Gender Inequalities

6

Chapter

Introduction

When you have observed family system, relations in peer groups, neighbourhood and nature of relation in various social groups, you might have noticed certain things. For instance, when father or brother or any male member of the family interacts with female members, a feeling of discrimination is always felt. Similarly, you might have seen dos and don'ts for females in several forms especially in Indian society. In print media the atrocities against women are regularly reported from several parts of country. Right from the beginning of human civilisation, the relations between man and woman are examined with several frames of reference. In Hindu family system, particularly during the duration of sacred fast like 'Karvachoth' etc., you might have heard several mythological stories which are full of those kinds of relationships. All these things help us to accept the idea propagated by Simone de Beauvoir that 'woman is not born, she is made'. It means woman – her ideas, perception, experience, what she is and what she should be – are all constructed by the related social groups and societies in which patriarchy is the dominant ideology.

In Sociology we try to examine these issues along with conceptual, theoretical and methodological insights which give rise to a branch of Sociology known as 'Sociology of gender relations'. Thus, Sociology of gender relations can be known as that branch of Sociology in which man-woman relations are scientifically and critically examined in context of society, culture, polity, economy and psychology. In fact, patriarchy is so powerful in a traditional society like India that every aspect of woman is constructed on the basis of what the male members think.

Whenever we discuss gender relations, we talk about:
- Inequalities between man and woman
- The relation between male power and female power
- The analysis of dominance of male power over woman and
- Women's participation in economic and political activities.

Concept of Gender and Sex

'Gender' is a socially constructed process which is a product of culture. Gender as a sociological concept refers to those political, cultural, socio-psychological and economic propositions by which the relations between men and women operate. It means when we describe men-women relations by using socio-cultural frame, gender comes into existence.

'Sex' is a biological category. In this category those biological features or physiological features are elaborated which create distinction between men and women. While filling the different columns in various application forms, you might have observed a column titled 'sex'. In that column the authorities ask about sex status in the form of male, female and transgender.

Difference between Sex and Gender

Sex differences are understood as biological whereas gender differences refer to those behaviours and attitudes which are constructed through social practice. The construction of ways of being female or male is a dynamic process in which all play a part.

Gender Relations

Gender relations as we have already discussed refer to men-women relations on the basis of ideological, cultural, political and economic issues. In gender relations we examine gender subordination. Issues relating to women empowerment and exploitative trends about women found differently in different societies. In gender relations, it becomes important to talk about the institution of marriage, family, pre-marital, marital and extra-marital relations, the issues of homosexuality, issues related to transgenders, the nature of intimate relations as human sexuality, etc. It is generally accepted that men and women are naturally different because of physiological distinctiveness. But such biological or physiological differences with the support structure of society and culture are converted into social differences. Anthropological and historical evidences have proved that cultural revivalism establishes and re-establishes these differences in relation to vital roles of social interaction.

Gender Inequality and Patriarchy

Through our everyday behaviour, males and females begin to learn their place in an unequal society where 'masculine' characteristics including the exercise of power and dominance are valued for men and 'feminine' characteristics, such as service, nurturing, caring are devalued. So in our society these gender constructions form the basis of unequal relations between females and males.

Patriarchy means rule of father in a male dominated family. It is a social and
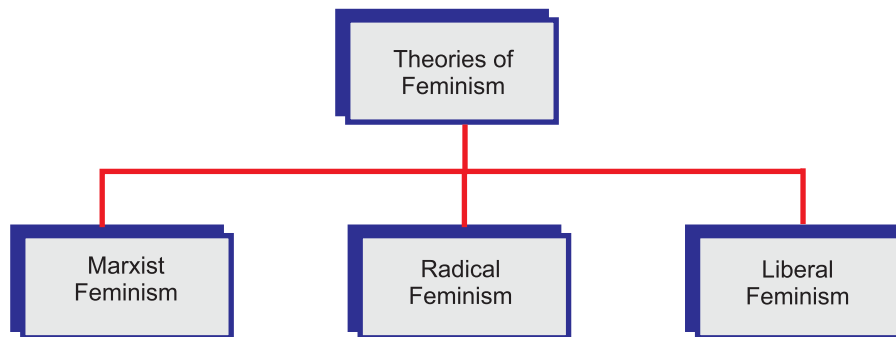
Activity 6.1

Discuss with your mother and father about those norms and value systems which have been communicated to you as a boy or as a girl. And then make comparison between the value system and the norms which a boy possesses and a girl possesses. Prepare a chart and discuss it with your teacher about why it happens.

