Chapter II

Gender Inequality: A Theoretical Development

2.1 Introduction
Before going through the methodological framework of this study, it is very essential to outline the theoretical development of gender inequality issue. The discussion delineates the different discourses of gender inequality issue and the interrelated facts. Firstly, the concept of gender inequality has been discussed in the context of geography. Secondly, the gender inequality issue in global perspective has been identified. Finally, gender inequality issue has been analysed from the Indian perspective.

2.2 Gender Inequality: A Geographical Perspective
Gender studies provide both the new outlook on both practice of gender norms within the society and also the theoretical process of gender studies. Cranny-Francis et al., (2003) attempted to denote gender as a facet of everyday life. They highlighted diverse aspects related to gender like “ways of talking”, “ways of thinking”, “ways of reading”, “ways of seeing”, “ways of being” and “ways of living”. They explored the definite means to re-analyze the gendering system and practices. The hierarchically placed roles of genders are analyzed in the context of masculinity and femininity. They also build up the various relationships between genders like “equal but opposite; opposite but female-negative; opposite but female-positive; and so on”. They commented that “human gender is binary, is made up of two halves, which each define the other”. The “binary understandings of femininity and masculinity” shapes the gender perception. They showed a correlation between the forms of “gendering practices” like “patriarchy” and “subjectivity”. They also intersected the ways of communication between gender and society. A critical analysis of gender related theories revealed that it has a close coherence with feminist ideologies. The “critical notions” of “stereotyping” is also recognized as a significant form of gender system. Meyer (2002) focused on “gender identity and women’s agency” in an arena of cultures and traditions. How the “encoding of gender stereotypes” in a container of patriarchy make the female identity deprived is also outlined. For Meyers, it is,
“difficult for ordinary women to recognize their lives in theories about them”. A Correlation had shown between “Gendered models” and “social relations” in an authentic manner. Meyer argued that “gender is internalized and does become a dimension of women’s identities”. She stressed on women’s identity both in a “gendered and individualized” form. Meyer again extended her ideas how the effect of a “series” or group behaviour direct the livelihood of women and shape the gender order. Most significantly, according to her often an individual identity is categorized as per its gender perceived by people and society. In this context, Dowler et al., (2005) linked the gender issue with landscape system. Gender has a spatio-temporal dimension as it closely related with “space and place”. The existence and perception of gender issue pervaded within a landscape system. For them, the notion of gender and its interaction with the society basically reflects from the landscape system itself. But they specified that, “the study of landscape, as it relates to gender, has been somewhat ignored”. They asserted that, the study of landscapes “as a system of power relations” are “vital to the production of gendered identities”. They observed that both the feminism and gender studies shift their area of discussion “from cultural, post colonial, subaltern, sexuality” to “locations and perspectives of groups”. They also recognized that, a detailed analysis of regional population especially women and the local “myth and literature” helps to map out the root of unequal power distributions among genders. “There has been a great deal of attention to the relationship of power to the construction of masculine and feminine identities in space and place” (Dowler et al., 2005). Bryant and Pini (2011) analyzed gender system and its different issues in the context of rurality. Both the “indigeneity” and “ethnicities” affirms a strong effect on gender inequality. According to them, “experiences of gender and rurality cannot be examined in isolation from other social locations”. An analysis in the context of rural Australia they “explore the ways in which gender coexists” with “class” and “sexuality”. The divisions of power relation are also determined by rurality. They essentially raised the question that “What is rurality?” and tried to identify the altered forms of rurality which affects gender inequality. According to them, “experiences of gender and rurality cannot be examined in isolation from other social locations”. An analysis in the context of rural Rajasthan in terms of gender inequality. She focused on the “empirical and conceptual gaps” as well as connected some strongly grounded characteristics of existing gender approaches. She rightly identified the mutual relationship between “mother’s perception and child’s wellbeing”. According to her in a specific domain whether it is rural or urban the position of the girl child is determined by culture and
community perspective. She observed that, the prime issue related to the subsistence of a girl child is influenced by both the educational attainment and economic empowerment. She also analysed the different positional effects between genders which also varies according to specific gender activities. Dreze and Sen (2004) made a comprehensive study on the aspect of gender inequality on account of “women’s agency”. They raised the issues like “female deprivation and missing women”, “female-male ratio” in a spatio-temporal context, “gender and caste” based “women’s agency and child survival”, “fertility and women’s emancipation”, “widowhood and gender inequality”, as well as “gender equality and social development”. They questioned that, cultural diversity and “complexities of caste and class among women” is actually reveals “an overarching women’s movement” or it is only a number of “fragmented campaigns”. They also described that how many significant campaigns are domain specific i.e. urban, middle class and rural. They also stated the actual definition of “women’s movement” and actual specification of women issues.

