960	0.964
M.P	0.912	0.919	0.931	0.941	0.932	0.918
Maharashtra	0.934	0.922	0.929	0.946	0.913	0.894
Orissa	0.971	0.972	0.979	0.967	0.953	0.941
Punjab	0.882	0.876	0.895	0.875	0.798	0.846
Rajasthan	0.910	0.921	0.928	0.916	0.909	0.888
Tamil Nadu	0.974	0.987	0.996	0.948	0.942	0.943
Uttar Pradesh	0.876	0.898	0.963	0.927	0.916	0.902
West Bengal	0.917	0.934	0.950	0.967	0.960	0.956
India	0.927	0.933	0.943	0.945	0.927	0.919
C.V	4.800	5.070	5.089	3.22	5.400	4.279

Source: Various census reports, GOI.

Table 1 reflects the magnitude of FMR and Child Sex Ratio among the prominent states of India. The cross-sectional data indicate a slight improvement in FMR in India at the national level, from .927 in 1991 to .943 in 2011 (among the prominent states). Although the southern states have been doing well in this regard as states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and AP have maintained better ratios in comparison to the national average, some of the northern states emerged as new promising states, for example, Uttar Pradesh had below ratio than national average in 1991 and 2001, but in 2011 it has the better ratio .963 than the national ratio of .943. Similarly, Rajasthan, West Bengal, MP, Odisha, and Assam are evidence of consistent improvement, while states like Haryana, Punjab, Bihar, Gujarat, and Maharashtra are witnessing

some zigzag scenarios in this part of gender inequality. These states must take appropriate measures to control the FMR ratio's downfall and raise it at least up to the national average. Another important parameter of analyzing gender discrimination is the child–sex ratio which gives clues about FMR in upcoming decades, and the situation is not as good as it must be, even the top performing states in FMR except Kerala has shown zigzag as CSR in Tamil Nadu was .948 in 1991 but declined to .942 in 2001 and .943 in 2011, the almost same situation persists in Karnataka as CSR in the state declined from the .960 in 1991 to .948 in 2011. To analyze the child sex ratio in all the prominent states, it's evident from the table that there is an overall decline in CSR from .945 in 1991 to .956 in 2011 in the prominent states of India. This

must be addressed by governments and societies, and they must take measures to uplift the child-sex ratio in the upcoming years.

Table 2: Ratio of female-male literacy rate and gender gap in literacy rate

States	Female -Male Literacy Rate			Gender Gap in Literacy Rate		
	1991	2001	2011	1991	2001	2011
A.P.	0.600	0.719	0.790	0.400	0.281	0.210
Assam	0.693	0.777	0.851	0.307	0.223	0.149
Bihar	0.442	0.566	0.723	0.558	0.434	0.277
Gujarat	0.671	0.728	0.813	0.329	0.272	0.187
Haryana	0.599	0.708	0.784	0.401	0.292	0.216
H.P.	0.693	0.790	0.848	0.307	0.210	0.152
Karnataka	0.656	0.750	0.826	0.344	0.250	0.174
Kerala	0.914	0.936	0.958	0.086	0.064	0.042
M.P	0.500	0.649	0.752	0.500	0.357	0.248
Maharashtra	0.675	0.790	0.858	0.325	0.210	0.142
Orissa	0.555	0.671	0.785	0.445	0.329	0.215
Punjab	0.757	0.842	0.879	0.245	0.158	0.121
Rajasthan	0.363	0.578	0.658	0.637	0.422	0.342
Tamil Nadu	0.689	0.792	0.846	0.311	0.207	0.154
Uttar Pradesh	0.446	0.614	0.740	0.554	0.386	0.260
West Bengal	0.691	0.769	0.864	0.304	0.231	0.136
India	0.603	0.710	0.797	0.391	0.290	0.203
C.V	22.070	13.410	8.850	36.050	36.400	37.933

Source: Various census reports, GOI.