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ideological construct which considers men as superior to women. According to Sylvia Walby, patriarchy is a "system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women." It means patriarchy is based on a system of power relations which are hierarchical and unequal. The nature of control and subordination of women may vary from one society to another due to the differences in class, caste, religion, education and socio-cultural background.

Theories of Feminism

Feminism is a school of thought in which we incorporate several propositions of ideas known as Marxian feminism, Socialist feminism, Radical feminism etc. These theories basically stress upon 'the patriarchy debate' and construct the logic of women's movement. The basic issue associated with feminism is women's subordination.

1. **Marxist Feminism:** The Marxist feminism talks about how oppression of women has been built systematically into the structure of society. Focuses on a link between patriarchy and capitalism. According to this thought female oppression is a result of ideological domination that emerges out of economic oppression. According to Friedrich Engels, the development of capitalism and the emergence of private property changed the position of women in society. He believed that women got oppressed through the institution of family. The bourgeois family is patriarchal and oppressive since men tried to ensure that property is passed on only to their sons.

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   │   Marxist   │ │   Radical   │ │   Liberal   │
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3. **Radical Feminism**: Radical feminism focuses on the universal nature of patriarchy and accepts that men play an important role in oppressing women. Simone de Beauvoir in her book "*The Second Sex*" pointed out that "women are made not born". Further the theory pointed out that patriarchy is not natural or inevitable that led to a natural division of labour within the family, where women are to be opposed by male members. The liberation of women is required that gender difference should be abolished.

4. **Liberal Feminism:** Liberal feminism believes that all individuals are important and are equal and entitled to equal treatment. Mary Wollstonecraft's "*Vindication of the Rights of Women*" (1972) was the first text of modern feminism which campaigned for women's right to vote (female suffrage).

Wollstonecraft claimed that if women gained access to education as rational individuals in their own right the distinction of sex would become unimportant in political and social life.

Gender Socialisation

One of the constraints in achieving gender equality in India is gender based socialisation. In informal/domestic space girl child right from the beginning internalises those values, norms and behavioural practices which institutionalise inequalities subordination and religio-cultural oppression. She learns to:

> **Box 1**
> Gender socialisation refers to the ways in which any society ensures that children learn the appropriate behaviours associated with their being males and females. It also sets children into different courses in life because they are male or female. Society thus channelises human behaviour through gender socialisation.

1. Act as an obedient child before father and other male family members including the younger brother
2. Always act in terms of politeness and never speak in a loud voice before any family member
3. Try to get efficiency, discipline and time management in the personality in such a way that no male member of family suffers
4. Get specialisation in all domestic activities including religious activities and food preparation

Gradually, what will be the roles in the family after marriage are also learnt by the girl as a part of socialisation process. It is ironical that gender socialisation gives insignificant importance to how to act in the public sphere as independent/ autonomous social unit. The gender socialisation as a process comprises "don'ts" rather than "dos" in the public sphere.

Gender Discrimination:

Gender discrimination refers to those behaviours of subordination, exclusion and non-participation by which one set of population, in this case women, is by and large sidelined or ignored. It means all behavioural patterns are in favour of men and as a result women suffer. In fact, women all over the world are disadvantaged in one form or another.

The Census of India of 2011 reveals that there are 943 females against 1000 males in context of child sex ratio (0-6 years). It is lowest since India's independence. This data shows that discrimination with women has moved toward upward direction. Sex selection in support of male child, dowry deaths, or torture because of dowry, rape and creation of visible differences in all spheres of social relations based upon sex are some of those phenomena which express gender discrimination.