In the discussion of gender inequality it is very essential to review the past gender inequality in the arena of geography. It is very significant to analyse the issue of women’s subordination in the premise of geography. Geography identifies the boundaries and globalized mode of gender relations whether it is isolated or fractional. Without the discussion of gender inequality in a geographical context the gender wise change in insight and practice is also very difficult to sort out. In the context of present hour gender inequality focused on women’s hole. Unequal access of women in resources and prospect gradually shift the focus from moderate feminism to geography of welfare. Conventional gender inequality in a globalized field varies according to space and time. In geography the analysis of local and regional gender inequality is very crucial. Geography explores how gender inequality is determined by local point changes in society and economy. In geography the discussion of gender inequality is very much associated with culture and class structure. An important concern of geography is grounded in space and how gendered livelihood varies according to that space. Moreover, variations in land use (rural and urban) also bound the changes in gender relations. Both the rural and urban land use allocates specific gendered division of labour which ultimately shaped the everyday gender inequality. The problem of gender inequality is closely related with culture and landscape which linked both space and time. Geography of gender basically centered on spaces and
discussed specific gender identities and ideologies in the context of geography. The discussion of gender studies within the domain of geography also identifies the mode of society whether it is patriarchal or matriarchal. The study of gender system in a global and Indian perspective also reflects the aforementioned observations in a clearer manner.

2.3 Issues of Gender Inequality: A Global Perspective
The study of gender inequality passes through a long journey. The appreciation for initiating a new discipline of gender studies go to Ann Oakley through her opening up text “Sex, Gender and Society” in 1972 (Pilcher and Whelehan, 2004). The work of Simone de Beauvoir (The Second Sex, 1972) stressed on the meanings and concepts of gender as well as the process of gender inequality. The works of Jacques Lacan, Donna Haraway, Sandra Harding analyzed how sexuality shapes masculinity and femininity, post – identity feminism and associated gender reforms. Judith Butler described the core issues of gender and its unequal relations and made a logical correlation between feminism and gender.

Bradley (2007) explained the delicate issues related to gender. The meaning, central theme of gender, association of gender with modernity, post modernity and the production, reproduction of gendered norms also discussed. Bradley described that, “it is not quite clear who first used the word gender in this context. Glover and Kaplan (2000) suggest that it was employed in the 1960s, in the then burgeoning area of sexology and the psychology of sex”. In the opinion of Bradley, Robert Stoller’s “Sex and Gender: On the Development of Masculinity and Feminity” (1968) was a path finding work which fully demarcated the distinction between sex and gender. Bradley stated that sex and gender had a very common and general use by the feminists of 1970’s.

Sen (1992) identified the different forms of inequality along with the general characteristics common in all the ethnic approaches which develops the social framework. He raised the very significant question “equality of what?” He explored the different dimensions of inequality as well as its inherent relationship with class structure and gender. He also defined “Incompleteness”, “Freedom”, “Agency and Well-Being” in an arena of gender inequality and welfare economics. He focused on the “Choice”, “Opportunities”, “Selection” and the “Demands of equality”. He raised
the question that, “at the practical level, the importance of the question equality of what?” The diversity of human beings determined the “demanding equality” and “wanting equality in terms of another” both theoretically and practically. Moreover, he stated that the field of “egalitarianism” depends on the existence of diversity during the discussion of internal characteristics as well as in external circumstances related to equality.

Pilcher and Whelehan (2004) highlighted the actual definition of “equality”. They stressed on the scenario of the historical movements for gender equality with its continuous debates about the meaning of equality. They argued about “equality of opportunity” and “equality of outcome”. They discussed about the nature of transmission in the attainment of equality between masculinity and femininity also. They studied the goalposts and norms of equality. They discussed the relationship between gender inequality and ethnicity also. They again stressed on the issue of gender equality whether it is essentially treated the both genders in a same platform despite of their differences or equality, discussed as the central theme of feminism and gender studies.

