

Examining Gender Egalitarianism in Uttarakhand Through Education and Labour Force Participation

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Abstract:

Gender disparity has been historically witnessed almost all over the world in one form or other. Man and woman are biologically co-existent as the life of one would not have completed without other, not only this, we are aware of the role played by women in each and every aspect of life. Despite that the woman has always been exploited. Her status was not acknowledged because of certain stereotypes. The present paper is going to examine status of gender egalitarianism especially with respect to Indian state of Uttarakhand.

Keywords: Egalitarianism, Gender Inequality, Financial Constraints, Societal Norms, Informal Sector, Social Security, Patriarchal.

1 INTRODUCTION:

Gender inequality remains a pervasive issue across the globe, manifesting in various social, economic, political, and cultural domains. Despite significant progress in recent decades, disparities between genders continue to persist, hindering overall development and social justice. Gender inequality is a structural issue deeply embedded in historical norms, institutional policies, and societal attitudes, making it a complex phenomenon requiring multifaceted approaches for resolution.

The concept of gender inequality encompasses a wide range of disparities between individuals based on their gender, including unequal access to education, employment, wages, healthcare, and political representation. Women and marginalized gender groups frequently experience discrimination, which limits their opportunities and reinforces socio-economic disparities. These inequalities are further exacerbated by intersectional factors such as caste, class, ethnicity, and geographic location, making some populations more vulnerable than others.

Economic gender inequality is particularly pronounced, with women facing wage gaps, occupational segregation, and limited access to leadership roles. According to various global reports, women, on average, earn significantly less than men for the same work, and their labour market participation rates are lower due to socio-cultural constraints and care giving responsibilities. In many developing nations, women are overrepresented in the informal sector, where they face precarious working conditions and lack social security benefits.

In the **educational domain**, gender disparities persist despite improvements in literacy rates. In several regions, especially in lower-income countries, girls encounter barriers to schooling due to financial constraints, societal norms favouring male education, and safety concerns. Lack of access to education

perpetuates the cycle of poverty and inequality, limiting women's ability to contribute to economic growth and development.

Healthcare inequalities further compound gender disparities. Women and girls often have less access to medical services, reproductive healthcare, and nutritional resources. In many societies, deep-seated biases in medical research and healthcare provisioning result in the inadequate treatment of female-specific health concerns, leading to higher morbidity and mortality rates.

Political representation is another critical aspect of gender inequality. Women remain underrepresented in legislative bodies, corporate leadership, and policy-making positions worldwide. Although some countries have implemented quotas and affirmative action policies to bridge this gap, progress has been slow. Increased female representation in governance is crucial for ensuring gender-sensitive policies and promoting inclusive growth.

Cultural norms and traditional gender roles continue to influence the distribution of domestic and care giving responsibilities, placing an unequal burden on women. The expectation that women should prioritize household duties over professional aspirations limits their economic independence and career progression. Moreover, gender-based violence, including domestic abuse, sexual harassment, and human trafficking, further entrenches systemic inequality and restricts women's autonomy and freedom.

Education

- Women make up more than two-thirds of the world's 796 million illiterate people.
- According to global statistics, just 39 percent of rural girls attend secondary school. This is far fewer than rural boys (45 percent), urban girls (59 percent) and urban boys (60 percent).- (**UN Commission on Status of Women**)

Employment

- In most countries, women in rural areas who work for wages are more likely than men to hold seasonal, part-time and low-wage jobs. Women also receive lower wages for the same work. (Source: FAO, 2011. "The State of Food and Agriculture: Women in Agriculture, Closing the Gender Gap for Development.)
- Men's average wages are higher than women's in both rural and urban areas. Rural women typically work longer hours than men, due to additional reproductive, domestic and care responsibilities. In Benin and Tanzania, women work 17.4 and 14 hours more than men per week, respectively-(**UN Commission on Status of Women**)

2. Literature Review:

1 Dr. Ajad Singh, Dr. Rakesh Sihmar and Suraj Kumar (2023) conducted a study on Trends and Dynamics of Uttarakhand, a gender prospective. They concluded that labour force participation rates, unemployment rates, and gender wage gap in Uttarakhand provides valuable insights into the status of women in economic activities in the state. The findings reveal persistent gender disparities in labour force participation, unemployment, and earnings. While there have been positive trends with increasing female labour force participation rates over the years, significant gender gaps still exist.

