



GENDER ISSUES AND POLICYMAKING IN INDIA: A LARGER PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract:

The sole purpose of this paper seeks to address the potential and probable causes behind the gender distinctiveness in India largely in the context and influence of involvement in the policymaking processes and in the times of its effective execution. The current outline of women in the present society states that they are excluded from all sources of access to control over the equitable distribution of resources, opportunities, wealth, information, technology etc. The economic, social and political status of women has a direct impact on different levels of productivity in the society because of which an unnecessary scope of restriction has been prevalent in the various positions of policymaking roles for women. Therefore, this paper attempts to devise various studies and methods through which the problem of gender disparity mainly in the regime of policymaking can be eliminated and call for the best plan of action to ensure the effective and holistic inclusion of all the women in the society regardless of their economic, social and political backgrounds in the policymaking processes and decisions on a national extent.

Keywords: Gender Equality, Policymaking, Gender Equity, Policy Execution, Public Policy, Gender Issues.

Introduction:

Policymaking Operation: -

Policymaking or policy formulation is one of the three important aspects of government of any nature or type that mainly deals with taking the best course of decisions for improving and uplifting the lives of all its citizens (Vera-Sanso, 2016). It is the policies of the government in any country whether at the national or the international levels that primarily focuses on dealing with addressing the existing problems and public issues of various economic or societal scope and subsequently develop the leading plan of action for the purpose of ensuring best standard of living for all its citizens and stakeholders (Ahluwalia). The process of policymaking is significantly important for any nation as it provides the right direction and guidance, identify and addresses the major problems existing in the society, construct the optimal strategies to overcome the challenges, evaluate the downfalls and loopholes in the ongoing initiatives through the mechanism of public-policy analysis, hold the policymakers accountable to the people and ultimately work for the accomplishment of holistic human development that satisfies the aspirations of the people in indeed (Swers, 2013). Policymaking incorporates planned and strategized steps to address the problems through numerous mechanisms of measurement and evaluation of public policies and choices so that the policy constituted is appropriately justifiable and suits the aspirations of the people and concerned community of the society (Jewitt, 2019). Thus, it is critical to acknowledge that policymaking action in its own literal and true sense is one the techniques and medium of displaying the notion of accountability and responsibility free from all the allegations of unfairness and biases in the society between the policymakers and the general public, rather it is the time where the conceptual promotion of transparency is visible in the policy formulation process that has increased the chances of ensuring the complete efficiency and effectiveness in the mutual service of public delivery (Stewart, 2012). The concept of policy formulation acts as an essential tool or instrument that is needed to be developed in accordance with the pursuit of the societal and public scope in order to achieve the defined objectives of the nation through necessary political decisions and commitments that ultimately intents to eradicate the sectional issues of the nation thoroughly and exceptionally (Williams, 2013). Therefore, it is very crucial to understand and claim that policymaking operation plays a vital role in the society in shaping the strong democratic

values, governance and accountability of a country for the strong purpose of ensuring collective responsibility of the policymakers and the people as a whole so as to thrive towards the better future together (Laurens, 2015).

Gender Equality: -

The conception of gender equality states that people from all the genders should have equal fundamental rights, responsibilities, accessibility to all the exposable opportunities and inclusive participation in decision making authority regardless of their socio-economic, cultural and educational backgrounds certainly (Atkinson, 2018). Gender Equality is one of the major human rights that places its importance to safeguard the aspirations of all the genders, protects them against any sort of violence or discrimination, promotes the economic prosperity, installs the healthy societal values, considers the interest and priorities of all the genders for the safe purpose of recognizing and acknowledging the dignity, respect and fairness amongst them (Smith, 2009). Now, consequently when it comes specifically to gender equity that primarily states justifiable treatment of men and women in accordance with their respective aspirations without any discrimination on the basis of their roles, historical backgrounds, social stereotypical perspectives and pre-dominant structural hierarchy (Goel, M. (n.d.). Gender equity is one of the major instruments that leads to the notion of gender equality through various multilateral mechanisms and strategies that particularly invokes to ensure the fairness in the distribution of wealth, resources and opportunities free from all the bondages of social disadvantages (Lori Beaman. (n.d.). Therefore, it is essential to ensure the pro-active inclusive participation of all the genders (specifically women) in decision making and policymaking roles for the purpose of availing broader perspectives and outlook of the current scenarios ongoing associated with many related public issues in the society and that the nation is in need (Sharma, m. (n.d.). The role of working women in investment decision making in India. Thus, it is vital to ensure the inclusion of women in policy making roles of the country otherwise the ultimate purpose of establishing the concept of gender equity will be left unfinished and unjustified (Seema Jayachandran. (n.d.).

