Chapter VIII

Conclusion

Gender inequality is deeply rooted within the inherent structure of a society. The level of gender inequality depends on social behaviour which varies across social groups. A comprehensive understanding of various forms and magnitude of gender inequality is therefore a complicated issue. In order to address this issue, rural areas of Chakdah and Haringhata C. D. Blocks in Nadia District were studied from the perspectives of gender inequality.

This study of gender inequality for the period of 1991 to 2011 has revealed the following significant observations.

Sex ratio is highly uneven at Village level. A sharp decline in child sex ratio has also been observed in the study area. Out of 15 sample Villages, child sex ratios have decreased in 11 Villages during the study period.

Increasing trends in both the male and female literacy rates have been recorded, but the gender disparity in literacy is still high.

Gender inequality has remained very prominent in case of work participation rate. The Village wise male work participation rate is higher than the female work participation rate to a larger extent. The female work participation rate in Muslim population is remarkably low.

It has been noticed that the factors responsible gender inequality in the study area are structural as well as conditional. The traditions and existing socio-cultural patterns determine the extent of gender inequality. From the analysis of variables responsible for gender inequality in sample Villages, the important outcomes are –

A wide gap has been observed in the percentage of households having male and female as their principal earner across overall population as well as religion and caste groups for both the years 1991 and 2011.

Female age of marriage is remarkably low in the Muslim population.

Female literacy rate varies significantly across religions and castes. Female literacy rate of Muslim is much lower than the Hindu.
Female mean year of schooling is very low, especially in the Muslim, scheduled caste and scheduled tribe population.

The high rate of female dropout is one of the key variables of gender inequality. Adoption of family planning methods is not well accepted by all religious and caste groups. Moreover, ignorance towards family planning methods has been noticed in Muslim, scheduled caste and scheduled tribe population.

Receive of antenatal care is well pervaded only those limited Villages where both the communication system and medical infrastructure is sound. The level of awareness of antenatal care also varies across religions and castes.

In Muslim and scheduled caste population, the mean age of motherhood is very low. Delivery complications have been observed as significantly high in Muslim and scheduled caste population due to low age of marriage and low mean age of motherhood.

In spite of the legal obligations in practicing dowry and awareness in terms of dowry issue, the dowry system widely prevails in the study area. Moreover, domestic violence has been identified as a dominant factor in determining the level of gender inequality in sample Villages.

During the identification of the variables responsible for gender inequality in sample Villages, it has been observed that the magnitude of these variables differs across religions and castes.

In case of total population, child sex ratio, gender wise percentage of household (principal earner based), gender wise literacy rate, percentage of female dropout, percentage of mothers received antenatal care and percentage of married female facing domestic violence were reflected as the significant variables.

For Hindu, the significant variables for gender inequality have been observed as sex ratio, child sex ratio, gender wise percentage of household (principal earner based), female age of marriage, percentage of female dropout rate, percentage of mothers received antenatal care, mean age of mother during first child birth, percentage of female decision makers and percentage of married female facing domestic violence.

In Muslim, the significant variables for gender inequality have been recorded as sex ratio, gender wise percentage of household (principal earner based), male literacy rate, female mean years of schooling, percentage of mothers facing delivery complications, gender wise percentage of decision makers, percentage of mothers ready to give...
dowry in their daughter’s marriage and percentage of married female facing domestic violence.

For scheduled caste population, gender wise percentage of household (principal earner based), male literacy rate, percentage of mothers received antenatal care, female work participation rate, percentage of female decision makers and percentage of married female facing domestic violence have been revealed as significant variables of gender inequality.

In case of scheduled tribe population, the responsible variables have been recognized as female mean years of schooling and percentage of male dropout.

The recognition of gender inequality issue discretely in every caste and religion in the study area is related to the fact that how the rural female from the very particular segment consider themselves subordinated or discriminated and expects an improvement in current process of development. Therefore, the policy designs and frameworks have to be responsive towards both the women of the privileged and non privileged groups in the study area.

The reduction of gender inequality in the study area is possible through the overall socio-economic development of women. For overall socio-economic development of women, provision of proper education, job oriented training, special health care, active participation in public life, opportunity to take decisions for herself and at household as well as community level are urgently needed. Case specific in depth analysis of gender inequality and outcome based strategies are need of the present hour. However, complete eradication of indifferent social behaviour towards women is also a prime necessity.