On the basis of 2011 Census you can identify the literacy rate between males and females, gender wage differentials, infant mortality, maternal mortality etc. where discrimination with women is well established.

In terms of malnutrition such discrimination can also be observed. We also find several prejudices about women and girls. In villages, one can observe the pitiable status of a widow. Probably widow in the family experiences the worst kind of discrimination. Also in all families, due to dominance of patriarchy, the female child has been considered inferior to male child.

Status of women

As we are aware, in India women have been facing various problems like female foeticide, dowry, child marriage, restrictions on widow remarriage, attitudinal differences, behavioural differences by society and related groups for women (gender bases), cultural avoidance of childhood of a girl child etc. Besides these pathologies women are also victims of rape, kidnapping, abduction, molestation, trafficking, prostitution, sexual harassment, eve-teasing, moral policing etc. Domestic violence and presentation of woman as commodity in media are also problematic issues which clearly reveal that all institutions varying from family to market suppress women in one form or another. School, in this sense, is a place which can act as instrumental means for minimising women's exclusion.

The issues of gender inequality and of discrimination give rise to various forms of gender discourse. The inequality based upon identity formation of gender raises the issue of gender justice. The question arises whether Sociology of present era is capable of creating those thought processes which lead to issues of equality based gender consciousness.

Universally women constitute almost half the population of the world. But because of subordination of women, ignorance of health status of women by male members of family and non-liking of girl child due to religious and economic reasons, in several parts of world including India women constitute less numbers than the male population. Thus, imbalance in sex ratio including child sex ratio (0-6 years) expresses gender discrimination.

In Indian society, it is found that sex selection abortion during first pregnancy is generally not practiced, but by the time of the second or third pregnancy almost 50 per cent more boys are born as compared to girls. It is more so with upper castes and better educated population. Preference for male child still prevails in India. In our opinion son can be defined as patriarchal value of security to family. It is to an extent unfortunate that gender equality in terms of various dimensions is not critically evaluated. As a result, issue of gender equality at workplace, state violence against women, feminisation of poverty, multiple deprivations of Dalits and tribal women, exclusion of women of various categories from education, the intentional exclusion of girls for determining suitable occupations and suitable partners for them are not examined analytically.

Role of Gender relations in social development:

The issues of gender relations can be used for conceptualising India as a democratic state and as a democratic society.

1. On the bases of constitutional norms, formation of government through election and domination of formal institutions such as law make India a democratic state. The citizens of India whether male and female enjoy and practice fundamental rights, fundamental duties and value of equality. But India as a democratic society practicing equality of gender is a matter open to debate.

2. There is no effective participation of women in decision making process with a sense of equality. Freedom of expression and freedom to make choices are denied to women in both rural and the urban India.

3. The issues relating to caste, kinship and religion perpetuate victimisation of women. In fact, a woman is a prisoner of patriarchy. Her involvement in relations can be observed with a sense of differentiation if comparison is made with man.

4. Wage differentials between males and females workers also exist. Their continuous activities in domestic sphere are always considered non-economic. It makes women a liability.

5. The low sex ratio particularly the child sex ratio is its consequence. Woman is a soft target as far as war and deviance are concerned. Her participation in political activities is not given equal importance.

6. The female members of an agriculturist family continuously work in the field but their presence in the market relating to purchase and sale of agricultural product is not accepted. If a female member claims property right in the family, she is continuously criticised and condemned by male members.

Box 2
Economic Participation

States	Female workers (in %)	Female literacy (in %)	Sex-Ratio (female/1000 males)
Mizoram **(Top)**	46.08	89.40	976
Delhi **(Bottom)**	12.19	80.93	868
Punjab	18.21	70.73	895
National average	25.6	65.46	943

Sources: 1. Economic Census Ministry of Statistic and Programme Implementation
2. The Times of India, 27 Aug. 2014.

In India 25.6 per cent work force consists of women. The highest participation of women in workforce is found in Mizoram while in Delhi it is the lowest. In Punjab the

percentage of population of women work force is below the national average.