Eshetu (2011) conducted one study on the impact of microfinance on women's economic empowerment in Ethiopia and observed that the micro -financing scheme has a positive impact on women's economic empowerment as measured by the increased participation of microfinancing clients in household decision making and also has a positive impact on the living condition of micro-financing clients.

Keshav S. (2014) analyzed the study conducted by NABARD which revealed that financial services required by poor households are: safe-keeping of small surpluses in the form of thrift; access to consumption loans to meet emergency needs and financial services and products. The benefits in terms of higher income, consumption, and savings matter for the poor, the focus here is broader, as an attempt is made to assess some key dimensions of women's empowerment defined broadly as expansion of freedom of choice and action to shape their own lives. Concluded with areas of future research emphasizing on review of literature on SHGs, the experiences of several leading NGOs involved in the formation of SHGs and interviews with chief executives and staff of other NGOs/projects promoting SHGs.

Vasanthakumari (2009) observed that microenterprises promoted by the women SHG members have successful in developing entrepreneurial skill and improving their economic and social status to some extent. But the main aim of eradication of poverty is yet to be achieved.

Panda and Atibudhi (2009) conducted one study to know the impact of group based microfinance programme on the mobilisation of savings by the participating rural households. The study revealed that the average annual savings per household in target group was significantly higher than that of the control group. The study also revealed that the target households had a highly significantly higher savings in commercial banks than that of the control group. The reason behind this is their increased savings habit and increased income due to their participation in compulsory savings led microfinance programme.

Sumera Qureshi, Abdal Ahmed and Shama Nargis 2021 conducted a study on WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN HILLY AREAS OF UTTARAKHAND-INDIA and concluded that India also needs to improve its management of agricultural practices on multiple fronts. Improvements in agriculture performance has weak linkage in improving nutrition, the agriculture sector can still improve nutrition through multiple ways: increasing incomes of women farming households, diversifying production of crops, empowering women, strengthening agricultural diversity and productivity, and designing careful price and subsidy policies that can encourage the production and consumption of nutrient rich crops. Diversification of agricultural livelihoods through agri-allied sectors such as animal husbandry, forestry and fisheries has enhanced livelihood opportunities, strengthened resilience and led to considerable increase in labour force participation in the sector and this can lead to economic development in India.

Agnieszka Stanimir's study (2014), titled "Participation in the Labour Market - Generation Y and Other Age Groups," explores the factors that influence employment rates among different age groups in Poland. The study analyzes the impact of variables such as education, family size, and income on participation in the labour market. This approach aligns with your objective of identifying key determinants of LFPR in Uttarakhand.

Ajad Singh and Malti Kapoor (2022), conducted a study titled "Trends of Labour Force Participation Rate in Rajasthan and its Major Determinant Factors," analyzes the LFPR trends in Rajasthan from 1991 to 2020-21. Although this study focuses on Rajasthan, it utilizes parametric logistic regression to identify the primary factors associated with the likelihood of participating in the labour force. The study takes into account variables such as family size, gender, income level, education, marital status, and job availability. These factors can provide insights into the determinants of LFPR in Uttarakhand as well.

A study by **Margaret et al. (2005)** examines the repercussions of economic reforms on patterns of labour force participation in both urban and rural areas of China. Unfortunately, the specific methodology employed in the study is not provided. Nevertheless, the study analyzes changes in labour

force participation rates and reveals that economic reforms have influenced patterns differently in urban and rural areas, leading to shifts in employment opportunities and participation rates.

