

**International Conference – 2025: Developed India @ 2047****Charting Multidisciplinary and Multi-Institutional Pathways for Inclusive Growth and Global Leadership held on 4th & 5th April, 2025****Organised by: IQAC - Gossner College, Ranchi****An Analysis of Gender Dynamics and Social Justice Movements in India****Shilpi Sinha**

Research Scholar, Department of English, Ranchi University, Ranchi.

Email: sinha.shilpi13@gmail.com

**Abstract**

It's been seventy-seven years since India has been an independent nation. In all these years India is continuously striving to become a developed country, but because of its vastness, enormity and diverseness, it's not easy for any kind of change or development to take place immediately. It takes time. It is praiseworthy that India has achieved many milestones and overcame many obstacles since 1947, but a lot has to be done for its inclusive growth and for it to become a global leader. The paper explores the gender dynamics in India while mentioning its important aspects, its impact on Indian society and culture, its pace of change, challenges, etc. The concerned laws and provisions are also mentioned in the paper. As India is a democratic country, social justice movements play a very significant role in policy-making. Thus, the paper also comments on the various social justice movements in India, their key aspects, their impact on common men and government, important organizations, challenges, etc. The paper also gives few suggestions for the concerned areas which can be helpful for making India a developed nation by 2047.

Gender is a social construct and gender roles are centred on the perceived conception of masculinity and femininity. The specifics regarding the gendered expectations may vary among cultures. Gender roles influence a wide range of human behaviour. Although they have evolved and expanded, they traditionally keep women in the private sphere, and men in the public sphere. Various groups, most notably feminist movements, have led efforts to change aspects of prevailing gender roles that they believe are oppressive, inaccurate, and sexist. Gender dynamics refer to the relationships and interactions between and among people based on their gender, including the power dynamics and social norms that influence those interactions.

Gender dynamics in India are largely characterized by patriarchal system where traditional gender roles are deeply rooted, with men typically holding more power and decision-making authority, while women are expected to prioritize domestic duties and often face limitations in education and career opportunities. Despite recent shifts towards more egalitarian views, significant challenges remain regarding gender equality, including prevalent son preference, early marriage, violence against women, etc.

**International Conference – 2025: Developed India @ 2047****Charting Multidisciplinary and Multi-Institutional Pathways for Inclusive Growth and Global Leadership held on 4th & 5th April, 2025****Organised by: IQAC - Gossner College, Ranchi**

Social justice movements advocate for fair treatment for all people, regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, or socio-economic status. In India, prominent social justice movements focused on gendered dynamics include the anti-dowry movement, campaigns against female infanticide (“Beti Bachao Beti Padhao”), movement advocating for women’s education and economic empowerment, activism against sexual violence, efforts to increase women’s political participation, etc. all aiming to combat deeply rooted patriarchal structures within society and a step towards a progressive India.

**Keywords:** *Gender, Gender Dynamics, Social Justice Movements, Society, Culture.*

**Introduction**

Gender is associated with the characteristics of women, men, girls or boys which are assigned to them by the society. Every facet of human life is influenced by it. It shapes identities, roles, norms, behaviours and interactions within societies. Gender dynamics is related to the sociocultural conceptions of gender and the power dynamics that characterize them. It can either reinforce or challenge established norms of the society. For example, if a man states that it is only a woman’s job to cook food and take care of children - reinforces a gender norm, whereas a man stating that it is okay for him to contribute in domestic duties challenges a gender norm. Gender dynamics can affect power, status, and authority. It can reflect how gender controls access to resources and opportunities.

Despite recent progress towards more egalitarian views; gender dynamics in India is deeply rooted in societal norms and cultural practices, with many Indians still adhering to traditional gender roles even while expressing support for some aspects of gender equality. India was the first nation in the world who had granted equal rights to both men and women when it became an independent country in 1947. Since then women’s condition has evolved significantly, marked by legal reforms granting them equality, increased access to education, providing protection from atrocities, etc. Important aspects of gender dynamics in India include: (i) a persistent gender pay gap, (ii) limited access to education and employment for women, (iii) prevalent gender stereotypes, (iii) high rates of gender-based violence, (iv) unequal division of domestic labour, (v) a lack of economic empowerment for women, and (vi) the need for strong policies and laws to promote gender equality, particularly in areas like education and workplace participation.