These issues of discrimination and oppression express the fact that justice to women and equality for women are still distant realities. It is necessary to attack the system of patriarchy. Such attack can be initiated by introducing gender inequality based socialisation in school. As student when you internalise gender equality based learning, you can communicate such learning to your family members and enter into a dialogue with them. It is one of the important ways by which issues of gender equality can reach different group of society and consciousness in support of gender issues is generated. It is also necessary to have dialogue about fundamental rights, directive principles and fundamental duties laid down in the Indian Constitution, so that consciousness about women's right is framed. Such consciousness will motivate us to raise our voice in support of women's empowerment.

Conclusion

The discourse established in this chapter clearly indicates that gender relations in India are of discriminatory nature. In informal groups and in formal groups woman is discriminated consciously and unconsciously. She also faces multiple forms of violence. Loyalty, obedience and submissions are those values which have been framed for women by patriarchy. After 68 years of India's Independence, situations have undoubtedly changed but such changes are not satisfactory. Women are still not enjoying constitutional rights. They are the victim of caste, religion and orthodoxy. Until and unless, gender equality appears, the development processes of Indian society will remain inegalitarian.

Glossary

- **Child sex ratio**   It refers to number of female child (0-6 years) per 1000 male child of same age-set.
- **Gender discrimination**   It refers to those behaviours of subordination, exclusion and non-participation by which one set of population, namely, women, are by and large sidelined or ignored.
- **Gender role**   It refers to expected attitudes and behaviour, a society associates with each sex.
- **Patriarchy**   It is a system of society in which men hold the power and women are largely excluded from it. In other words, in which the father or oldest male is the supreme authority, and descent is traced through the male line.
- **Sex ratio**   It refers to number of female per 1000 male.
- **Socialisation**   It is a process of life-long learning by which individuals acquire the knowledge, culture, norms and value and transmit it to the new generation.

I. Objective type questions

A. Multiple choice questions

1. Gender relations refers to :
   (a) Inequality between men and women.
   (b) Between male power and female power.
   (c) Dominance of male power and female power.
   (d) All of the above

2. Transgender means :-
   (a) Male   (b) Female
   (c) Third Gender   (d) All of the above

3. The Sociologist theory of feminism has been given by :-
   (a) Karl Marx.   (b) Auguste Comte
   (c) Weber.   (d) Emile Durkheim

4. Gender discrimination is
   (a) Behaviour subordination   (b) Exclusion
   (c) Non- Participation   (c) All of the above

5. Sex ratio means
   (a) Number of females per 1000 males (b) Number of males per1000 males.
   (c)number of children per 1000 females (d) Number of females and males

B. Fill in the blanks

1. ....means rule of father in a male dominated family.
2. The basic issue associated with .... is women subordination.
3. ....feminism focuses on the universal nature of patriarchy.
4. The.................... is family is patriarchal.
5. The Census of India of 2011 reveals that there are...... females against 1000 males.

C. True/False

1. Gender socialisation institutionalised women's subordination.
2. Sex ratio refers to male per 1000 females.
3. Transgender refers to the category of the persons who have attributes of both male and female .
4. Liberal feminism believes that all individuals are important and equal.

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D. Match the columns.

Column A	Column B
Sex	Rule of father
Patriarchy	Expected attitudes and behaviour
Simone de Behavoir	Biological category
Gender role	Vindication of the Rights of Women
Wollstonecraft	The Second Sex

II. Very short answer type questions

1. What is the difference between the term sex and gender ?
2. What do you mean by gender inequality?
3. Is gender socialisation a symbol of discrimination?
4. Is violence against women a consequence of patriarchy?

III. Short answer type questions

1. Which is socially and culturally constructed process?
2. Give the term for male dominated family.
3. Number of female child (0-6 years) per 1000 male child is known as?
4. Define the term referring to number of female per 100 males?
5. Define Sex.
6. Define Gender.
7. What do you mean by gender relations?
8. What is patriarchy?

