

# **GENDER PARITY: MENTAL AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT OF MEN + EMPOWERMENT OF FEMALE AND TRANS GENDER**

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**Abstract:** This paper, 'Gender Parity: mental and moral development of men + empowerment of female and Trans gender, makes an effort to realise the long wished goal of gender equality. It enunciates how mental & moral development of men can not only end to the widening gender inequality, but also end impunity; and how female and Trans gender empowerment can help development of the society as a whole. This paper makes an attempt to promote the message of personal empowerment by personal development of an individual, regardless their gender.

**Keywords:** Development, Empowerment, Equality, Moral.

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**Introduction: Gender:** First of all, when we talk about gender, in anyway, let us not forget the Trans gender. Gender is the sex of a person. There are three kinds of biologically determined sex- female, Trans and male. This, 'sex dichotomy' led to differentiating genders as masculine and feminine in nature, where masculinity is considered formidable and femininity is considered pleasant (often understood as weak), this further takes us to the concept of 'gender roles', the torch bearer, leading us all to the ultimate blunder of Gender inequality. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a women or a man in a given context. In most societies, there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities. Gender based assumptions and expectations generally place women at a disadvantage with respect to the substantive enjoyment of rights, such as freedom to act and to be recognised as autonomous, fully capable adults, to participate fully in economic, social and political development, and to make decisions concerning their circumstances and conditions.<sup>1</sup>

**Gender Inequality:** In 2017, India fell 21 places in global gender equality report of the World Economic Forum's, 'Global Gender Gap index, ranking 108 in 144-nation list. India ranked 87, in 2016. The global gender gap widened this year, for the first time since the World Economic Forum's index started. "A decade of slow but steady progress on improving parity between the sexes came to a halt in 2017," it said.

Gender inequality refers to a legal, social and cultural situation in which sex determine different rights and dignity for women and men, which are reflected in their unequal access to or enjoyment of rights, as well as the assumption of stereotyped social and cultural roles. These affect their status in all areas of life in society, whether public or private, in the family or the labour market, in economic or political life, in power and decision-making, as well as in social gender relations. In all societies, women are in an inferior position to men.<sup>2</sup>

It has created a visceral of considering female and Trans gender as secondary or weaker sections, in comparison to the male. This seed is so deeply and prolifically sown that even today it continues to be an intolerable, sweltering issue! It not only hinders with personal development of an individual but also, with development of the society, nationally and globally, as well.

Inequality leads to injustice, and injustice leads us to revolutions. Similarly, this ancient evil of inequality on the basis of gender takes away from every individual (men women and trans) their liberty to make a choice, or even to have an option. This has given birth to worldwide gender revolutions, like Women's Liberation Movement, feminism, Trans revolution etc. These revolutionary movements have a common goal which is to create equality of all sexes in every aspect of life whether political social, economic personal or professional, by empowering women and Trans gender. They do not seek to establish superiority by opposing to other gender, as

some might think, but to create equality of all genders by opposing the oppressive and dominant sexist mentality.

Gender (in)equality concerns all humans (men, women and Trans). It is a human right issue.

**Gender Equality:** Gender equality means that the rights, responsibilities and opportunities of an individual must not depend on their gender. Gender equality is not just a 'women's issue', it also concerns Trans gender and men as well. It is not a fight of one gender against another. It is, and always have been, a fight against the sexist mentality. We all have equal rights, duties and dignity, which must be valued and respected, as we want our own to be valued and respected.

Gender equality is not just a purpose, but a process and we are all part of it. This process includes twelve steps, to cover the gap, from being a theory to becoming a reality:

1. Recognise that your opinions are not always error-free
2. Accept the flaws in yourself and in the society
3. Educate yourself
4. Adjust your thinking
5. adapt a broad mentality and tolerance for all kind of people
6. Know and modify your thinking, if you have a problem with a community, identity or sexuality
7. improve your understanding
8. reconstruct new thoughts according to the new world, for the upliftment and development of all
9. Practice equality, justice & harmony in your daily life
10. Fight discrimination and injustice
11. preach equal human rights for all
12. evolve with the ever changing time, for the betterment of all and self.

