

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LAW MANAGEMENT & HUMANITIES

[ISSN 2581-5369]

---

Volume 9 | Issue 2

---

2026

© 2026 *International Journal of Law Management & Humanities*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://www.ijlmh.com/>

Under the aegis of VidhiAagaz – Inking Your Brain (<https://www.vidhiaagaz.com/>)

---

This article is brought to you for free and open access by the International Journal of Law Management & Humanities at VidhiAagaz. It has been accepted for inclusion in the International Journal of Law Management & Humanities after due review.

In case of **any suggestions or complaints**, kindly contact [support@vidhiaagaz.com](mailto:support@vidhiaagaz.com).

---

**To submit your Manuscript** for Publication in the **International Journal of Law Management & Humanities**, kindly email your Manuscript to [submission@ijlmh.com](mailto:submission@ijlmh.com).

---

# Contributions of Equal Gender to Indian Federalism

---

DR. ANINDITA CHOUDHURY<sup>1</sup>

## ABSTRACT

*Gender inequality is a quite known phenomenon till our Nation witnessed the steps of civilization. Gender inequality is the consequence of several factors. Our Nation has experienced historically the difference of attitudes towards the roles of men and women in society. The conventional gender roles assigned to women and men are so much impactful that the patriarchal prominence has become highly influential. Such dominating patriarchy is often seen to propagate the suppression of women's rights and opportunities. Indian Democratic and Federal set up need the equal socio economic contribution of male and female for achieving its ultimate developmental goal. Such Inequalities are becoming vital cause behind several social curses like poverty, political instability and conflict, damage to societies and the broader global community. Irrespective of the fact that there are various steps taken towards genuine progress, but practically the world remains, on the whole, highly unequal to women. Not only are women and girls unable to access the same opportunities as men on an equal basis but also suffer the most deleterious impacts of events such as social violence, economic recessions and political instability. The ongoing suppression and repression of women's ability to participate with men as equals in society is not merely an issue of equity – it is one of justice and a threat to the federal structure of our Country. Equal gender contribution to federalism will be victorious by escalating their political partaking at multiple levels, by equivalent representation of women and nurturing female policy innovation.*

**Keywords:** *Political instability, Economic recessions, Federalism, Equivalent representation*

## I. INTRODUCTION

*“Empowering Women is a prerequisite for creating a good nation, when women are empowered, society with stability is assured. Empowerment of women is essential as their value systems lead to the development of a good family, good society and ultimately good nation”*

– Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam

The National Commission for Women estimates that 94 percent of the total female workforce

---

<sup>1</sup> Author is an Assistant Professor at Faculty of Law, ICAI University Tripura, India.

is to be found in the unorganized sector. The presence of a vast multitude of women as workers and producers in the unorganized sector, where earnings are low, employment seasonal and insecure, supportive services woefully inadequate or even nonexistent, growth opportunities few and collective organization weak, has brought into sharp focus the failure of the mainstream to alleviate their predicament. While it is true that workers, irrespective of sex, are exploited in the unorganized sector, women suffer more by the fact of their gender. The changing patterns of economic development in the liberalization era have put a heavy burden on women, which is reflected in their health status. The small farmers, landlessness, forced migration both temporary and permanent, have undoubtedly affected women's health, nutritional and emotional status. The growth of small and cottage industries has depended heavily on female labour. Women work in industries like tanning, tobacco, cashew, coir, textiles, garment, fish processing and canning, construction and domestic work, etc. In all these industries, they toil long hours at low paid, skilled or unskilled workers. As a result they face serious health problems related to work place, hazards of pollutants on women who work during adolescence, and pregnancy have serious consequences on women. Women work the most; paradoxically they earn the least in life. The additional social responsibility shouldered by them, their subordinate status in society, patriarchal family set up, socio-economic backwardness, proneness for occupation in the unorganized sector with low productivity and marginalization in employment opportunities account for their poor or low earning skills, illiteracy, ignorance and surplus labour and thus face high level of exploitation. This hampers their bargaining power for higher wages and any opportunities for further development.