D. Contreras et al.'s study (2011) endeavours to identify the determinants of labour force participation and employment in Chile. The authors utilize econometric analysis to examine the factors that influence labour force participation and employment. The study demonstrates that factors such as education, age, gender, and marital status significantly impact labour force participation and employment in Chile.

Ajad Singh's study (2022), titled "Women Labour Force in Haryana and its Determinants," examines the trends and determinants of women's LFPR in Haryana. This study employs logistic regression to identify factors such as family size, household jobs, education, and marital status that influence women's LFPR. The findings underscore the importance of these factors in shaping women's participation in the labour force.

3. Study Area:

State of Uttarakhand is located in North West of India. It was formed on 9 November, 2000. Originally, Uttarakhand was part of Uttar Pradesh. This state has a unique place among Indian states for a number of reasons like its mountain peaks, scenic beauty and pilgrimages. State has potential to attract tourists all over the country. Uttarakhand shares its borders with Tibet in the North, Uttar Pradesh in the South, Nepal in the East, Haryana in the West and Himachal Pradesh in the North West. State of Uttarakhand has 13 districts which are divided into two divisions Garhwal and Kumaon.

Research Methodology

Objectives:

To study education educational of women in Uttarakhand

To study women participation in labour force.

To study the status of gender inequality in Uttarakhand.

The proposed study relies on secondary data comprising of national as well as international reports, previous studies conducted, relevant articles published in news paper and reports published by government of India.

TABLE 3.1 shows comparison of male/female in different workers category in rural as well as urban areas based on category (ST/SC)

	Gender & Background	Main Worker	Marginal Workers (less than 3 months)	Marginal Worker 3-6 months	Marginal Worker (job seekers)	Non worker	Non worker (job seekers)
ST	Male(R)	48595	3093	10691	8819	18715	4834
	Female(R)	22262	5351	14512	5841	37684	4939
	Male(U)	5378	66	524	332	2968	836
	Female(U)	1618	116	540	182	6545	1061
SC	Male(R)	230634	18573	69451	61256	100358	23538
	Female(R)	121212	22272	66394	33819	206103	24919
	Male(U)	83128	1725	10535	7885	37054	10873
	Female(U)	16983	766	4478	22171	98962	12467

Source: Census 2011

The table clearly explains that female has major share in rural areas from both the categories. The share of female in urban areas is less than male for SC category. In marginal worker (job seekers) share of female is less than male for ST than SC category. Overall, female has greater share than male as for as category of marginal worker is concerned. This shows that female has significant contribution in economy and they deserve wage equivalent to their male counterpart to avoid gender gap.

Table 3.2 showing trends of LFPR of Uttarakhand.

	Year	Male	Female
Rural Uttarakhand	2004-05	834	676
	2011-12	745	473
	2017-18	732	219
	2018-19	740	225
	2019-20	782	397
	2020-21	774	378
	2021-22	753	395
Urban Uttarakhand	2004-05	791	209
	2011-12	779	161
	2017-18	751	132
	2018-19	760	167
	2019-20	783	187
	2020-21	759	203
	2021-22	743	201

Source: *International Journal of Publication and Reviews* vol. 4 no. 6 pp 524-532 June 2023 LFPR= Labour Force Participation Rate

In the given table we can clearly observe that LFPR of female is far lesser than male. Share of male and female both has declined over time. Certain studies point that females are trapped in the burden of domestic responsibilities that is why their share is less in decision making. Further, there is more gap in LFPR between male and female in urban areas as compared to rural areas.