Social justice movements are groups of people who work together to bring change in society by protesting, advocating, or campaigning. They aim to end discriminations which are mostly based on such elements as race, class, gender, disability, religion, etc. They follow the principles of equality, participation, diversity, equal access to resources, human rights, etc. They play a huge role in India as they are a medium through which common men can voice their opinion to the government and can bring change in the society. Types of social justice movements in modern India include caste-based movements, tribal and indigenous movements, women’s movement, environment movements, LGBTQ+ rights movements, civil rights and anti-corruption movements, etc. These kind of

**International Conference – 2025: Developed India @ 2047****Charting Multidisciplinary and Multi-Institutional Pathways for Inclusive Growth and Global Leadership held on 4th & 5th April, 2025****Organised by: IQAC - Gossner College, Ranchi**

movements can spark conversation that lead to transformative change. They are a critical force in shaping modern India and are an image of India's vibrant democracy.

**Main Thrust**

Every child ought to realize his full potential, according to gender equality, but this fact is hampered by gender inequality they have to face. Regardless of where they reside in India, girls and boys witness some kind of gender inequality on a daily basis in their homes and communities, as well as in the media, movies, songs, etc. According to UNICEF, Indian girls and boys experience adolescence in different ways. Very often girls have to face restrictions on their freedom of movement and taking decisions for themselves which adversely impact their education, career, marriage, social ties, etc. whereas boys usually get unrestricted freedom. While there are lots of laws and provisions in India to tackle gender inequality and protect women, it is still a challenge to successfully implement them. Legal reforms like Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 was aimed to put an end to the custom of dowry. Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 was brought for ensuring maternity leave and protection for working women during pregnancy. Acts like Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 was made for combating domestic abuse. Also, Women's Self-Help Groups (SHGs) provide economic empowerment and support to women in rural areas. There are few reservation policies only for women. Though these acts are there, their practical implementation remains a problem in the deep rooted patriarchal system of India. According to the 230<sup>th</sup> Report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee 2021, an alarming number of 6,589 deaths because of dowry were registered, along with 13,568 dowry-related incidents. Also, there are huge number of registered cases of atrocities done to women by their husbands or their family members. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), 2023, in the three years between 2019 and 2021, more than thirteen lakhs girls and women were reported missing, with Madhya Pradesh having the highest number at around two lakhs, closely followed by West Bengal. In order to effectively prevent sexual offenses, the government has implemented several measures for women's safety throughout the nation, including the Criminal Law (Amendment), Act, 2013. In addition, the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018 was passed in order to establish even harsher punishments, such as the death penalty, for raping females younger than twelve. The Act also requires that charge-sheets and investigations in rape cases be finished within two months, and that trials be finished within two more months.

The overall literacy rate of women has improved significantly since independence. According to the 1951 census women's literacy rate was 8.8 % whereas it increased to a significant 65% in the 2011 census. While for men it has increased from 27% to 82 %. Today women graduates make up nearly half of the overall enrolment in higher education in the country. Though the situation of women's education in rural India is challenging, where a large gender gap exists in literacy and a high dropout rate for girls. The gap is wider among the poorest and most marginalized groups. It should be taken into notice that the government has taken few initiatives to tackle child marriage, promote the education and empowerment of girl children. For example, government has started a scheme

**International Conference – 2025: Developed India @ 2047****Charting Multidisciplinary and Multi-Institutional Pathways for Inclusive Growth and Global Leadership held on 4th & 5th April, 2025****Organised by: IQAC - Gossner College, Ranchi**

“Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana” under “Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao”, where parents can open a savings account for their daughters to secure funds for their education and marriage expenses. India has experienced immense economic growth since its independence, but men and women’s contribution in this growth is not equal. Women’s participation in economic sector remains very low. While some sectors like healthcare, IT, banking and education may see a higher percentage of women in workshops, others like manufacturing and construction tend to have significantly lower female participation. To increase women’s contribution in India’s economic growth the government has started many programs such as Women’s Vocational Training Program (WVTP), Mahila E-Haat Scheme, Mudra Scheme, Annapurna Scheme, Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendra Scheme, Drone Didi Scheme, Trade Related Entrepreneurship Development Assistance Scheme (TREAD), etc.