Gender-Sensitive Policy Framework and Planning:

A system of policies and practices known as a gender-sensitive policy is intended to advance gender equality and abolish gender-based discrimination in all spheres of social, political, and

economic life (Saini, D. S.,2011). A gender-sensitive policy framework acknowledges the pervasiveness of gender-based discrimination and the need for a multifaceted strategy that takes into consideration the social, economic, and political variables that contribute to gender disparity in order to address it (Jayachandra, S,2015). Four essential elements make up a gender-sensitive policy framework: mainstreaming gender, analyzing gender, budgeting gender, and monitoring, and evaluating gender (Saini, D. S,2011). Each of these elements is necessary to advance gender equality and guarantee the abolition of gender-based prejudice in all domains of policymaking.

1. **Gender Mainstreaming:** - In order to accommodate the various needs, experiences, and interests of women, men, and people of all gender identities, the process known as gender mainstreaming involves incorporating a gender viewpoint into all policies, programmes, and activities. In order to implement gender mainstreaming, policymakers must assess how their actions affect gender relations and take steps to guarantee that the advantages of their decisions are shared fairly across the various gender groupings.

The following measures must be taken into consideration by policymakers in order to mainstream gender in decision-making:

- Evaluating current programmes and policies to find biases and gaps based on gender.
 - Creating objectives, targets, and metrics that are gender-specific.
 - Creating laws and initiatives to combat discrimination based on gender and advance gender equality.
 - Putting in place laws and initiatives to advance gender equality.
 - Making sure that programmes and policies are meeting the goals of gender equality by monitoring and reviewing them.
2. **Gender Analysis:** - Gender analysis is the practice of looking at how gender interacts with other social characteristics, such race, class, and ethnicity, to affect how people experience marginalization and discrimination. In order to establish policies and initiatives that address these problems, officials must understand the social, economic, and political elements that contribute to gender-based discrimination (Mehta, R,2020).

The following elements are examined as part of gender analysis:

- Gender roles and expectations
- Resource availability and decision-making authority
- The separation between labor and available jobs
- The effects of programmes and policies on various gender groupings

In order to better understand how gender interacts with other social elements to affect people's experiences of discrimination and marginalization, gender analysis may be used to inform policy creation as well as to pinpoint areas in need of more study (Mary E. John. (n.d.).

3. Gender Budgeting: - Examining how government spending affects gender relations and creating budgets that advance gender equality and eliminate gender-based discrimination are both steps in the gender budgeting process. In order to create budgets that guarantee the needs of women, men, and people of other gender identities are addressed, policymakers must take into account the various demands, experiences, and interests of these groups (Rubin, M. m. 2005).

The following steps are included in gender budgeting:

- Examining the influence of government spending on gender relations.
- Establishing expenditure objectives and targets that are gender-specific.
- Allocating funds to combat gender-based prejudice and advance gender equality.
- Monitoring and assessing how well the money the government spends is going towards its goals for gender equality.

In order to better understand how government spending affects gender relations, gender budgeting may be used to guide policy creation and pinpoint areas in need of more study.

4. Gender Responsive Monitoring and Evaluation: - Examining how policies and programmes affect various gender groups and utilizing this knowledge to influence policy

creation and implementation is the process of gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation. Policymakers must gather information on how different gender groups are impacted by policies and programmes in order to establish policies and initiatives that combat gender-based discrimination and advance gender equality. This is required by gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation (Rai, Shirin M. 2003).