Gender inequality is perhaps the single most significant impediment to achieving a more just, equitable, prosperous, and inclusive world. Inequality, a root cause of poverty, instability, and conflict, is damaging to people, societies, and the broader global community. Despite some small pockets of genuine progress, the world remains, on the whole, highly unequal to women. Not only are women and girls unable to access the same opportunities as men on an equal basis (and in some cases are actively prevented from doing so), they also suffer the most deleterious impacts of events such as economic recessions, political instability and conflict, and climate change. The ongoing suppression and repression of women's ability to participate with men as equals in society is not merely an issue of equity – it is one of justice and democracy. While women's rights, interests, and opportunities remain subordinate, their fundamental human rights will continue to be breached.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> LPSAManager. (2023, June 27). Gender equality and federalism. Decentralization Net. <https://decentralization.net/2022/09/gender-equality-and-federalism/>

**Definition of unorganized sector:**

Although, it is difficult to give a concise and holistic definition of unorganized labour. Unorganized labour stands for scattered and fragmented workforces working individually sometimes loosely associated, in various occupations. Unorganized labour is not formally cohesive in any recognized association and union with defined ideology, goals and areas of specialization. The unorganized sector of the economy in India is the largest sector in term of employment of the workforce. It consists of agriculture and such related activities as forestry, livestock and fishing as well as non-agriculture. The bill of National Commission for Enterprises in the unorganized sector, 2006 presented by the government of India, broadly divided the works of unorganized sector into self-employment and wage workers.

**Women in Unorganized Sector**

The term unorganized sector was first used by Hart in 1971 who described the unorganized sector as that part of urban labour force, which falls outside the organized labour market. In the unorganized sector, work situations are not in official record and working conditions are not protected by law. So the problems of female workers in unorganized sector are not properly known. It has been pointed out by Hart that one of the major problems is that working conditions are worst. Due to population growth and urban migration, the active labour force was growing at a much faster rate than availability of jobs in the organized sector. The focus of development policies was gradually shifting from pure economic to growth with equity and the eradication of poverty. Interest was, thus generated in sectors outside the organized economy that was providing a livelihood to a large section of the poor. Hence, the concept of the unorganized sector was born. In defining the unorganized sector, self-employed with or without family labour and microenterprises with less than five workers, is also included.

**II. CONDITION OF FEMALE WORKERS**

The International Labour Organization says that women represent:

- 50% of the population
- 30% of the labour force
- Perform 60% of all working hours
- Receive 10% of the world's income
- Own less than 1% of the world's property.

As per a report by International Labour Organization released on the International Women's Day on March 8, 2007, it is depicted that though the status of a working woman does not surprise many, there is surprisingly a significant gender inequality in terms of wages, job security, etc. In all the regions women either work for poor wages or are unpaid contributing members of the family. In South Asia, India and Bhutan rank 108<sup>th</sup> and 131<sup>st</sup> among 189 countries as far as percentage of women lawmakers in the lower house of parliament in 2006 is concerned.<sup>3</sup>

### **Categories of Women Workers in Unorganized Sector**

1. **Rag pickers:** Rag picker is a person who salvages reusable or recyclable materials thrown away by others to sell or for personal consumption. There are millions of waste pickers worldwide, predominantly in developing countries. The global population of urban dwellers is expected to double between 1987 and 2015, with 90% of this growth occurring in developing countries. The United Habitat Report found that nearly one billion people worldwide live in slums, about a third of the world's urban dwellers.

2. **Domestic workers:** In 1977-78, there were some 1.68 million female domestic workers, while the number of male workers was only 0.62 million. A study of domestic workers in Delhi (Neetha 2004) <sup>[8]</sup> shows that although domestic work has brought higher incomes to many women and their families it is still far from decent work being characterized by long working hours, low wages and hardly any social security. Domestic workers are more vulnerable than other kinds of workers because they are not officially classified as workers at all and are therefore not covered by laws that apply to workers.

3. **Coolies:** Women coolies basically do the job of loading/unloading of packages being received at railway stations to warehouses and from warehouses/ go downs to further distribution centers.

4. **Vendors:** This is the most scattered category, which includes women engaged in selling different types of commodities, like broomsticks, cane baskets, utensils, petty cosmetics, bangles, vegetables and those running roadside tea stalls, etc. Nearly 40% of total vendors are women and 30% of these women are the sole earning members in their families.

5. **Beauticians:** A large number of women are employed as beauticians. A large portion of the beauty saloons/parlours fall under the unorganized sector and are characterized by informal employment. According to a study on Human Resource and Skill Requirements in the

---

<sup>3</sup> International Labour Organization released on the International Women's Day on March 8, 2007

Unorganized Sector: mapping of human resourceskill gaps in India till 2022 carried out by National Skill Development Corporation, Mumbai, the demand for personal care/ body care would drive the demand for beauticians.

6. **Construction labourers:** The construction industry provides direct employment to at least 30 million workers in India (but recent expansions has resulted in a higher number: trade unions estimate that there were roughly 40 million migrant construction workers in India in 2008. Women work mainly as unskilled workers.