Table 2 shows the male-female literacy rate in three different decades and the situation of the gender gap in literacy rate among the prominent states of India. In this part of the analysis, we can observe a vibrant improvement in almost all the prominent states, where Kerala has the best values, i.e., .914 in 1991, .936 in 2001, and .958 in 2011. The gap between female and male literacy is also the least in Kerala, which is only .042 in 2011. Although the other southern states are significantly behind the indices of Kerala, they are doing well, as they have better values in comparison to national averages among the prominent states. Some of the states, like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, MP, Odisha, Haryana, and

Rajasthan, have fewer indices than the national averages, and that proves that they are still in BIMARU status in this regard. Surprisingly, Rajasthan is in the worst situation in terms of the gender gap in literacy rate, but when we talk about the improvement scenario, Rajasthan has been able to bridge the gap significantly, as it declined from .637 in 1991 to .342 in 2011. Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and MP are also almost in the same situation as their gender gap in literacy rate is higher than the national averages in the given periods, but they are doing well in terms of bridging this gap, which is a good indicator for the future.

Table 3: Ratio of female-male employment and gender gap in employment

States	Female - Male Employment Ratio			Gender Gap in Employment		
	1991	2001	2011	1991	2001	2011
A.P.	0.601	0.610	0.635	0.399	0.390	0.365
Assam	0.403	0.921	0.419	0.597	0.079	0.581
Bihar	0.282	0.365	0.410	0.718	0.635	0.590
Gujarat	0.452	0.468	0.409	0.548	0.532	0.591
Haryana	0.191	0.465	0.353	0.809	0.535	0.647
H.P.	0.670	0.596	0.764	0.330	0.404	0.236
Karnataka	0.521	0.544	0.540	0.479	0.456	0.460
Kerala	0.345	0.018	0.346	0.655	0.982	0.654
M.P	0.582	0.592	0.609	0.418	0.408	0.391
Maharashtra	0.592	0.533	0.555	0.408	0.467	0.445
Orissa	0.375	0.456	0.484	0.625	0.544	0.516
Punjab	0.071	0.311	0.252	0.929	0.689	0.748
Rajasthan	0.505	0.617	0.682	0.495	0.383	0.318
Tamil Nadu	0.516	0.540	0.536	0.484	0.460	0.464
Uttar Pradesh	0.218	0.317	0.351	0.782	0.683	0.649
West Bengal	0.200	0.316	0.317	0.800	0.684	0.683
India	0.400	0.462	0.479	0.600	0.538	0.521
C.V	43.260	40.890	30.374	29.780	37.650	27.912

Source: Various census reports, GOI.

Table 3 exhibits the ratios of female-male employment and the gender gap in employment. It's interesting to observe that this data denies our common perception about the correlation between literacy rate and employment. Kerala has the best indices in terms of literacy rate and the least value in terms of the gender gap in literacy rate, but it's not even among the first three states where the women's employment ratio is high. Himachal Pradesh (HP) has the best female-male employment ratio with an

index value of .764 in 2011. Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, and even MP have better female-male employment ratios than Kerala. These states have better averages, .635, .682, and .609 respectively than the national average, which i. e .479 in 2011, in prominent states of India. Surprisingly, Punjab, Haryana, and Kerala have the least female-male employment ratios, and thus, these states are among the state which has the highest gender gaps in employment.

Table 4: Ratio of female-male IMR and gender gap in IMR

States	Female-Male IMR Ratio			Gender Gap in IMR		
	1981	2001	2011	1981	2001	2011
A.P.	0.761	0.937	1.150	0.239	0.063	-0.150
Assam	0.906	1.010	1.018	0.094	-0.010	-0.018
Bihar	1.430	1.170	1.023	-0.430	-0.170	-0.023
Gujarat	1.100	1.200	1.077	-0.100	-0.200	-0.077
Haryana	0.947	1.350	1.171	0.053	-0.350	-0.171
H.P.	-	-	1.083	-	-	-0.083
Karnataka	0.972	0.946	1.029	0.028	0.054	-0.029
Kerala	0.911	1.330	1.182	0.089	-0.330	-0.182
M.P	1.030	1.080	1.088	-0.030	-0.080	-0.088
Maharashtra	1.050	0.875	1.042	-0.050	0.125	-0.042
Orissa	0.860	0.831	1.055	0.140	0.169	-0.055
Punjab	0.654	1.730	1.179	0.346	-0.730	-0.179
Rajasthan	0.840	1.060	1.060	0.160	-0.060	-0.060
Tamil Nadu	0.927	0.934	1.095	0.073	0.066	-0.095
Uttar Pradesh	1.060	1.100	1.073	-0.060	-0.100	-0.073
West Bengal	0.680	0.849	1.133	0.320	0.151	-0.133
India	1.060	1.040	1.070	-0.060	-0.040	-0.070
C.V	20.091	21.867	5.111	325.514	-255.833	-6.97674

Source: Various census reports, GOI.