Steps involved in gender-responsive monitoring and assessment include:

- ✓ Gathering information on how policies and programmes affect various gender groupings.
- ✓ Examining the information to find biases and gaps related to gender.
- ✓ Use the data to guide the creation and application of policy.
- ✓ Monitoring and analyzing policies and programmes to make sure they are addressed and acknowledged in every intended interest domain with total equality.

Gender Mainstreaming:

In order to advance gender equality and abolish gender-based discrimination, the process known as gender mainstreaming involves incorporating a gender viewpoint into all policies, programmes, and activity (Manjusha Gupte, 2004).

. Gender mainstreaming acknowledges the pervasiveness of gender-based discrimination and the need for a multifaceted strategy that takes into consideration the social, economic, and political elements that contribute to gender disparity in order to eliminate it. The Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 is when the idea of gender mainstreaming first appeared. There, nations vowed to include a gender viewpoint into all policies and initiatives. Since that time, several national governments and international institutions, such as the United Nations and the European Union, have embraced gender mainstreaming (True, J.2010).

Gender mainstreaming consists of the following steps:

1. Evaluating current programmes and policies to find biases and gaps that are gender-based. In order to discover gender-based gaps and biases, the current policies and programmes must first be evaluated. This entails looking at how policies and programmes affect gender relations and pinpointing instances of gender-based discrimination. (Saini, D. S, 2011).

2. Creating objectives, targets, and indicators that are gender-specific. The development of gender-specific objectives, targets, and indicators is the next stage in gender mainstreaming. This entails establishing goals for advancing gender equality and choosing the metrics that will be used to gauge success in meeting these goals (Morison, A,2007).
3. Creating laws and initiatives to combat discrimination based on gender and advance gender equality. The next phase is to develop policies and programmes to combat gender-based discrimination and advance gender equality. This is done once gender-specific goals, targets, and indicators have been defined. This entails considering the various needs, experiences, and interests of women, men, and those who identify as having multiple genders (True, J,2010).
4. Putting into action laws and initiatives to advance gender equality. Putting laws and initiatives that support gender equality into place is the next stage in gender mainstreaming. This could entail creating new policies and programmes as well as altering how existing ones are carried out (Morison, A, 2007)
5. Assessing and monitoring programmes and policies to see if their goals for gender equality are being met. Monitoring and evaluating policies and programmes to make sure they are accomplishing gender equality goals is the last step in gender mainstreaming. This entails gathering data on how various gender groups are impacted by policies and programmes in order to use this knowledge when developing and implementing new policies (Nathalie Holvoet).It entails several steps, including an assessment of the current policies and programmes, the development of goals, targets, and indicators that are specific to gender, the design of policies and programmes to address gender-based discrimination and promote gender equality, the implementation of such policies and programmes, and monitoring and evaluation of such policies and programmes to make sure they are accomplishing gender equality goals (ROBEYNS.I,2011). In order to advance a more equitable and just society, gender mainstreaming necessitates a fundamental change in how policies and programmes are created and carried out (True, J,2010).

GAD Framework:

Through supporting women's empowerment and gender equality, the Gender and Development

(GAD) framework aims to alleviate gender inequalities. Since its first introduction in the 1980s, the development framework has gained widespread acceptance. The GAD framework is founded on the understanding that gender inequality impacts every area of development and is a widespread issue (Priti Jha Niti Nagar,2015). Uneven access to resources, a lack of political representation, and limited possibilities for work and education are just a few examples of how gender inequality manifests. The GAD framework promotes gender equality and women's empowerment in an effort to overcome these problems. It achieves this by concentrating on three crucial elements: gender analysis, gender mainstreaming, and women's empowerment (Emily Oster, 2009).