**Women and Gender Equality:** The struggle for equal rights for women has turned out to be the oldest, which also makes it the longest struggle to have existed on earth. Even today when so many efforts, for so long, have been, and are still being, made nationally and internationally to empower women and to bring gender equality, still not a single country can claim total parity in any sphere.

The position of women has always been, and still is, secondary to men. It is one of the most widespread and dehumanizing discrimination which has a strong impact on every aspect of their lives. Women's Movement and feminism played a major role in triggering women empowerment, giving women greater power to balance the long prevailed inequality.

Women empowerment aims to eliminate forms of oppression based on gender and to gain for women equal economic and social status and rights to determine their own lives, as are enjoyed by men. Women empowerment focuses on providing women their rights and equal position in the society, by equal opportunity and ending discrimination of women. Many programs & organisations (NGO, government and international organisations) have come up to support women empowerment. Equal and fair treatment of individual, regardless their gender, is a necessary condition to achieve the highest form of civilisation.

**Myths and Reality about Feminism:** It is wrong to assume that feminism concerns just women. Feminism, once, did started to define, establish, and achieve political, economic, personal, and social equality of sexes; seeking to establish educational and professional opportunities for women that are equal to such opportunities for men. It was a movement that aimed at empowering women, by claiming equal rights and freedom for women, just as men. This was the time when most feminist were women, along with some men, which gradually with time increased.

With the increasing number of feminists (women, men and trans), today, the meaning and scope of feminism has also widened. Feminism, now, does not supports the equal rights and freedom of women only, but also holds and supports equal rights and freedom for trans and men as well. With the passage of time and better communication it has been noticed that Men actually does suffer a lot, emotionally, due to the pre-defined notion of "masculinity". There are certain, so called, "feminine" feelings that are assumed to be incompatible with masculinity, therefore makes it unsuitable and unnatural for men to have the "feminine" feelings *such as*

crying, sharing feelings, being emotional, showing concern or care, choosing to communicate instead of being violent to resolve a matter, etc. This differentiation between femininity and masculinity is so wide that, something as natural and neutral as *feelings* is not spared from this dichotomy. The pre defined and assumed notions of both, femininity and masculinity hinders with the freedom of a person, to be themselves, in both men and women; which is equally unfair and intolerable. Feminism seeks to fight the feminine and masculine dichotomy and establish an environment of *neutrality*, fair and impartial to all.

**Trans and Gender Equality:** Being a transgender is *unreasonably hard*. In most countries, like India, a trans kid/adult is abandoned to live far from the “dignified” society, homeless or in a separate transgender community. Trans gender for far too long, and still, have not been accepted as a natural third sex among us. They are often looked down as a disgrace, and are discriminated from living a normal life. They are considered unfit to live in a family, society, get education, go to a doctor, have a friend outside their community, a right to work and even banned from entering religious places. Not only this, trans gender are also not allowed to use the rest room that they identify themselves with; or have a completely separate rest room for themselves. Even though, in a few countries, they are now “allowed” to receive education and work at a regular workplace, they still face unnecessary discrimination, bullying, sexual harassment and are ill treated in every possible way. The problem in such demeaning condition of trans genders lies in the attitude of the society. The society exhibits an ignorant and apathetic attitude towards their existence. This ‘out of sight out of mind’ mantra here has become a major obstacle for empowering the trans community.

*What can be done?*

The fact that, even today a whole community is suffering for being the gender they are, is a proof of the failure of the existing social order. We might be too late to correct the past and give back the life trans gender community always deserved, but still we’re not too late to uplift the quality of their lives today and for the future.