Table 4 represents the ratios of female-male infant mortality rates in the prominent states of the country. This table is evidence of increasing gender discrimination in this regard, as in 1981, the indices for India were 1.06, which increased to 1.07 in 2011. In 2011, all the states had a value of more than 1, which indicates a problematic situation in this part of gender discrimination. Though it's difficult to establish a direct relationship between the effect of family planning drive and increasing female child abortion or we can say selective abortion, to reduce the family size most people want at least one male child as per their patriarchal mindset, and this results in increased female infanticides, selective abortions, negligence health care for the female

child in the family and society, etc. It's also surprising that when it comes to gender equality, Kerala and Haryana are almost in the same status, as the female-male ratio in Kerala was 1.182 in 2011, and the same ratio in Haryana was 1.171 in 2011. Also, the gender gap value in Kerala was .182 in 2011, and in Haryana, it was .171. Thus, we can easily establish the fact that when it comes to family planning and care, we are suffering from conservative and patriarchal thoughts across India; merely increasing the literacy rate or participation in employment is not guaranteed to mitigate gender inequality in society, but our families, societies, and government should work together to create a progressive thought process among the societies.

Table 5: Cross-State Temporal Regression Results for Gender Discrimination

Dependent Variable	No. of Observations	Constant	Log (LR)	Log (ER)	R ²	Adjusted - R ²	Prob (F-statistic)
Log(FMR-91)	16	0.0416 (0.0243) [0.110]	0.116 (0.034) [0.0045]	0.0509 (0.013) [0.0022]	0.643	0.588	0.001
Log(FMR-01)	16	-0.0513 (0.0403) [0.224]	0.098 (0.094) [0.318]	-0.021 (0.014) [0.171]	0.299	0.192	0.098
Log(FMR-11)	16	0.065 (0.0507) [0.222]	0.309 (0.136) [0.041]	0.062 (0.039) [0.141]	0.307	0.201	0.091

This section includes the gender inequality indices (GDI) for each state, as well as an analysis of the nature of the gender inequality discrepancy between states based on these indices. Further, we also find out the main correlates of the inter-state disparity in gender discrimination. The intertemporal cross-state regression results (see Table 5) demonstrate that for the year 1991 employment has been the statistically significant explanatory factor for the interstate variability of gender discrimination (FMR). On the other hand, we discover that, for the year 2011, employment and the literacy rate are both major factors that influence the inter-state difference in FMR in a statistically significant way. All of these factors, however, are not found to be statistically significant for the year 2001, and the adj. R² value is also shown to be low. Overall, then, one can conclude that the employment of women may be a key factor in the decline of gender discrimination because economic independence fosters women's social and political freedom in society.

Major Findings and Discussion

The Female-Male Ratio (FMR) is the ratio in a given population, expressed in terms of the female population per thousand males. The higher it is, the greater the number of females compared to males, and the lower the value, the greater the number of

males compared to females. Between the years 1991 and 2011, there was a trend towards improvement of the FMR in the majority of the states, as is evident from the increasing values in the table. States such as Kerala always have more than 1 FMR, which means there are more females in the population than males. This suggests that regions such as these relatively have better gender balance than other regions. However, there are some states like Haryana and Punjab that have had lower FMR than the national average, which indicates that there are fewer females than males in these populations and hence raises questions of gender equality. For children aged between 0–6 years, the Child Sex Ratio is defined as females per 1,000 males in that age group. It is a measure of pernicious tendencies towards sex selection, such as female infanticide and or abortion. A notable pattern across most states and the national average is that, insalubriously, CSM has been declining over the years, aggravating the state of affairs so far as gender balance amongst children is concerned. However, the Child Sex Ratios for Haryana, Punjab, and Gujarat have consistently remained lower than the national average. Irrespective of having a relatively higher Female-Male Ratio, over the years Kerala has been showing an alarming trend in the Child Sex Ratio, which increases the chances of sex-selective practices being covertly prevalent even in relatively fairer regions. Gender