Gender Analysis: - The first component of the GAD framework is gender analysis. It entails analyzing how gender roles and relationships impact both men and women's lives. Gender analysis aims to comprehend both the causes of gender inequality and the solutions that may be used to combat it (Vivek Divan, 2016). Data and information on the various experiences of men and women are gathered in the process of gender analysis (Preet Rustagi,2004). This information may be used to pinpoint places where gender disparity is present and to create plans for dealing with these problems. Understanding how gender interacts with other types of inequality, such as race, class, and sexuality, is another aspect of gender analysis. In order to make sure that development initiatives are created to address the needs and experiences of all people, regardless of their gender or other characteristics, intersectional analysis can be used (Savath, Vivien, 2014).

Gender Mainstreaming: - The GAD framework's second component is gender mainstreaming. The process entails incorporating a gender viewpoint into every stage of development. Gender mainstreaming is to make sure that gender is considered at every level of the development process, rather than only as an afterthought (George, G. R,2008).

Many distinct tactics are used in gender mainstreaming. They may consist of: -

- Carrying out a gender analysis to comprehend how gender influences development.
- Incorporating gender issues into programmes and policy.
- Ensuring the presence of women in positions of decision-making.
- Promoting budgeting that is gender-sensitive.

- Delivering gender-related training and improving people's capacities.

Development programmes may be created to accommodate the unique needs and experiences of men and women by mainstreaming gender. Women's empowerment and gender equality may benefit from this. Women Empowerment: - The third component of the GAD framework is women's empowerment. It entails advancing women's rights and opportunities and making sure they can fully participate in all facets of development (Catherine Locke, 2002). Empowering women can take many different shapes. It may entail giving women access to chances for work, healthcare, and education. Promoting women's representation and engagement in politics is another option. The GAD framework places a strong emphasis on women's empowerment since it acknowledges that gender inequality cannot be eliminated by programmatic and policy reforms alone. Instead, it necessitates a fundamental change in how men and women interact in terms of power. Governments, non-governmental organizations, and other development groups have largely embraced the GAD framework (Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt, 2007). It has been applied to inform policies and initiatives in a number of fields, such as economic growth, education, and health (Savath, Vivien, 2014). The GAD framework has, however, also come under fire. Some detractors contend that it can be unduly focused on women's empowerment at the expense of men's needs and experiences, and that it falls short in addressing the underlying reasons of gender inequity (Vivek Divan, 2016). The GAD

framework continues to be a crucial instrument for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, not these concerns. The GAD framework offers a comprehensive strategy for tackling the complicated and widespread issue of gender inequality by concentrating on gender analysis, gender mainstreaming, and women's empowerment (Savath, Vivien, 2014).

Policy Implementation Gap:

The gap between a policy's aims and objectives and its actual results in practice is known as the policy implementation gap. The policy implementation gap, when referring to gender roles in policy making, can be defined as the inability of policies and programmes to effectively address gender inequalities and promote women's empowerment (Catherine Locke, 2002). Despite the fact that gender equality is widely acknowledged to be important, many nations still fail to enforce their

gender roles policies equally. Several things, such as a lack of political will, insufficient funding, and societal and cultural hurdles, can be blamed for this disparity. The lack of political will is one of the major causes of the gender roles policy implementation gap. Political commitment to advancing gender equality is lacking in many nations, which can lead to underfunded or poorly implemented policies and programmes (Bina Agarwal,1992). Moreover, policies might not be given top priority or might be overridden by other political goals. The misallocation of resources is another element causing a gap in policy execution. Politicians may have the desire to advance gender equality, but laws and initiatives may not have the necessary funding or resources (L Heise,2002). This may have an impact on both the ability to implement policies successfully and access the resources required to get the intended results. The gender roles gap in policy implementation may also be influenced by social and cultural constraints. Gender inequality is sustained by deeply rooted gender views and conventions in many civilizations. The implementation of programmes that question conventional gender roles and support women's empowerment may be challenging due to these norms and attitudes. Moreover, prejudice and discrimination against women can restrict their access to opportunities and resources, which makes achieving gender equality more challenging. The political sphere is one particular area where the gender roles policy implementation gap is particularly pronounced (Manjusha Gupte,2004). Despite recent major improvements in their political representation, women are still underrepresented in many nations. This can make it more challenging to advocate for laws and initiatives that advance gender equality as well as to successfully put these laws into practice. There are several approaches that may be taken to close the gender roles policy implementation gap. These tactics include strengthening political will, raising funds, removing social and cultural barriers, and encouraging women to run for office. To reduce the policy implementation gender roles gap, political will must be improved. In order to do this, it may be necessary to increase support for laws and initiatives that encourage women's empowerment as well as public understanding of the significance of gender equality. Addressing institutional obstacles like the absence of gender sensitivity in governmental organizations and regulations may also be necessary (Renu Batra,2016). Another key tactic for reducing the gender roles policy implementation gap is to increase resources. In addition to giving groups working on these issues with technical assistance, this may entail committing greater cash to efforts promoting gender equality. The lack