- Awareness should be raised about Trans gender community and the hate crimes towards them.
- Efforts should be made by educational institutes and otherwise, to educate children and youth, as well as the adults about transgender and gender non-conforming people, and other the issues associated with identity or its transition.
- Trans community should not be isolated from the rest of the society. Their existence should be brought into the daylight and in our daily lives.
- Government should implement necessary programs and laws to empower transgender community, improve their life quality and stop violent & discriminatory activities against them.
- Individually, we must all accept them as one of us, because they are.

We need to accept the fact that being a Transgender is equally normal and dignifying, as being any other gender.

**Men and Gender Equality:** Gender equality will not benefit only women and Trans, but in reality, men also benefit from gender equality as they too face gender-specific issues. Gender equality is needed for complete development of the society. Too much ink has been spilled and efforts have been made, worldwide, about women & Trans empowerment. There is undoubtedly improvement in the condition of women, in few countries; still we are far from the ultimate goal. It should be acknowledged that this improvement in the conditions of the female and Trans genders would not be possible without valiant efforts of all three genders together.

The reason why equality is still not, yet, fully attained anywhere, even after so many efforts is because empowering women and Trans genders is only half of the work. The other half of the work is – ‘mental & moral development of men’.

To prove, or dismiss, this hypothesis that *mental & moral development of men* is necessary to achieve gender equality a questionnaire survey was conducted (in both hindi & english) through online and personal meetings. Shown below in fig.1

**IMAGINE**

You are a busy working person, so is your life partner and everyone else in your family. You have a baby, a boy, who is now ready to be admitted in school. But, in the whole world there are only two schools, 'School A' and 'School B', which are your only two options!

**SCHOOL – A**

School – A, comprises of *all male* staff.  
(Peon to Principal)

**SCHOOL – B**

School – B comprises of *all female* staff.  
(Peon to Principal)

**NOTE:** These are the only two options you have. Homeschooling or No schooling is not an option.

Question 1. Which School, of the above two options, will you pick for your baby boy?

Answer 1. ....

Question 2. Why did you choose that school?

Answer 2. ....  
 ....  
 ....  
 ....

Question 3. Why did you not choose the other school?

Answer 3. ....  
 ....  
 ....

**Some information about you.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: male/ female/ transgender \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Profession / Stay at home mom or Dad / Student : \_\_\_\_\_

Contact number (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

If you want the research results and research paper please mention your Email id: \_\_\_\_\_

**Your Quote/suggestion about Gender disparity (Optional):** # \_\_\_\_\_ #

**Note:** your quotation or suggestion will be printed with the published paper with your name and designation, if selected.

Thank you for your time.

Regards,  
Madhulika Jain

Fig.1

### Why The Child In The Questionnaire Was Specifically A Boy?

In an Indian society, prolifically, a boy child is given more preference than a girl (trans gender are, again, out of the question). A boy is not brought up just as a regular child, but like a valuable asset that brings the family a lot of pride and honour, just for being born as a boy. So, because boys are considered so valuable and looked up with such pride, specifically in Indian society, we wanted to know, will the people choose a school full of the men, who were once, looked upon in the same way when were boys.

**Result:** 85% of the participants chose an all-female school, 'SCHOOL-B', a better option for their son.

**Conclusion:** The reason for not choosing an institute full of men were, mainly, related to lack of compassion & sensitivity, and the safety of their own son. This helped us realise that the way a boy is brought up is completely different from that of a girl. Because the reason why the participant picked an institute full of women was because of their sense of compassion & sensitivity, and quality of creating a safe environment, completely opposite why they did not choose school A, full of men.

The area of difference in the upbringing was related to the checking on behavior and freedom.

Boys, unlike girls, are not checked strictly for unacceptable/ bad behavior. They are given not only more freedom compared to girls, but also, sometimes, given unchecked freedom. Unlike girls, boys are not taught that there are always consequences to their actions. This, overlooked, unchecked behavior & freedom for boys makes them *fearless* > then *punk* > *violent* > and finally unsafe with time, for even a child.

