

EVALUATION OF GENDER INEQUALITY THROUGH DEMOGRAPHIC CONDITION IN BIHAR

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Abstract: *In this research, the term "gender inequality through demographic status in Bihar" is introduced. Gender inequality refers to a society's ongoing unfairness, sexism, and discrimination against one particular gender. Although males and females are used interchangeably at times, there is a proliferation between the two. Women are primarily dominated by men and have been victimised and oppressed throughout recorded history. Gender is the socio-economic definition of male and female, with civilizations distinguishing the two according to the social duties and actions allocated to them depending on their sexual categorization. In terms of the availability of various resources and necessities, demographic conditions have a critical influence in gender inequality.*

Keyword: *Gender inequality, discrimination, socio-economic, demographic conditions*

Introduction

The process of gender discrimination in our society begins at the birth of a child. A girl's birth is agonising, but a son's is a cause for rejoicing. Boys are treated with love, care, attention, food, respect, and hierarchy, whereas girls are ignored everywhere. In many parts of both India and Bihar, having a girl child has been viewed as a curse. Bertocci (1974) said that a newborn baby's attitude and role are influenced by the discrimination they experience in their early years, and they will learn, internalise, and act accordingly in subsequent situations in their lives.

Ookley (1972) was one who distinguished between sex and gender in her book, 'Sex, gender, and society'. Male and female are classified as "masculine" or "feminine" according to sociocultural frameworks, while sex indicates or distinguishes between the two based on their physical and biological traits. The difference in gender leads to variation in roles, behaviour, character traits, and social status.

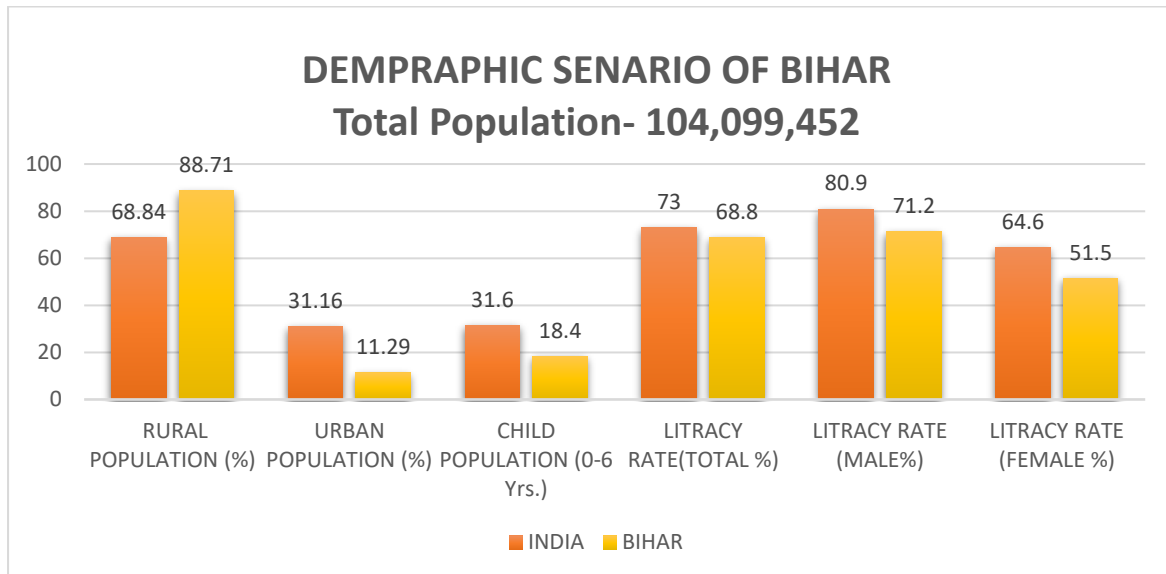
The seven main characteristics of gender disparity that women experience were described by Amartya Sen in (1992):