7. **Garment workers:** The garment industry is a sub-sector of the textile industry and also generates many jobs for migrant workers. India's readymade garment exports increased significantly as a share of total exports (12% or Rs 254780 million in 2001-02). The women work as helpers to male/female tailors (called as masters). These workers include those involved in knitting clothes/woolens.

### III. PROBLEMS OF WOMEN IN UNORGANIZED SECTOR

A large number of women from rural areas migrate to cities and towns all over India. Most of these women and girls are illiterate and unskilled. They work in inhuman conditions in cities as their living standard is extremely poor. It is a recognized fact that there is still no society in the world in which women workers enjoy the same opportunities as men. According to the 2001 census about 96% of women workers in India are in unorganized sector. The women unorganized sector are facing so many problems:

1. **Lack of education:** Illiteracy is the biggest problem because they do not get time to educate themselves. In childhood, they have to start working early which do not allow them to go school.

2. **Insufficient skill & knowledge:** Majority of female do not have proper training and skills aligned to their task. This result is excessive stress and inefficient working.

3. **Exploitation of the female labour:** Female worker are more vulnerable to exploitation by employer. They can be easily threatened of their job for indecent favours.

4. **Insecure job:** Absence of strong legislation controlling the unorganized sector makes the job highly insecure in this sector.

5. **Non sympathetic attitude of employer:** Temporary nature of employment in this sector does not allow the bond between the employee and employer to establish and become strong.

6. **Extreme work pressure:** Female are overworked, they work twice as many hours as worked by their male counterpart. In agriculture sector the condition is the worst. When

measured in terms of number of tasks performed and the total time spent, it is greater than men as per one study in Himalayas which found that on a one-hectare farm, a pair of bullocks' works 1064 hours, a man 1212 hours and a woman 3485 hours in a year.

7. **Irregular wages payment:** There is lack of controlled processes in unorganized sector which results in to untimely payment of wages to the workers. When it comes to payment to female, it is even worst.

8. **Wage discrimination:** Female do not get similar payment to the male for same work.

9. **Seasonal employment:** Many of the unorganized sector industries are seasonal. These industries includes fruits processing, pickle making, agricultural sector, construction sector etc. They have to fetch another employment when there is no work during offseason.

10. **Physical problems:** The working conditions are not healthy. Work place is not ergonomically designed. This results into workers facing fatigue resulting physical problems. Female workers are mostly on such tasks where they need to remain in one position such as agriculture. This results on to saviour problems such as backache and knee-ache.

#### **IV. SCHEMES PROMOTING WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: CENTRALIZED INITIATIVES<sup>4</sup>**

According to the guidelines established in articles 15(3) and 39(A), the Central Government develops a number of plans and programmes over time to strengthen women socially, economically, mentally, and politically. Here, a few efforts by the central government that have helped women advance in society.

##### **Welfare Schemes:**

1. To grant loans to Indian women with modest incomes, the Rastriya Mahila Kosh was established in 1993.

2. To provide moms and their children with health care services in 2009, the Mother and Child Tracking System went into effect. There were also available programmes like the Conditional Maternity Benefit and the Indira Gandhi Matriva Sahyog Yojana.

3. Swadhar Greh (2001) is an initiative to provide temporary housing for homeless girls and women who are left alone due to family problems, violent crimes, mental trauma, or social ostracism.

4. Sabala is another initiative for adolescent girls and offers various services to make them

---

<sup>4</sup> Journal URL: <http://www.wbnsou.ac.in/openjournals/index.shtml> p59-65, NSOU-OPEN JOURNAL January 2024 Vol. 7 No.1

self-reliant, physically fit, and vocationally trained.

5. The Beti Bachao one of the most recent government projects, Beti Padhao, was launched in 2015 with the goals of protecting girls from sex discrimination and gender bias, advancing women's education, and encouraging girl engagement. Therefore, the goal of this plan is to protect the survival and security of female children in infancy while also promoting equal rights and eradicating gender bias.

6. The Sukanya Samridhhi Yojna is a special initiative by the Indian government to encourage parents of girls to generate money for their daughters' future education and marriage costs.

7. Through community involvement, Mahila Sakti Kendras empower rural women and foster an environment where they can reach their full potential. This plan operates at the national, state, district, and block levels.

8. The Support to Training and Employment Programme (STEP) is geared towards wage labourers, daily employees, and people who are living in poverty. This programme offers marginalized women the chance to develop their skills in order to find employment and generate revenue.

