

The reality of women's lives remains invisible to men and women alike and this invisibility persists at all levels beginning with the family to the nation. Although geographically men and women share the same space, they live in different worlds. The mere fact that “*Women hold up half the sky*” - does not appear to give them a position of dignity and equality. True, that over the years women have made great strides in many areas with notable progress in reducing some gender* gaps. Yet, ‘the afflicted world in which we live is characterised by deeply unequal sharing of the burden of adversities between women and men’. Sprawling inequalities persist in their access to education, health care, physical and financial resources and opportunities in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres.

‘Gender inequality holds back the growth of individuals, the development of nations and the evolution of societies to the disadvantage of both men and women’. Gender issues are not simply talking about women’s issues. Understanding gender means understanding opportunities, constraints and the impact of change as they affect both men and women.

The impact of inequality is reflected in the status of women worldwide and in India.

**(The term "gender" is used to describe a set of qualities and behaviours expected from men and women by their societies. A person's social identity is formed by these expectations. These expectations stem from the idea that certain qualities, behaviour, characteristics, needs and roles are 'natural' for men, while certain other qualities and roles are 'natural' for women. Gender is not biological - girls and boys are not born knowing how they should look, dress, speak, behave, think or react. Their "gendered" masculine and feminine identities are constructed through the process of socialisation, which prepares them for the social roles they are expected to play. These social roles and expectations differ from culture to culture and at different periods in history).*

WOMEN WORLDWIDE

Women and Poverty

- ♀ 70% of the 1.2 billion people living in poverty are female¹

Women as Workers

- ♀ Women do more than
 - 67% of the hours of work done in the world
 - Earn only 10% of the world's income
 - And own only 1% of the world's property²
- ♀ The value of unremunerated work was estimated at about \$16 billion, from which \$11 billion represents the invisible contribution of women³
- ♀ Women are paid 30-40% less than men for comparable work on an average⁴
- ♀ 60-80% of the food in most developing countries is produced by women⁵
- ♀ Women hold between 10-20% managerial and administrative jobs⁶
- ♀ Women make up less than 5% of the world's heads of state⁷

Women and Education

- ♀ 60 % of the 130 million children in the age group of 6-11 years who do not go to school, are girls⁸
- ♀ Approximately 67% of the world's 875 million illiterate adults are women
 - 3 out of 5 women in Southern Asia and an estimated 50% of all women in Africa and in the Arab region are still illiterate⁹

1 Source: <http://www.comminit.com/BaseLineArchives/sld-36.html>

2 Source: UN statistics

3 Source: The Human Development Report, 1995

4 Source: <http://www.comminit.com/BaseLineArchives/sld-36.html>

5 Source: <http://www.comminit.com/BaseLineArchives/sld-818.html>

6-7 Source: UN statistics

8-9 Source: <http://www.undp.org.in/webbook/Enlrg-spc-wmn-india.htm>



Women and Health

- ♀ Women account for 50% of all people living with HIV/AIDS globally¹⁰
- ♀ In the year 2000, there were
 - 80 million unwanted pregnancies
 - 20 million unsafe abortions
 - 5 lakhs maternal deaths

99% of these cases were reported in developing countries¹¹

WOMEN IN INDIA

Child Sex Ratio (0–6 years)

- ♀ The child sex ratio has dropped from
 - 945 females per 1000 males in 1991 to
 - 927 females per 1000 males in 2001¹²
- ♀ The United Nations Children’s Fund, estimated that upto 50 million girls and women are ‘missing’ from India’s population because of termination of the female foetus or high mortality of the girl child due to lack of proper care¹³

Women as Workers

- ♀ Female share of non-agricultural wage employment is only 17%¹⁴
- ♀ Participation of women in the workforce is only
 - 13.9% in the urban sector and
 - 29.9% in the rural sector¹⁵
- ♀ Women’s wage rates are, on an average
 - only 75 % of men’s wage rates and
 - constitute only 25% of the family income

In no Indian State do women and men earn equal wages in agriculture¹⁶

- ♀ Women occupy
 - only 9% of parliamentary seats
 - less than 4% seats in High Courts and Supreme Court
 - less than 3% administrators and managers are women¹⁷

Women and Education

- ♀ Close to 245 million Indian women lack the basic capability to read and write¹⁸
- ♀ Adult literacy rates for ages 15 and above for the year 2000 were
 - female 46.4%
 - male rate of 69%¹⁹

Women and Health

- ♀ The average nutritional intake of women is 1400 calories daily. The necessary requirement is approximately 2200 calories²⁰
- ♀ 38% of all HIV positive people in India are women yet only 25% of beds in AIDS care centres in India are occupied by them²¹
- ♀ 92% of women in India suffer from gynaecological problems²²
- ♀ 300 women die every day due to childbirth and pregnancy related causes²³
- ♀ The maternal mortality ratio per 100,000 live births in the year 1995 was 440²⁴