- **Mortality inequality:** when there is discrimination against women's access to healthcare and nutrition, and when the mortality rate for women is comparatively high to that of men.
- **Natality inequality:** This kind of discrimination is centered on the preference for male children and the pregnancy-related neglecting for female children.
- **Basic facility inequality:** In this there is discrimination in providing basic facility to the girls like schooling.
- **Special opportunity inequality:** As there is discrimination in basic facilities between male and female there is obvious discrimination in the higher education and professional training between the both.
- **Professional inequality:** Women are always discriminated in getting jobs as well as at the time of promotion. Even when they get the job there is pay-gap between male and female.
- **Ownership inequality:** There is biasness in the ownership of property between male and female. There is uneven distribution of house and land among them.
- **Household inequality:** Household inequality includes sharing of the workload of the house and child care. Women are normally not taken into consideration during the decision-making processes too.

GENDER INEQUALITY THROUGH DEMOGRAPHY

Under the Constitution of India, women are equal to men, but in reality, they are not so, for they face discrimination and bias and are ill-treated in almost all spheres of life. Thus, it is important to assess the social structures and cultural norms that influence the role and status of women in society.

In this paper, gender inequality in demographic status has been featured using some selected parameters like missing women, sex ratio, child sex ratio, under-five child mortality, and child marriage for the period 1991–2011. A composite demographic index has also been calculated to examine the role of the above-mentioned parameters in defining gender inequality in Bihar, and thirdly, the districts have been ranked suitably.



(Source: National Family Health Survey)

Missing women

Missing women is a concept given by Amartya Sen (1990 and 1992) to depict the considerably low ratio of females to males in the developing nations of the world, especially in India and China. In his paper, the low sex ratio has been converted into a numerical value by estimating the number of extra females who would have been born if equal care had been given to both males and females, regardless of their gender.

Between 1901 and 1931, women outnumbered men in Bihar. Throughout the census years 1941 and 1951, the number of females compared to males was almost equal. During the years 1961–1940, the number of women increased more than men, followed by a decline, and by 1971, around 9 lakh women were found to be missing.

From 1991 to 2011, the number of missing females had increased considerably in 32 districts of Bihar, and only in 4 districts did the number remain unchanged. Patna, Purbi Champaran, Muzaffarpur, Paschim Champaran, and Bhagalpur districts recorded the highest number of missing females during the same period of time. Gopalganj was the only district where the number of missing women decreased, and by 2011, there were a greater number of females compared to males.

From the census data 2011, Patna is in the top for having maximum number of missing women in Bihar (3.2 lakh) followed by Muzaffarpur and Purbi Champaran, with 2.6 lakh each. Districts

having minimum number of missing women (0.2 lakh) were Arwal, Sheikhpura and Siwan only.

Sex ratio

The sex ratio is explained as the number of females per thousand males. The sex ratio is one of the most significant social and demographic parameters to depict the status and condition of women in society.

Based on the Census 2011, India's sex ratio was 943; however, it was only 918 in Bihar, which was significantly lower than the national average, as a consequence of a patriarchal culture, faith, traditions, and customs supported by contemporary medical technology. Bihar was ranked 23rd in terms of sex ratio, making it one of the worst-affected states throughout the nation (Census, 2011). In the early years of the twentieth century, the sex ratio in Bihar remained advantageous, with females outnumbering males with a sex ratio of 1061 in 1901 and 1005 in 1961. However, over time, the situation deteriorated and plummeted to 918 in 2011, which is completely unacceptable. Thus, there has been a decline of 143 points during the period from 1901 to 2011.

Child Sex Ratio

Child sex ratio, the number of girl children per 1000 male children in the 0–6 age range, is a sociological indicator that represents the degree of respect we have for our daughters.

Bihar's child sex ratio has been steadily lowering since 1991, when there were 953 girls for every 1000 boys, down to 942 in 2001 and 935 in 2011.