**Note:** This has nothing to do with their caliber and talent.

Something right must be happening in the parenting of girls (in an Indian society) that everyone who participated trusted their most valuable thing with the girls. Keeping equality between boys and girls is often interpreted wrongly as, to give girls same unchecked freedom like the boys. When it is actually, and should be, about to check the freedom and behavior of the boys just like the girls.

The discrimination in the parenting/upbringing of the boys and girls, by the parents & society, is not only working negatively for the women but also for the men.

**Results:** As mentioned above this survey was taken online and through personal meetings as well.

**Case 1:** People who did not consider gender inequality as an issue, and therefore refused to fill the questionnaire (On the basis of personal interviews):

- It was noticed during the survey that people who did not consider gender inequality as an issue resisted to participate after reading the questionnaire. After cross questioning, it was observed that this resistance and refusal, to give their views for the questions asked, was because when they read the situation and the options given to them in the questionnaire, this group of people, *couldn't choose School A* (which was contrary to their thinking that gender inequality affects neither men or women), *and did not wanted to choose School B* (because this was, again, contrary to their thoughts that the existing stereotypical social order is faultless and successful). With further cross questioning, they responded in either an arrogant manner or joked about it.
- The problem, as observed, was that they weren't ready to accept the fact that their thinking was actually, proved flawed, by themselves, when they were unable to choose School A; and since they cannot recognise that their could/might be an error in their judgement (the first step to the gender equality process) they were naturally restrained themselves from accepting the grave damage gender inequality has caused (second step to gender equality process).
- **Conclusion:** Participants of Case 1, formed the **majority** out of all the four cases, of the results. The ignorant & apathetic attitude, with the immutable prejudicial belief system stands out to be the biggest challenge in the way of achieving gender equality.

**Case 2:** Participants who did not fill the questionnaire (Online only):

- People were reached out both personally and online via social media and emails. 9% of the total, people reached out electronically, did not wished participate as while some couldn't relate to the questionnaire others found the data insufficient.

**Explanation:** The questionnaire was called IMAGINE; it consisted of a hypothetical situation to prove, or dismiss the hypothesis that mental and moral development needs attention in men. If this condition was revealed to this set of people, that might have influenced their thoughts. Therefore, their decision of not participating in the survey was accepted, and respected.

**Case 3:** Participants who chose SCHOOL A: 6% of all participant, chose SCHOOL A, and honestly shared the reason & concern, why and why not.

- Why?

The participants were of the view that since the child is boy, it is important to give him a masculine environment for unerring upbringing.

- Why not school B?

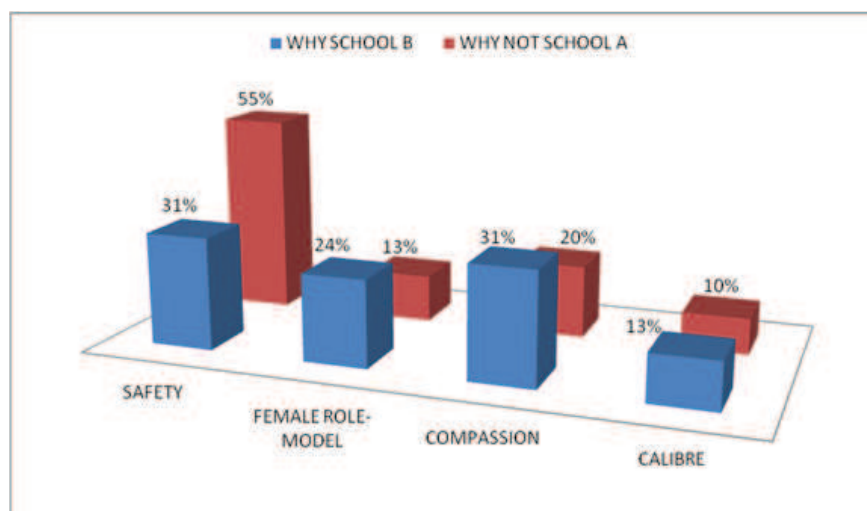
The participants shared a similar view here as well, that by sending their son to an all-female school would compromise with the masculine behaviour of a boy, which is needful to exist in the society.