10 Source: http://www.breakthrough.tv/teach_detail.asp?TeachId=9&id=5
11 Source: <http://www.comminit.com/BaseLineArchives/sld-24.html>
12 Source: Indian Census Report, 2001
13 Source: <http://in.news.yahoo.com/040617/43/2dodv.html>
14 Source: Human Development Report, 2003
15-17 Source: http://hdr.undp.org/statistics/data/cty/cty_f_IND.html
18 Source: Women in India- How free? How equal? – Kalyani Menon Sen, A.K. Shiva Kumar
19 Source: http://hdr.undp.org/statistics/data/cty/cty_f_IND.html
20 Source: Gender and women’s health, publication by CHETNA, NGO
21 Source: http://www.breakthrough.tv/teach_detail.asp?TeachId=9&id=5
22 Source: Gender and women’s health, publication by CHETNA, NGO
23 Source: Women in India- How free? How equal? – Kalyani Menon Sen, A.K. Shiva Kumar
24 Source: Human Development Report, 2003

CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN IN INDIA

Although efforts have been taken to improve the status of women, the constitutional dream of gender equality is miles away from becoming a reality. Even today, 'the mainstream remains very much a malestream'. The dominant tendency has always been to confine women and women's issues in the private domain. The traditional systems of control with its notion of 'what is right and proper for women' still reigns supreme and reinforces the use of violence as a means to punish its defiant female 'offenders' and their supporters. Hence it is of no surprise when the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) predicted that the growth rate of crimes against women would be higher than the population growth rate by 2010. To elucidate the subject, let us take a look at some government data, from the NCRB, 2002 and research done by some non governmental organisations. However it is important to mention here, the data presented here is only a partial reflection of the extent of crimes against women as most incidents of violence go unreported.

*Source:NCRB 'Crime in India, 2002'

Every 3.5 minutes, 1 crime was committed against women in India in 2002*

Female Foeticide

- ♀ Female foeticide in India increased by 49.2% between 1999-2000

Source:NCRB 'Crime in India, 1999-2000'



According to NCRB '*Crime in India, 2002*' the following crimes were committed against women in India.

Rape

- ♀ 16,373 women were raped during the year
- ♀ 45 women were raped every day
- ♀ 1 woman was raped every 32 minutes
- ♀ An increase of 6.7% in the incidents of rape was seen between 1997-2002

Incest

- ♀ 2.25% of the total rape cases, were cases of incest

Sexual Harassment

- ♀ 44,098 incidents of sexual harassment were reported.
- ♀ 121 women were sexually harassed every day
- ♀ 1 woman was sexually harassed every 12 minutes
- ♀ An increase of 20.6% was seen in incidents of sexual harassment between 1997-2002

Importation of girls/Trafficking

- ♀ 11,332 women and girls were trafficked
- ♀ 31 women and girls were trafficked every day
- ♀ 1 woman or girl was trafficked every 46 minutes

Nearly one-third said the perpetrator had been a father, grandfather or male friend of the family.

Kidnapping and abduction

- ♀ 14,630 women and minor girls were kidnapped or abducted
- ♀ 40 women and minor girls were kidnapped every day
- ♀ 1 woman or minor girl was abducted every 36 minutes



Dowry Related Murders

- ♀ 7,895 women were murdered due to dowry
- ♀ 21 women were murdered every day
- ♀ 1 woman was murdered due to dowry every 66 minutes

Domestic Violence

- ♀ 49,237 women faced domestic violence in their marital homes.
- ♀ 135 women were tortured by their husbands and in-laws every day
- ♀ 1 woman faced torture in her marital relationship every 11 minutes
- ♀ Domestic violence constitutes 33.3% of the total crimes against women
- ♀ A steep rise of 34.5% in domestic violence cases was witnessed between 1997-2002

Suicide

- ♀ 12,134 women were driven to commit suicide due to dowry
- ♀ 1,10,424 housewives committed suicide between 1997-2001 and accounted for 52% of the total female suicide victims

Source: NCRB, 'Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India', between 1997-2001

Research Findings

Child Sexual Abuse

- ♀ Out of 350 school girls
 - 63% had experienced sexual abuse at the hands of family members
 - 25% had been raped, forced to masturbate the perpetrator or forced to perform oral sex
 - Nearly 33% said the perpetrator had been a father, grandfather or male friend of the family

Source: A research carried out 1997-98 by Sakshi an NGO

Sexual Abuse

- ♀ Out of 600 women respondents
 - 76% had been sexually abused in childhood or adolescence
- ♀ Of Of Of the abusers
 - 42% were 'uncle' or 'cousin'
 - 4% were 'father' or 'brother'



Source: research carried out 1997-98 by RAHI an NGO

Domestic Violence

- ♀ Over 40% of married Indian women face physical abuse by their husband
- ♀ 1 in every 2 women faces domestic violence in any of its forms—physical, sexual, psychological and/or economic

Source: INCLIN Survey, 2000

SWAYAM

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