Despite social, educational, and economic development in the state, the ratio of males to females among children in Bihar is decreasing. While the situation in Bihar (935) is more positive than the national average (918), the trend of the child sex ratio in the past thirty years is extremely alarming, and suitable steps need to be taken to prevent further reduction. According to data from the 2011 census, Bihar placed 18th in child sex ratio, and 20 of the 38 districts had child sex ratios lower than the state average of 935. Kishanganj had the highest child sex ratio (971), followed by Katihar (961), and Araria (957), while Vaishali (904), followed by Patna (909), and Muzaffarpur (915).

Five major reasons have been identified for the low child sex ratio in Bihar: son preference over daughters, access to prenatal sex determination, discrimination in health treatment, nutritional inequality, and small family size

Under Five Mortality

Five significant factors for increased female under-five mortality in Bihar have been identified: inadequate investment in girl children, disparities in sickness care, breast feeding, dietary intake, and vaccination.

When male under-five mortality is higher than female: In the year 2010–11, there were only four districts (Katihar and Purnia in the east, Kishanganj in the north-east, and Rohtas in the south-west), which remained constant in number. In the year 2011–12 (Bhagalpur and Katihar in the east, Kishanganj in the north-east, and Banka in the south-east) and then increased to 10, with newly included Siwan in the west, Gaya and Nalanda from the south, Jamui in the south-east, and Buxar and Kaimur in the south-west in 2012–13.

When female under-five mortality is higher than male mortality, in 2010–11, the number of districts in this category was 31, which decreased to 30 in 2011–12 and further decreased to 26 in 2012–13. Still, this number of 26 districts has more female under-five mortality than males, which is very high. Most of the districts are from central and northern Bihar.

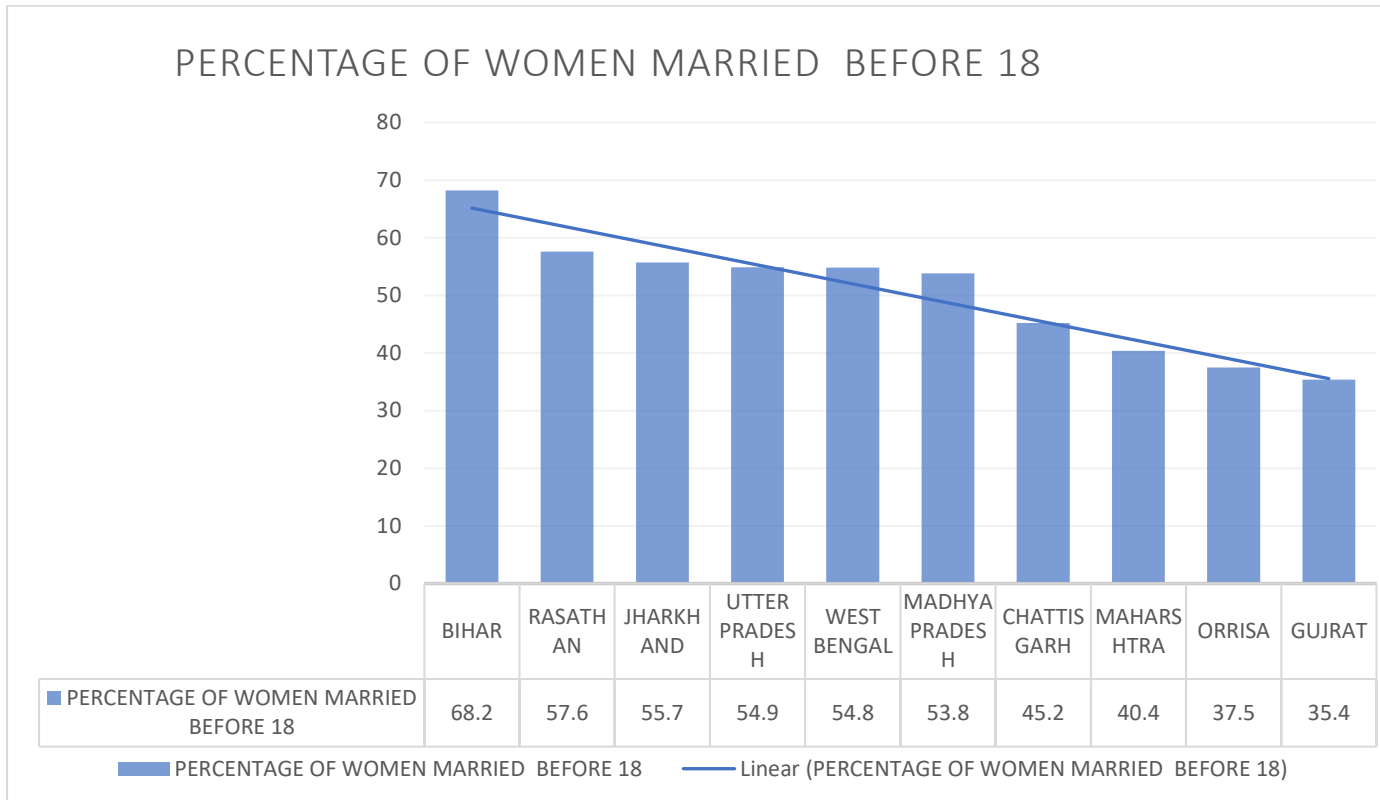
On analysing the data, it was visible that there were 10 districts in Bihar in 2012–2013 where male mortality was higher than female mortality, namely Bhagalpur, Banka, Gaya, Jamui, Nalanda, Buxar, Kaimur, Katihar, Kishanganj, and Siwan, and male and female under-5 mortality were equal in two districts (Supaul and Nawada), and in the remaining 26 districts, female under-5 mortality was higher than male.