**Case 4:** Participants who selected SCHOOL B: 85% of the total participants chose School B. The reasons for why selecting school B and why not school A, respectively, could be categorised under four similar headings,

1. Safety concern
2. set example of female role model/ Women empowerment/Inculcate feeling of respect towards women
3. Quality of compassion/ sensitivity
4. Calibre

The data according to the *reason* for 'why school-A' and 'why not school-B' is shown, below, in Bar Graph1 :





Bar Graph 1

The reason of safety and compassion dominated in both questions of *why school B* and *why not school A*.

- Where 31% chose school B because they were concerned about the *safety* of the child, 55% did not choose School A because of insecurity for the same reason.
- Whereas 31% chose school B for the reason of *compassion/sensitivity*, 20% did not select school A for the lack of same reason.

**Conclusion: Case for Mental Development of Men:** The questionnaire consisted a clear division of male and female sections. The people were put into a hypothetical situation, where they had to make an unavoidable choice between male and female; which one of the two, will they trust, to be the best option for their “most valuable asset” *their son*.

During the personal interviews where most women showed an enthusiastic spirit about the survey and shared their views and suggestions, majority of men (not all) on the other hand were obscure and showing resistance. It turned out that prolific male section, still, is incongruous with empowerment and equality of all genders. They showed an arrogant contempt towards gender (in)equality and exhibited an indolent behaviour towards women and Trans empowerment. Some went as far as calling gender (in)equality as futilitarian. This reaction of men towards the issue brought us to the conclusion that, mental development of men regarding gender (in)equality and its importance, is much needed for realising the goal of equality.

**Note:** during the personal interviews both patriarchal women and men who supported women empowerment and feminism, were found. The above case is based on the majority basis. Awareness and awakening is needed in people, both men and women, who do not think that gender (in)equality is an issue and the patriarchy is justified.

**Case for Moral Development of Men:** Apart from mental development, the survey result also indicated that moral development calls for an urgent attention in men. Very often it is fallaciously assumed (socially, politically, professionally and personally) that men are more calibrated than women, and trans gender are not even considered, yet. But when the survey was conducted, every single person who participated happened to choose the female division i.e., School B.

A huge number of 55% of participants were of the opinion that they will feel unsafe for their son in an all-men school. They were concerned about the safety which therefore, questions the morality of men. Apart from safety another 20% of the participants who chose School B, questioned if men will be sensitive, compassionate or patient enough to take care of a child.

75% (55% + 20%) participants, both Men and women, who chose school-B weren't ready to trust their child, with men alone because they would worry about lack of safe and compassionate environment. Whereas the 6% who chose school-A, picked an all-male school only cause they were concerned about fulfilment the masculine nature of the boy, and none had doubts about an all-female school's calibre, compassion or safety.

Calibre/ capacity went out of question, in both cases, when compared with moral and humane nature. It stood at lowest concern of people when clear division of the two genders was made.

The survey revealed that both women and men are doubtful about the sense of compassion and morality in men. Not all men lack these qualities, not all men are immoral or uncompassionate, but still people were doubtful, when it came down to trust their most precious thing with men.

Men are not born with a lack of compassion and morality. What has made this a peril condition in men is, the rigidly pre-defined “masculine” environment and manner they are brought up in. Boys, in Indian society, from a very young age enjoy impunity and are hardly taught that there are consequences to their actions. As they grow up, with time this freedom to act without rationally thinking becomes dangerous and an obstacle to the other genders (including men themselves).

#### **What Can Be Done?**

- Don't only raise awareness among women and trans gender about the women empowerment, trans empowerment, gender (in)equality, their significance and importance but also raise awareness men. This will help to develop or widen the perspective of men regarding gender differences and their affects on the whole society, including themselves.
- Parents and society must not take away from their boys the freedom to be expressive and emotional. This in the later years not only prove to be dangerous towards the society but for themselves as well.
- Men should be checked for violent or unacceptable behaviour, rather than keeping unhealthy *boys will be boys*' attitude. This will help to end impunity among men.