Geetha (2002) mainly explored that gender exists everywhere. The allotment of specific roles and attributes for particular sexes ultimately escorts to “doing gender”. In an extremely consistent manner she described the actual sense of gender as a phenomenon in existing society. She also showed the assimilation of gender identities with class, caste and religion. Through her decisive analysis she removed the question of ambiguity about normal gendered behaviour. According to her, “as we grow up, ideas of masculinity and femininity become central to the way we think about ourselves. Many of us actively reject interests which we recognize as untypical of our sex”. For her, “very few girls dare to ask why their ultimate destiny is linked to the institutions of marriage and motherhood; or why their inner lives should heed the virtues of patience and sacrifice”. Very significantly she opined that, “if all human beings were equal, then surely men and women were equal”.

Abbott and Sapsford (1987) depicted the nature of association between women and class analysis. They showed the gradual shifting of conceptual framework of feminism towards the gender identity and related inequalities. They argued that identification of gender inequalities is more important than the male class
stratification analysis. According to them, feminist theory of stratification is more concerned with gender disparities. They stated that, a theory unable to deal with the expression of the chief “sources of social inequality” cannot be sufficient to explain single source inequalities “because all sources combine to define social position”. They observed that, all forms of patriarchy follows the axis of differentiation within a social structure must be gender related. They also noticed that, the social mobility of women also depends upon the integration of class structure. They also observed that, as “women’s work histories are not like men’s” it is very complicated to enumerate women in a specific “class” based on “their occupations”.

John (1996) discussed the women issues in global context. He invited to rethink women issues and viewed them differently. He also examined that gender issues with a traditional and powerful origin pervaded globally with “morally valued conceptualizations”. He raised the question that who represents the women and what organizations are with the development of them. For John, “gender is not only richly intertwined with other meanings when investigated along etymological and linguistic lines”. He stated about a probable way of defining “feminism” that, it “is a politics as much as it is an epistemology where questions of representation must deal with who speaks for whom, along with what is being said”.

Ackerly and True (2010) made a critical analysis about feminist research and feminist theory. They noticed that, from the 1970s, feminist research has been “activism-engaged, theory-building, and methodologically innovative”. They observed that though feminists differ in many theoretical frameworks, it provides a sound phase of empirical research. Feminist theory centered along power dynamics and related research. According to them, “this usefulness depends on our sustaining the activist roots and traditions of feminist praxis while being relevant to current politics”.

Green (1995) expressed her ideas about “ethic-of-care feminism” as a major theme. She stressed on the effect of “Humanism” on feminist studies. She identified the specific tune of women thought through their writings which are different from their male halves within a feminist humanist trend. Green raised a question of reconstruction of “rationality” and “liberalism” with a focus on a female account of rationality. She analyzed the terms like “phallocentrism” used by Luce Irigaray,
Derrida’s concept of “difference and logocentrism” from a new insight. She also explained Hobbes’s ideas to explore the feminist rejection of “liberal humanism”. She made a clear cut division between “liberal humanism” and “rationalist humanism” and also pointed out the concept of “maternalist contractualism”. She vertically linked the feminist humanism with the socialism as well as with political sex. According to her, “those who emphasize the equality of the sexes nevertheless implicitly recognize that there are some sexual differences which should be taken into account by society”. She also discussed about the “distinction between humanist and ‘gynocentric’ points of view”.

Walby (1994) mainly concentrated on the dimensions and discourses of “patriarchy”. She stressed on the “patriarchal mode of production”. She examined the paid nature of male work participation in public sphere as well as the unpaid character of female work participation in household economy. She argued that, patriarchy in economic structure functions through the out casting of women from specific types of occupation, unequal distribution of promotion opportunities, and unequal political representation as par with men. She also observed that domestic violence is a significant form of patriarchy which continues it even within a welfare state. In the household level “the patriarchal division of labour” is not entirely controlled by the appearances of “patriarchal relations” in a specific society, it is influenced by the “other sets of patriarchal relations” also. She also observed that patriarchal relation has an important enunciation with capitalism.

Hooks (2000) outlined the multifaceted aspects of feminist movements both in contemporary and modern context. She described that apparently the “contemporary feminist movement” reflects as a base fully structured with “feminist principles and beliefs” from the time of initiation. But in reality the unknown feminist existence was not able to define the problem clearly. She argued that the occurrence of any feminist movement is not space, time and gender specific. Feminist movement can be initiated by both male and female but depends on the resistance against subordination and “sexism”. She stressed on the “re-visionist feminist theory” which was a critique of 1960’s radicalism. She discussed about both the black and colour women who recognize gender as an altered and specific determinant of feminist perspective. According to her, “sexism as a system of domination is institutionalized, but it has
never determined in an absolute way the fate of all women in this society”. She raised a very crucial question, that female livelihood is controlled by the combined effect of class, race and gender but it is not clear that how these issues actually influence “feminist practice”. She opined that, if the issues like patriarchy and sexism exists then the feminist perspectives and feminist applications will always be in “risk”.