Child Marriage

Girls Not Brides (International Civil Society Organization)

Although child marriage (getting married of girls before they reach the age of 18 and boys prior the age of 21) continue to be an ongoing issue and one of the worst types of basic rights violations, as it impedes an individual's overall development, girls are the actual victims because they outnumber boys and impede their education (Lee-Rife et al., 2012).

In 2014, the Planning Commission released a report on child marriage that referenced a study conducted in ten states (Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal), which found that Bihar had the highest rate of child marriage, followed by Rajasthan and Jharkhand.



(Source: Planning commission 2014)

In 2001, 80 to 85 percent of girls were married before reaching the age of 15 in ten districts; by 2011, the figure had risen to 26 out of 38 districts. The enormous number of districts in this category is concerning because it is a serious social issue and a danger to young brides.

Child marriages of girls beneath the age limit of 15 were 75 to 80 percent in 10 districts of Bihar in 2001 and 7 in 2011, signifying little improvement. In 2001, 4 districts were from south-west (Rohtas, Buxar, Kaimur and Bhojpur), 3 from south (Jamui, Lakhisarai and Nalanda), 2 from north-west (Paschim Champaran and Gopalganj), and Madhubani from north and in 2011 all were from South Bihar (Arwal, Aurangabad, Bhojpur, Gaya, Jehanabad, Nawada, and Sheikhpura). In 2001, less than 75% of child weddings were of girls in five districts of south Bihar (Aurangabad, Jehanabad, Gaya, Nawada, and Sheikhpura), but none in 2011, indicating a worsening epidemic.

Conclusion

Gender inequality is the most significant impediment to the nation's and states' progress. After visualising the overall data for gender inequality in Bihar in accordance with the aforementioned parameters, it was clear that gender inequality is more prevalent in the north (Darbhanga, Madhubani, and Supaul), south (Arwal and Jehanabad), south-west (Bhojpur and Buxar), and west Bihar (Saran), and less prevalent in central Bihar (Muzaffarpur and Patna), stretching east (Begusarai, Munger Khagaria, Bhagalpur, Katihar, and Purnia); Gaya in south; and Gopalganj in the west. Gender inequality in Bihar is on the verge of worsening, which ultimately reflects the state's general growth and socioeconomic and cultural practises.

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