Table 3.3 shows district-wise comparison of girls/boys enrolment in junior schools in Uttarakhand

Districts	Total No. Of schools	Male Enrolment	Female Enrolment
Almora	301	11670	14170
Bageshwar	159	4781	5894
Chamoli	319	7903	9055
Champawat	143	5293	6503
Dehradun	651	11758	13783
Haridwar	530	13080	16179
Naintal	426	11757	13791
Pauri	457	11323	12201
Pitthoragarh	384	8334	9838
Rudraorayag	187	5062	5481

Tehri	500	12873	14425
Udam Singh Nagar	503	16962	22487
Uttarkashi	339	5898	7543
Total	4899	126694	151350

Source: International Journal of Research in Social Sciences vol. 11 issue 8 august 2021

It is quite interesting to note that the enrolment of girls in junior schools more than boys across all the districts of Uttarakhand but question is does this ratio maintain as we move from junior level up to higher education level going through subsequent levels, if yes , it is definitely a good sign.

Table 3.4 shows district-wise comparison of girls/boys enrolment in senior schools in Uttarakhand.

Districts	Total schools	Male Enrolment	Female Enrolment
Almora	329	26864	26624
Bageshwar	118	10200	10120
Chamoli	237	16195	15333
Champawat	129	9676	9257
Dehradun	455	62265	44344
Haridwar	250	54100	49636
Naintal	303	33725	31634
Pauri	422	29534	27923
Pitthoragarh	258	20249	17907
Rudraorayag	147	10742	10337
Tehri	324	24977	25688
Udam Singh Nagar	318	55653	50383
Uttarkashi	149	13713	13060
Total	3439	367893	332246

Source: International Journal of Research in Social Sciences vol. 11 issue 8 august 2021

As we move from junior to senior level the enrolment of girls is less than boys across all districts of Uttarakhand. The government and other relevant stakeholders must look into the matter and address low enrolment of girls after finding out the reason.

Schemes Related to women empowerment in Uttarakhand: Some of the State Sponsored schemes for women empowerment in Uttarakhand are as under.

Uttarakhand Mahila Samekit Vikas Yojana (UMSVY): This scheme aims for holistic women's empowerment, enabling participation in decision-making and contributing to social, economic, and political development.

Nanda Gaura Yojana: This scheme provides financial assistance to girl children, aiming to improve their education and overall well-being.

Uttarakhand women Integrated Development Scheme: This scheme aims to reduce the workload of women, make them self-reliant, and address gender discrimination.

Mukhyamantri Mahila Poshan Yojana: This scheme aims to reduce malnutrition among pregnant and lactating women by providing nutritional food.

Swadhar: This scheme provides shelter, food, clothing, and care to marginalized women/girls in difficult circumstances, along with emotional support, counselling, and rehabilitation.

Nanda Devi Kanya Yojana: This scheme provides financial assistance to girl children, aiming to improve their education and overall well-being.

Mukhyamantri Satat Aajivika Yojna: This scheme focuses on sustainable livelihood for women.

4. Findings and Recommendation:

State government of Uttarakhand has done a quite appreciable job to eliminate gender gap since it was carved out from UP in 2000. There are certain centrally sponsored schemes operational in the state to meet the same problem but still the state is yet to achieve its desired destination in terms of gender equality. In rural areas students have to walk long distance which is not secure for girls.

Female has greater share in case of marginal worker category showing their significant contribution. But if further, investigation or study is conducted to see if there is no wage discrimination it will really be an encouraging sign. Because female are no less than male in any aspect of life and therefore there is no point to discriminate them on gender ground because it will make society patriarchal (male-dominated).

The Labour Force Participation Rate of female found to be less for female than male which needs government special attention to see if women are engaged in domestic responsibility for which they get no money.

As for education prospective is concerned, girls enrolment in junior school is satisfactory but as we move upward to senior school or above level, this enrolment starts declining which is bound to create gender gap.

Conclusion:

State government is doing extra ordinary steps to reduce gender gap. State government has launched a number of schemes at its own level apart from centrally sponsored schemes operational in state. But implementing existing schemes is more important than launching more and more schemes. Government needs to lay its special focus on rural areas to educate people to achieve desired result at ground level.

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