2.4 Issues of Gender Inequality: An Indian Perspective

In the case of Indian scenario the schools of thoughts reflects the co-existence of both the concept of equality and inequality between genders. Women studies in early history of India mainly enlighten the social status of women which draws attention to limited issues like “marriage law, property rights, and rights related to religious practices” (Chakravarty, 2004). The major drawback in terms of this is the lack of perception about the “social processes which have shaped” gender and “social institutions”. Basically the gender inequality in India is a compilation of “religious traditions” and socio-cultural spheres where genders “have been placed” (Chakravarty, 2004). So in the analysis of theoretical framework of gender development in India it is essential to analyze caste and gender hierarchy to assess the proper order of gender system in India (Chakravarty, 2004). Recently a number of landmark works have been placed by eminent scholars like Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Feminism, 2000: One Step Beyond?,2000), Amartya Sen (The Argumentative Indian: Writings of Indian History, Culture and Identity, 2005), Saraswati Raju and Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt (“Doing Gender” in Geography: Emerging Research in India, 2011), Yasodhara Bagchi (The Changing Status of Women in West Bengal, 1970-2000: The Challenge Ahead, 2005), Maithreyi Krishnaraj (Gender, Food Security and Rural Livelihoods, 2007), Bina Agarwal (Gender Inequality, Cooperation, and Environmental Sustainability, 2002), and Neera Desai and Usha Thakkar (Women in Indian Society, 2001). They worked on different segments of gender inequality in different regional scale. For the present study a wide range of existing literature has been viewed which reflects a number of different perspectives.

Forbes (1996) provided a detail description of women’s history in India. She analysed woman issues from different angles like historical, social, political, economic as well as religious. She threw a light on the shadowed colonial history of Indian women also. She stressed on the educational enlightenment of women so they will be able to define
and solve their own problem by themselves. Forbes in one side tried to the women’s movement before the nationalist movement and on the other hand its relation with “subaltern studies”. For her, social feminism is an expression which supports equal rights for women. She discussed women’s activism from the late 1930s to the early 1950s. According to her “education was one of the items on the reform agenda that contributed to the emancipation of women”.

Rao (2007) presented a clear description about the asymmetry in gender driven caste structure. She discussed about female education and associated nature of response during nationalist movement. She analyzed the various causes of this uneven response on the avenue of the political reform in western India. According to her, “the question of women’s education received an uneven response in the nationalist discourse. The Brahmanical patriarchy had always denied women access to education”. She also highlighted upon the arguments on the nature of curriculum of female schools.

Bradley (2011) described religion as a link between patriarchal gender inequality and daily lives of women. She provided a critical analysis of gender from a religious point of view and also discussed the ways in which gender inequality can be challenged. It should integrate the inner functions of religion and custom which hold on any transforms within the community. Gendered perspectives of religion often affect the livelihood of women. She also drew attention towards the hierarchies of patriarchy which figure and boost the specific religious beliefs and discourses. Often the dearth of critical gender aspect reflects in the distinct impact on people’s livelihood. According to her, “specifically by revealing the patriarchal foundations of many, if not all, religious traditions, a gendered perspective can highlight the ways in which women find themselves disadvantaged and marginalized”.

Basu (1998) made a relative analysis of women exist in an arena of both leadership and grass root level from their national to local status. She tried to establish a significant correlation between religious and political life of women both in local and regional level in the context of South Asia. According to her, “one striking feature of women’s activism in ethnic and religious movements is its tendency to uphold and defend the family rather than challenging it, as feminists have”. She also opined that,
“until quite recently, the scholarly literature tended to treat gender, religious, and community identities as static and unchanging”.

Altekar (1999) explored the actual position and status of Hindu women in early Indian civilization through a periodic observation. He showed the deterioration in the status of women in family, religious practices, social participation as well as in ownership rights. He also examined the class wise economic and social status of women as well as their changing roles with the gradual change in time. Altekar linked the gender identity with the class identity. He stressed on the different forms and functions of land and property rights of women throughout the historical analysis. According to him during the age of later Smritis in general the livelihood of women were comfortable and satisfied but the continuation leads to a serious break with “the prohibition of widow remarriage, the revival of the Sati Custom, the spread of the purdah and the greater prevalence of polygamy and supersession”.