inequality indicators over the years have clear regional distinctions across various states. Southern regions such as Kerala have fared better in Female-Male Ratios in comparison to their Northern counterparts, such as Punjab and Haryana, which have lower and consistent Child Sex Ratios. The Male Female Ratio, on the other hand, has shown an improvement in states such as Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, but still shows outlier behaviour in comparison to the national average, showing massive gender inequality in the state. Despite the gradual improvements that have been witnessed in female proportions on the Female-Male Ratio, it cannot be stressed enough to capitalize on such improvements, as the deterioration in Child's Sex Ratio values is of much concern and needs active measures in place to understand the traditional notions favoring a boy over a girl. The national average for the first and second Child Sex ratios also demonstrates these disparities, as although there is growth, they have not eliminated gender discrimination, even when there are policies in place to do so, strategies that need constant re-evaluation, and new strategies developed for the improvement of women and girls.

The Literacy Rate Ratio among the males and females, in this case, the ratio of the female literacy rate to the male literacy rate, is one of the indicators that indicates the literacy gender ratio. There is a general increase in the Female-Male Literacy Rate Ratio over time across most states and the national average, as shown in the increasing table values. Some states, such as Kerala, have always had a higher Female-Male Literacy Rate Ratio than others, meaning that the female-male literacy gap is not as wide as in some states; however, states such as Bihar and Rajasthan seem to have consistently had lower ratios, meaning that female literacy is vastly lower than male literacy. The Gender Gap in Literacy Rate measures the difference between the literacy rates of females and males in each state, thereby measuring the level of gender imbalance

that characterizes the education sector. Except for a few southeast states, such trends have been evident in all states, including the national average, a decrease in literacy rates of males as compared to those of females. Some states, such as Kerala, have consistently had more effective educational outreach efforts for females and other human development-related issues that have resulted in less diversity among genders in literacy rates, whereas in states such as Bihar and Rajasthan, women have had a much harder time obtaining education. A noticeable regional difference in the gender gap concerning literacy rates is noticed across the states.

Southern states like Kerala have lower gender gaps and higher female-to-male literacy rates, which means gender equality in literacy, whereas northern states like Bihar and Rajasthan have lower gender gaps and exhibit significant gender inequality in access to education. States like Uttar Pradesh have witnessed improvements in female and male literacy rates over the years, but there are still huge challenges in reducing the gender gap in literacy rates. Although female and male literacy rates are improving in the country over the years and the gender gap in literacy rates is narrowing, there are existing gaps and challenges to male access and women's equality in education in various have relatively high characteristics (C.V). countries that claim sustainability. Addressing this gap requires targeted interventions focused on improving access to quality education for women, addressing social and cultural barriers, and programs and programs that it is about promoting gender equality at the state and national level

The employment rate represents the ratio of employed women to employed men in each country and reflects gender inequality in employment. There has been a steady but limited growth in female and male employment over the years in most states and the national average, as indicated by the increasing values in the table. States like

Haryana and Punjab constantly exhibit decreasing Female-Male Employment Ratios as compared to others, suggesting higher levels of gender inequality in employment, even as states like Himachal Pradesh and Karnataka display enormously higher ratios, indicating better gender parity in employment. The Gender Gap in Employment represents the difference in the employment fees of women and men within every country, serving as a measure of gender inequality in getting access to employment opportunities. Over the years, there has been a fashion of discounting the gender gap in employment across most states and the national average, as indicated using the decreasing values in the table. States like Haryana and Bihar constantly show off higher gender gaps in employment in comparison to others, suggesting significant challenges in making sure of equitable right of entry to employment opportunities for females in those areas. There are sizeable disparities in gender inequality in employment throughout the states. States in northern India, inclusive of Haryana, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh, generally tend to have better gender gaps and lower Female-Male Employment Ratios, indicating greater demanding situations in attaining gender parity in employment. Southern states like Karnataka and Tamil Nadu generally showcase better gender parity in employment in comparison to northern states, even though challenges still exist in decreasing gender gaps in employment in these areas. Although female-male employment rates have improved slightly in the country over the years and the gender gap in employment has narrowed, a persistent relatively high coefficient of variation (C.V) shows existing gaps and challenges in achieving gender equality in employment in different countries. Addressing these gaps requires targeted interventions focused on employment opportunities women will have it improved, addressing social and cultural barriers, and promoting gender-sensitive policies and programs at the state and national levels.