Today Indian women have a strong political presence though their number is less. For example, Smt. Droupadi Murmu is the president of India. Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman is the first woman Finance Minister of India. Delhi’s current chief minister is Smt. Rekha Gupta. On the other hand, because of the strongly ingrained patriarchal beliefs and customs, many Indian women and girls are unable to exercise their rights. According to a survey conducted by a professor from the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, Indian women between the age group of 15 to 60 do 7.2 hours of unpaid household work, while men only give 2.8 hours. According to research based on the Times Use Survey of the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), even wage-earning women devote twice as much time to unpaid domestic work as do wage-earning men in order to meet basic household needs like cleaning, meal preparation, and caregiving. The survey also mentions that men spend nearly 150 minutes more per day on paid employment relative to women. Although India has laws like the Equal Remuneration Act which guarantees equal pay for equal work, its implementation and enforcement remain a challenge.

India has a skewed sex ratio, with fewer girls being born compared to boys, partly due to illegal sex-selective abortions and female infanticide. In the 2011 census, the sex ratio of India was recorded 943. It should be taken into account that in 1951 census, the sex ratio was 946. So, according to the numerical figures India’s sex ratio has not improved in all these years. But the government has taken strong actions against sex-selective abortions and female infanticide. Some of the challenges regarding gender dynamics are rural-urban divide, caste system, social norms and mind-set, etc. Gender inequalities are often pronounced in rural areas compared to urban areas. The caste system further exacerbates gender inequalities, with women from lower castes facing additional discrimination. Addressing deeply rooted ingrained patriarchal attitudes and gender stereotypes is crucial for long-term change.

The primary social justice movement related to gender dynamics in India is feminism, which aims to achieve equal political, economic, and social rights for women by addressing issues like child marriage, widow remarriage, access to education, workplace discrimination, gender-based violence, dowry, female infanticide, etc. Key contributions of social justice movements related to gender

**International Conference – 2025: Developed India @ 2047****Charting Multidisciplinary and Multi-Institutional Pathways for Inclusive Growth and Global Leadership held on 4th & 5th April, 2025****Organised by: IQAC - Gossner College, Ranchi**

dynamics in India include (i) Rising awareness about gender inequality (ii) Advocating for legal reforms (iii) Empowering women through education and economic participation (iv) Challenging harmful social practices (v) Intersectionality approach, etc. Significant milestones have been reached by a number of women's social justice campaigns in India, including legislative changes such as the Protection of Women from Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act (2003), the Domestic Violence Act (2005), the Dowry Prohibition Act (1961), etc.

LGBTQ+ rights movements have been a critical area of focus in recent times. These movements are fighting for the rights and acceptance of the concerned people in the legal and social sphere. Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code was nullified by the Supreme Court in 2018 to decriminalise same-sex relations. In 2014, the National Legal Service Authority (NALSA) recognized transgender people as a third gender. The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act was enacted in 2019. Madras High Court gave order to the state to provide welfare services to the LGBTQ+ community in 2021. However, these people still face discrimination, harassment, bullying, violence, stigma, and rejection.