Gupta (2001) mainly concentrated on redevelopment of “Hinduist” ideology with the exploration of gender related cultural identities. The center of her interest was late 19th century Uttar Pradesh during the later colonial age. It focused particularly on the homogeneous community identity within a patriarchal structure and its effect on Hindu women. In her writings Gupta made an agglomeration of race, gender and colonialism. She defined the changes in sexuality and associated gender inequality, in Hindu literature also. The changes in the status of women had shown in a framework of Hindu communalism. She also observed that, “woman becomes a marker to shape differences with Muslims, specifically in the 1920s and ’30s, amidst the background of shuddhi and sangathan movements”.

Tyagi (2004) described the ancient patriarchal hierarchies in the avenue of domestic space. A dual perception towards women is clearly visible from her study. It showed that how the “brahmanical” patriarchy confined women in particular roles, and develops male dominant power relations. In this context she stated that, “women were divorced from learning and one can distinctly trace the fact that the brahmanization of learning was instrumental in creating a gender divide in the society”. She also observed that, the early learning of gendered behaviour continued “in later life too”.

West (1986) offered a consistent basis for comprehending the socio-historical situation of women. She showed her concern about the “class” raised inequalities in “contemporary societies”. She rendered the inefficiency of usual “functionalist approach” which determines the position of women in “class hierarchy”. Very carefully she addressed the “proletarianization” of specific economic segments. She analysed the “White-collar sectors of the work force” within “the sexual division of labour”. West stressed on the significance of women employment on the determination of “women’s class position”. She also derived the nature of gender inequality with the production market. Referring the family as a unit of “placement agency” she demanded a “conceptual segregation” within “its component” factor in a general mode of economic structure. According to her, “women constitute such an underclass because they are sexually disqualified from primary jobs in the labour market as a result of prejudice and interruptions in labour availability due to marriage and child birth”. She also noticed that female concentration thus become high in “secondary jobs” having “a low economic return, and limited security, lack other economic benefits and chances of promotion”.

Caplan (1985) made an attitudinal study of the association between class and gender, and it is mainly scrutinized through a comprehensive understanding of the upper and middle class female members in the so called Madras city. Along with a theoretical background she discussed different roles played by female householders. She observed that the socio-religious networks performed by women members which is very significant to shape their class identity. Caplan went through the development history and activities of some organizations to analyze its tuning with national as well as local level. She also tried to make a comparative study about the similar type organizations and their performances in Nineteenth-century Third world countries and England. She analysed that periodical origin of such organizations mainly points towards the “historical development of class society”. According to her, “an understanding of bourgeois women thus gives us an important insight into the way this class reproduces itself and, therefore, into the dynamics of the class system as a whole”. Moreover, she observed that, the oppression of working class women often follow a “different order” rather than oppressed as women.
Korpi (2000) covered the different areas of gender inequality in terms of “gendered agency inequality” in association with “democratic politics, tertiary education, and labour force participation”. In relation with this the combine effect of gender inequality and class inequality in 18 countries and the “role of welfare states” are also examined. It is argued that the discussion of gender must include the issues like “class, race and ethnicity” as an integral part of “distributive process”. Korpi also discussed about the structure of different welfare states which varies according to the nature of outcome of gender and class inequality. It is also noticed that, inequality in class can be deduced “in terms of the division of labour in the sphere of economic activity”. “In the analysis of gender inequality, differences with respect to material standards of living have traditionally played an important part” (Korpi, 2000).

2.5 Summary
The theoretical development in the field of gender studies requires inclusion of multiple view points, spatial dimensions and approaches which correlates gender systems and social constructions. Both the understanding of colonization and globalization make widen the platform of gender studies. It contains the social theories as well as histories of development discourse. Though some ground breaking monographs remarkably assess the global gender inequality and make a pioneering step towards gender studies but there must be a variety in gender perspectives. The gender identity from the ancient periods, forms of inequality in different frame works of economy, regional characteristics and customs in the gender geography beyond the boundaries must be explored. The way outs of a self sufficient, multilevel, useful and approachable framework to reduce micro level gender inequality depends a lot on the methodology and technical insights adopted to identify the gender inequality issue of a very particular area. So, the next chapter is devoted to design the methods and techniques to delineate the gender inequality issue properly in the study area.