

Gender Differentials and Gender Issues of Human Development: Evidences from the Dangs

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Abstract

Status of women in The Dangs has been discussed in this article with respect to its sex ratio, gender gaps in literacy rate, work participation rate, women involvement in self help groups, etc. The Dangs has the credit of having a high juvenile sex ratio while this district has a highly favorable Female Male Ratio too. Even if remarkable improvement in literacy level of both male and female is recorded during the last decade and the pace of this rise is more noticeable among females, large gender gaps still exists among males and females in case of literacy level. There is a big decline in female work participation rate in case of main work in The Dangs while there is an increase in availability of marginal work to women which leads to low economic status of women over a period of time. Participation of women in self help groups is comparatively high in the Dangs.

Keywords: Gender; Sex ratio; Female literacy; Work participation rate; Self help groups.

Introduction

Human development is ensuring development of all members of a society by availing resources and opportunities to all. In any society if women are denied of these facilities such a process becomes unjust and discriminatory and human development cannot be achieved by that society. Denial of equal choices to women in economic, social and political areas is a continuing indictment of modern progress. In most of the societies there are limited opportunities and chances for women to expand their capabilities, and the so called socio-cultural, political and economic environment existing there limits the use of their capabilities.

Gender equality and women's empowerment are human rights that lie at the heart of development and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Despite progress that has been made, six out of ten of world's poorest people are still women and girls, less than 16 percent of world's parliamentarians are women, two thirds of all children shut outside the school gates are girls and, both in times of armed conflict and behind closed doors at home, women are still systematically subjected to violence (Helen Clark-2009).

Even if there is considerable progress evident in the areas of women education and health universally, there is clear disparity exists between women and men in these areas too. Inequalities seen in areas of political and economic empowerment are more disturbing. Situation in developing countries is worse than in developed ones in case of gender differentials in human development. Poor implementation of laws coupled with lack of political will for proper implementation of existing women friendly laws puts women under continuous threat of abuse and crime globally.

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Sex Ratio

The sex ratio is considered as a strong indicator of gender development. It was the Committee on Status of Women in India [(CSWI (1975)] which highlighted demographic factor as most secular and composite indicator of women's declining status in a country over a long period. Druze and Sen (1995) feel that it even displays intra-household inequalities. Hirway and Mahadevia (1996) however, are wary of including FMR as an indicator within the country as it is affected by migration, (Rustagi 2000).

It is believed that in general life expectancy of women is five years more than men. If there is no gender discrimination in a society there would be more women than men and the sex ratio would be in favor of women. In general, a sex ratio less than 1000 indicates discrimination against women.

The Dangs shows a better Sex ratio as well as juvenile sex ratio as compared to Gujarat state and national average. But a sharp decline in juvenile sex ratio in the Dangs is clearly evident from Table 1. Tribal districts are believed to be less discriminated against females with respect to sex-ratio. But the changing trend that the female girls are not allowed to be borne even in tribal areas is more glaring. Most disturbing fact is that a declining juvenile sex ratio will add towards a declining male female ratio in future also and can worsen the already abysmally low sex ratio of the state .

Gender Gaps in Literacy

Education is a human right which enables a person to be empowered. It is been regarded that education makes a persona rational and develops the innate abilities and personality of people. It enables people to fulfill certain economic, political and cultural functions and thereby improves their socio-economic status in the society. It makes a person respectable in the community. The universal declarations of human rights regard education as one of the basic rights of every human being. According to a World Bank Study, increased education

for women is not only a matter of justice but would yield exceptional returns in terms of world food security (DHDR, Bankura-2006). Since, educational attainment reflect the nature and quality of human capital formation within society, persisting gender gaps in terms of education and literacy in The Dangs district point to drawbacks within the development process that have a disproportionate impact on women.

It is evident from available data that the clear variations exist in literacy rate between Gujarat state and The Dang district have been narrowed down in the last decade. Literacy rate improved sharply among females as compared to males. There is no much difference in the position of The Dangs district in terms of general education and literacy compared with Gujarat state according to 2011 Census data. At the same time large gender gaps exist in the Dangs among males and females in 2001 as well as in 2011. While literacy levels for both males and females in Gujarat exceed the national averages in 2001 and 2011, male and female literacy rates in The Dangs district showed a sharp decadal growth compared to national and state level and this pace of improvement is so much obvious with females here.

Lots of efforts taken towards improving the educational condition in The Dangs by state government is seemed to be had contributed into achieving this. The government has taken up drives to increase enrollment in the schools. It had also taken measures to see that students once enrolled do not drop out. Apart from these initiatives infrastructure in schools has also improved and in several areas new schools were started.

Census figures of 2011 mentions literacy rate of the Dangs at 76.8 per cent compared to 59.7 in 2001. In Gujarat now The Dangs ranks 14 in case of educational attainment with the highest decadal growth rate of the state i.e. 29.24 between 1991-2011. This drastic rise from bottom 23rd position in 1991 and 2001 to 14th position in 2011 and the 12th position in case of female literacy level is really