The condition in the questionnaire was a hypothetical situation, to prove, or dismiss, the hypothesis. The survey results not only proved the hypothesis true but also, made us realise about this overlooked and under estimated menace.

In reality, everyone agreed that both are equally important, but when clear distinction was made between the two groups, one group seemed to be more preferred. And what differentiated the two groups was not their calibre but, their morality and sensitivity. There is no doubt in the real world *a perfect balance of all three genders is an ideal condition, to create a perfect environment for all of us to grow and prosper.*

This balance is needed, to live in harmony. Balance not in a way that men holds the capacity for brain, women hold the capacity for heart, and trans gender will hold the, often ignored, soul. But, a balance of brain, heart and soul in every individual; though the hierarchy of holding the three elements might variate from person to person. No one person could live a fully evolved life, or even a peaceful life with just one of the three elements fulfilled. All three elements are essential and needs equal nurturing in every individual. To achieve this balance, according to the above explained research, women and transgender empowerment, along with the mental and moral development of men is necessary.

#### **Some Thoughts Shared by the Participants of the Survey:**



Sayan Banerjee, 26  
Student, Kolkata

“Intersectional feminism is perhaps the only way to reach egalitarianism at least in terms of gender parity. But we need more awareness, more education and more active participation in such cause at both individual and mass levels.”



Mansi Gupta, 25  
Student, Carnegie Mellon  
University, Pittsburgh

“Let people be themselves”



Vishakha Sharma,  
25, Lecturer, Gov.  
of Rajasthan

"God doesn't discriminate between a girl and a boy. It is we who always raise our girls to be sweet and boys to be strong. And we assume a sweet girl should bear all the torture and a strong boy can do all the torture."



Puja Bansal, 26, Marketing Head,  
Novatree Esolutions Pvt.  
Ltd. Kolkata (WB)

"Equality is not the absence of differences, but respect for all."



Diksha Singh, 23,  
Stenographer,  
Directorate General  
of Mines Safety,  
Ajmer

"Both the genders, as created equal, have equal importance. Any one of the genders, if suppressed, would create imbalance"



Avinash Jain, 40, Senior  
Divisional Engineer, Indian  
Railway, kolkata

"There is disparity, women are better; because men can't beat women in caring, sensitivity, motherhood and ability to give birth a child."



Niharika Sharma,  
25, Assistant Professor (English),  
R.K. Patni College  
Kishangarh (\_RAJ).

"The world needs matriarchies to become a better place to live in."



Rashmi Awasthi, 21  
Student, Sophia Girls  
College, Ajmer

God has given us diverse genders, we should accept this with obeisance, and believe in equality.



Charul Joshi, 24  
Student, King's College,  
London

"Equality, liberates both men and women from the shackles of societal prejudices and definitions of femininity and masculinity. Only together can men and women obliterate the patriarchal fangs of society. Equality, therefore is in the interest of humanity. It has the power to set everyone free."



Saurabh malkar, 30  
Intern, Modern Diplomacy,  
Mumbai.

"Efforts to bring about gender equality shouldn't overthrow the male-female dynamic and destroy the nuclear family – both of which have served as cornerstones for modern, industrialized society."

#### Thoughts by the Authors of This Paper:



Veena Gurnani, 33  
Lecturer (Home Science) St. Mary's Convent Sr. Sec School,  
Ajmer (Raj)

"Gender Equality is not a fight of one gender against another. It is, and always have been, a fight against the sexist mentality. We all have equal rights, duties and dignity, which must be valued and respected, as we want our own to be valued and respected."



Madhulika Jain, 25  
M.A. (Political Science)

"Gender Equality is not just a purpose, it's a process, and we are all part of it. Awareness, education and practice of it must be adopted in our daily lives to create an environment of neutrality, fair and impartial to all. Every life is equally valid, and no one is more important than other."



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