Dalit Rights Movements fight for the rights and equality of dalits (formerly known as untouchables). The primary law protecting dalits in India is the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. It prevents any kind of hate crimes and atrocities against them. Anti-Corruption Movement, 2011 spearheaded by anti-corruption activist Anna Hazare has been a one-of-a-kind event. It demonstrated what can happen when the world's largest democracy awakens and seizes power. The aim of this movement was to end corruption in the Indian government. Because of this movement, The Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013 were made. Nirbhaya Movement, 2012 was started because of the gruesome Delhi Gang Rape in 2012. This heinous and barbaric incident, compelled thousands of Indians to protest around the country on the streets and social media. As a result, numerous states and the central government announced a number of initiatives to protect women. There are several other social justice movements in India which had influenced and continue to influence India. These movements also face a number of obstacles that may compromise their durability and efficacy, such as movement fragmentation. This lack of unity may divert the concerned objectives and make it difficult to sustain an impactful agenda. Inclusivity should be an integral part of all social justice movements to bring different groups together in pursuit of a single objective. When movements resort to violence, they often lose moral authority, so they have to refrain from any kind of violence. Sometimes when these movements align with political parties, their goals compromise. Since these movements don't necessarily represent all facets of the communities they purport to support, they frequently lack inclusive representation.

**Conclusion**

Gender dynamics in India has significantly impacted the lives of women, particularly in the rural areas, limiting their access to education, employment opportunities, and overall societal participation due to deeply ingrained patriarchal norms, leading to issues like child marriage, teenage pregnancy,





### International Conference – 2025: Developed India @ 2047

**Charting Multidisciplinary and Multi-Institutional Pathways for Inclusive Growth and Global Leadership held on 4th & 5th April, 2025**

**Organised by: IQAC - Gossner College, Ranchi**

domestic violence, skewed sex ratio, etc. ultimately hindering the country's economic development and social progress. At the same time, some positive changes are occurring, shifting the gender dynamics in a traditional yet modernizing country. Social Justice movements in India have significantly contributed to changing gender dynamics by actively campaigning for women's rights, challenging patriarchal norms, and advocating for legislation that protects women against violence and discrimination, leading to some landmark laws. But, now-a-days, we also hear few instances of misuse of these laws by women themselves. Gender awareness is necessary to change traditional gender dynamics in India and create a more just and equitable society for all citizens.

To quote UNICEF, "India will not fully develop unless both girls and boys are equally supported to reach their full potential.... Changing the value to girls has to include men, women and boys. It has to mobilize many sectors in society. Only when society's perception changes, will the rights of all the girls and all the boys in India be fulfilled."

Social justice movements have hugely impacted and shaped the present social, economic and political structure of India and there is no doubt that these kind of movements will continue to have their influence in the future also. A large portion of these movements create and push forward new ideas and thoughts which are expected to influence people and government. In India, there have been many movements of women, marginalized, peasants, students, etc. which were very significant as these people were deprived of basic rights under the British rule and remained largely non-beneficiary of development gains. No doubt, today their condition has improved. It is crucial that the principles of equal access, diversity, participation, and human rights must be addressed and achieved to bring social justice in Indian society. For the largest democracy in the world, pace of change towards becoming a developed country by 2047 is slow but steady. It has achieved many milestones but it has to achieve many more.

### References

1. Bandyopadhyay, Mridula. "Missing Girls and Son Preference in Rural India: Looking Beyond Popular Myth." *Health Care for Women International*. vol. 24, issue 10, January 2004.
2. Fernandez, Luiz. "Unveiling Gender Dynamics: An In-depth Analysis of Gender Realities." *Influence International Journal of Science Review*, 2023.
3. Ghosh, Biswajit. *Social Movements*. SAGE Publications India Private Limited, 2020.
4. Iyer, V. R. Krishna. *Social Justice Sunset or Dawn*. 2nd ed., Eastern Book Company, 1987.
5. Richards, Rose. "Special Issue: Gender Activism in India." *Feminist Encounters*, vol. 7, issue 1, 2023.
6. Shah, Ghanshyam. *Social Movements in India: A Review of Literature*. Rawat Publisahers, 2022.
7. Verma, NMP and Alpana Srivastava. *The Routledge Handbook of Exclusion, Inequity and Stigma in India*. Routledge Handbooks, 2020.