9. NIRBHAYA is named for a daughter of India who endured horrifying violence on Delhi's streets. This programme works to end violence against women and girls in public areas like buses, trains, and streets. For the benefit of women's protection and safety, money is being raised. This undertaking concerns about the use of technology and optimum use of existing infrastructure.

10. The National Mission for Women's Empowerment seeks to empower women on all levels. Women are protected from all forms of violence thanks to this central government programme that guarantees their economic empowerment.

11. The Nari Sakti Puraskar is a national honour given in appreciation of outstanding contribution towards the empowerment of women. This award was given for the first time in 1999 as the Stree Sakti Puraskar. This yearly honour is granted to women or organisations who have made a significant contribution to the cause of empowering women by the Ministry of Women and Child Development of the Government of India. This award was given to 15 accomplished women in 2019 by President Ram Nath Kovind.

12. NARI Web Portal: In 2018, Maneka Gandhi, the Union Minister for Women and Child Development, unveiled a website with details on the programmes accessible to women. The

National Repository of Information for Women is known as NARI. This website provides information about 350 various programmes in the areas of social support, decision-making, housing, health, employment, and education. The She-Box Portal also deals with workplace sexual harassment cases and provides rapid fixes for these issues.

13. CBSE Udaan, a programme that aims to boost the number of girls enrolled in engineering colleges nationwide by providing study resources to those who qualify. This programme aims to increase the participation of women in the workforce and to motivate them to seek higher education.

14. The Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, an initiative sponsored by the Indian government that provides cash transfers to expectant and nursing mothers

## **V. SUGGESTIONS**

1. Since women workers lack in skill, skill development programs should be provided to them to enhance their skill level.
2. Women workers should be educated and make them aware about their rights and legislative provisions.
3. It is very much essential to create awareness among women workers about the institutional support available to them to protect their rights.
4. A comprehensive law is needed to protect the rights of women workers.
5. Any kind of exploitation including sexual harassment of women workers is to be prevented and stringent action needs to be taken against the wrong doer.
6. Mass media should be used to communicate the social message relating to women equality.
7. A separate women grievance cell headed by a woman should be established in every organization sector and in case of unorganized sector women to form self-help groups for their protection.
8. Necessary amendments are required to be made in labour laws.
9. There should be proper regulation of unorganized sector industries, which ensure job security, healthy work environment and at least minimum wages, maternity and child care benefits.

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

The unorganized sector is larger in rural areas as compared to urban areas. The female participation in this sector is more than male. Women worker face grave problems. Their condition is highly unpredictable and have constraints related to their work such as insecurity, wage discrimination, absence of medical and accidental care, lackof continuity etc. this is due to their seasonal intermittent nature of work, low level irregular patterns of earning and employment, absence of employer-employee relationship and weak administrative structure. It is also clear that self- awareness and education are the magic wands which will fuel the revolution.

\*\*\*\*\*

**VII. REFERENCES**

1. Agarwal, J.C. (2010). Landmarks in the History of Modern Indian Education. New Delhi: Vikas Publication.
2. Bhat, R. A. (2015). Role of Education in the Empowement of Women in India. Journal of Education and Practice.
3. Bhat, R.A. (2015). Role of Education in the Empowerment of Women. Journal of Education and Practice. Retrieved from [www.iiste.org](http://www.iiste.org)
4. Halder, G.D. (2013). History of Indian Education (Modern). Kolkata: Bannerjee Publishers.
5. Hazarika, D. (2011). Women empowerment in India: A brief discussion. International Journal of Educational Planning & Administration. <http://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/gender-equality-and-womens-empowerment>
6. Jain, P., Agarwal, R., Billaiya, R., & Devi, J. (2017). Women education in rural India. International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (IJSSH).
7. Laxmikant, M. (2018). INDIAN POLITY. India: McGraw Hills Publication.
8. Ministry of Women & Child Development: GOI, Women Empowerment Schemes. Retrieved from <http://wcd.nic.in>
9. Mokta, Mamta. (2014). "Empowerment of women in India: A critical analysis." Indian Journal of public administration.
10. National Policy for the Empowerment of Women (2001). Retrieved from <https://wcd.nic.in>
11. Rao, R.K. (2001). Women and Education. Delhi: Kaspaz Publication.
12. Sharmila, N., & Dhas, A.C. (2010). Development of Women Education in India. Munich Personal RePEc Archive. Retrieved from <https://mora.ub.uni-muenchen.de/20680/>
13. Tripathy, B. & Raha, S. (2019). Role of government on women empowerment in India.

\*\*\*\*\*