of resources that women have access to, such as finance and land, may also be addressed. Another essential tactic for reducing the gender roles policy implementation gap is to overcome social and cultural impediments. This might entail combating discrimination and bias against women as well as striving to alter social norms and attitudes that promote gender inequity (Ruchira Ganguly-Scrase,2003). Also, it can entail encouraging women's involvement in decision-making processes, perhaps through the implementation of quotas and other affirmative action strategies. And last, one of the most important approaches to closing the gender role implementation gap is to increase the political representation of women (Naomi Beyeler,2016). This might entail supporting female candidates for office as well as campaigning for laws that encourage women's political engagement. Addressing the obstacles that prevent women from achieving political power, such as a lack of finances and social and cultural norms that prevent them from participating in politics, may also be necessary (May Sudhinaraset,2016). In order to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment, it is imperative that the policy implementation gap in gender roles be addressed. Many approaches may be used to close this gap, such as strengthening political will, expanding resources so as to ensure holistic participation and acknowledgement of every gender regardless of their social, educational, cultural or economic backgrounds.

Conclusion:

Promoting gender equality and tackling gender-based inequities in society depend heavily on gender concerns in policymaking processes. Governmental policies and programmes have a significant influence on people's lives; thus, it is crucial that they are created and carried out in a way that is equal and fair for both genders (Kuntal Lahiri-Dutt, 2007). The underrepresentation of women and other oppressed genders in positions of power is one of the main problems with policymaking processes. Systemic hurdles prevent women and other oppressed genders from obtaining leadership roles, which can lead to policies that are insufficiently sensitive to their needs and experiences (N. Balasubramanian,2013). Promoting gender diversity in positions of authority and ensuring that policies and programmes are created with the needs and experiences of all genders in mind are essential steps in resolving this issue. The absence of gender-based analysis in policy creation and implementation is a crucial problem in the policymaking process (Mini Govindan, (n.d.)). Gender-based analysis is a method that helps identify and address gender-based inequities by looking at how policies affect various genders in different ways. Gender-based

analysis must be used by policymakers to guarantee that laws and programmes are created and carried out in a way that advances gender equality (Archana Parashar, 1992). Another important gender problem in the formulation of policy is the lack of access to resources and services. When it comes to getting access to resources and services like education, healthcare, and job opportunities, women and other underrepresented genders frequently confront structural impediments (Manjusha Gupte, 2004). Both genders must have access to the resources and services they need to succeed, thus policies and programmes must be created to remove these obstacles. Another crucial issue that governments need to address is gender-based violence (Renu Batra, 2016). Sexual assault, domestic abuse, and other forms of harassment that are motivated by gender are disproportionately experienced by women and other oppressed genders. Gender-based violence must be avoided, survivors must be supported, and offenders must be held responsible. In conclusion, gender concerns in the formulation of policy are complicated and varied, necessitating an all-encompassing and intersectional strategy (Ritu Mehta, 2005). As well as addressing gender-based violence, policymakers must address the lack of gender diversity in positions of authority, ensuring that resources and services are accessible, and design and execute policies using gender-based analysis (May Sudhinaraset, 2016). Policymakers may advance gender equality and build more just and equitable societies for both genders by addressing gender issues in their processes from all angles.

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