Female-to-male IMR ratios represent infant mortality rates among women and men in each country and indicate whether or not there is a gender difference in infant mortality. States like Kerala have consistently lower female-to-male IMR ratios compared to others, indicating relatively low gender differences in infant mortality, whereas in states like Punjab and Bihar, sleep rates showed higher rates, indicating significant gender inequality in infant mortality. In each of the gender differences in IMR Represents the difference between the infant mortality rates of women and men die within a state, which is a measure of gender inequality in access to health care and nutrition for infants. For many years, most states have a trend toward national averages so in general decreasing the gender difference in IMR, as indicated by decreasing values in the table. However, some states, such as Bihar and Punjab, exhibit a consistently high gender gap in IMR compared to others, indicating major challenges in achieving health care and nutritional equity for infants of women in these areas. There are notable regional differences in gender differences in infant mortality in different countries. States like Kerala and Tamil Nadu have lower gender gaps and lower female-to-male IMR ratios, indicating that female infants enjoy better health and nutrition, while states like Bihar and Punjab have increases between men and women. Higher differences are also observed, leading to infant mortality rates. The lack of data over many years for some states, like Himachal Pradesh, highlights the need for comprehensive and consistent data collection efforts to assess gender differences in infant mortality in all regions equally. Although there have been improvements in female-to-male IMR ratios and a narrowing of the gender gap in IMR at the national level over the years, states point to existing differences and challenges between males and achieving women's equality in infant mortality rates across diversity. Targeted interventions focused on improving health care, nutrition, and maternal and child health services are needed to

address these gaps, particularly at the geographical level, with significant gender differences and differences in infant mortality.

Conclusions and Way Forward

The nature and extent of gender discrimination in Indian states are examined in this research. We arrive at the following findings after analyzing census data. First, the traditional measure of gender discrimination, the FMR, shows that, except in Kerala, it has been declining over time in practically all of the states. This blatantly shows that gender inequality is trending upward. Second, a converging tendency across the states is amply demonstrated by the cross-state regression on the declining trend in FMR. Thirdly, we discover that the child sex ratio shows a downward tendency in practically all states, except Punjab, Kerala, and Himachal Pradesh. The fact that interstate differences are growing in this regard is unexpected. Additionally, we discovered a favorable relationship between child sex ratio and FMR. The reason for this declining tendency in the child-to-sex ratio appears to be due to clandestine female infanticides, sex-selective abortion, etc. Fourth, it is discovered that there is a sharp decline in the literacy rate across all states when the gender gap is taken into account. Fifth, it has been discovered that practically every state has extremely high levels of gender discrimination in the workplace. It is surprising to learn that, except for Kerala and Maharashtra, practically all states showed a modest downward tendency between 1991 and 2001. It is rather unexpected that Kerala has the highest levels of gender inequality when it comes to employment and DAR, even though the state also has the lowest FMR and literacy rates. Sixthly, the gender gap in employment and the literacy rate are the statistically significant explanatory factors that account for the inter-state differences in gender inequality, according to our cross-state regression results. Last but not least, the gender discrimination indices in practically every

state blatantly show a large upward trend over time. On the other hand, the cross-state difference in this regard indicates a downward trend. Thus, our work raises an intriguing policy implication: large-scale public action programs aimed at boosting female literacy and job possibilities are crucial for addressing the issue of the growing gender imbalance within Indian states.

In conclusion, the analysis of the table underscores the complex nature of gender inequality in India, highlighting improvements in some indicators but persistent challenges in others, necessitating concerted efforts at both national and regional levels to achieve meaningful progress towards gender equality. Further, the analysis represents the importance of addressing gender inequality in education as a crucial step towards achieving overall gender equality and socio-economic development in India, necessitating comprehensive efforts at various levels to ensure equitable access to education for all genders. the analysis states the importance of addressing gender inequality in employment as a crucial step towards achieving overall gender equality and socio-economic development in India, necessitating comprehensive efforts at various levels to ensure equitable access to employment opportunities for all genders. the analysis talks about the importance of addressing gender inequality in infant mortality as a crucial step towards achieving overall gender equality and improving maternal and child health outcomes in India, necessitating comprehensive efforts at various levels to ensure equitable access to healthcare and nutrition for all infants, regardless of gender.

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