IV. Long answer type questions

1. What is the theory of feminism?
2. Give examples of gender discrimination in public sphere.
3. What is the role of caste in gender discrimination?
4. What is the role of religion in gender discrimination?
5. Write a note on gender socialisation in Rural India and in Urban India.

V. Very long answer type questions

1. Describe important theories of feminism.
2. 'Women is not born, she is made'. Comment.
3. Is gender inequality raising doubt on India as a democratic society?
4. Describe some important features of gender discrimination in political sphere of India.
5. How gender discrimination is a constraint to inclusive growth?

PROJECT

Write a script and arrange a short play in the class room in which Girl acts as daughter/sister and boy as father/brother, then introduce interaction based on following questions:

1. Daughter: Father, what should I wear in marriage ceremony?
2. Daughter/ sister: Father/Mother/Brother, I would like to go see a   movie with my friends . Please give me permission.
3. Daughter : Father, I will be going to Chandigarh to appear in an examination. Can I go alone or with my friends ?

UNIT 3

3

Unit

Structural and Cultural Change in India

Westernisation and Sanskritisation

7

Chapter

Introduction

As you have read in the Class XI book that culture is a learned behaviour which is shared and transmitted from one generation to another. It can be acquired only when an individual is a member of a society. Culture includes material aspect, i.e., architecture, jewellery and artwork, as well as, non material aspect i.e. beliefs, norms and values, which undergo a change. In this chapter we will discuss two major cultural processes of change, namely, Westernisation and Sanskritisation.

Westernisation

Sanskritisation
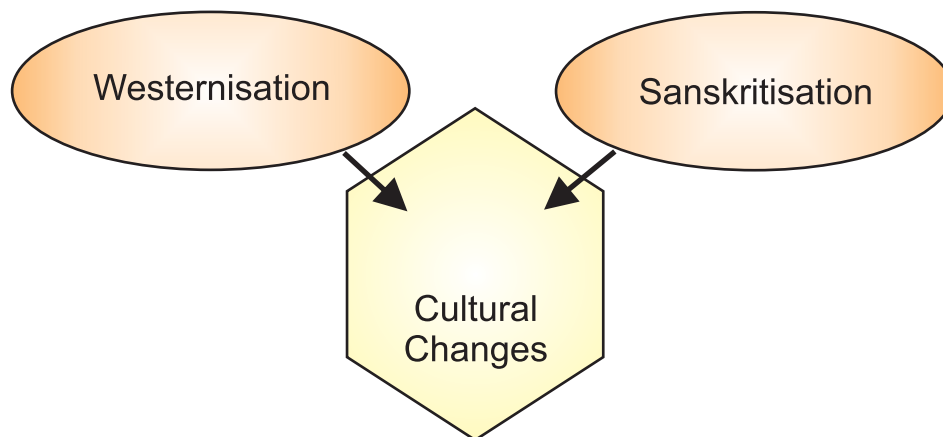
Cultural Changes

Meaning of Westernisation

In order to understand the socio-cultural changes one needs to comprehend the meaning of Westernisation. According to M. N. Srinivas, westernisation refers to "the changes brought about in Indian society and culture as a result of over 150 years of British rule and the term subsumes changes occurring at different levels – technology, institutions, ideology, values." It can therefore be said that the growth of westernisation can be traced from the period of British Raj. No doubt colonial rule lead to exploitation and suppression of masses. But at the same time, it had also brought few radical changes in the society and culture of India.

Army

It was during the nineteenth century, that the British slowly laid the foundation of a modern state. During this period the survey of land was made and revenue was settled. This era marked the emergence of a new bureaucracy. The army, police and law courts were established. These had opened the new avenues for all castes where recruitment was made on the basis of merit. Further, the establishment of schools and colleges took place, which opened their doors to all castes for education. Railways, postal and telegraph services were also established and roads and canals were constructed. The printing press, which had a profound impact on the Indian society, was also brought by the British. It is clear from this that the advent of such changes laid the foundation of transmission of modern, as well as, traditional knowledge to large number of Indians. Knowledge remained no longer a privilege of few. Newspapers, one of the best source of communication had made people realise the common bonds in the whole length and breadth of the country. In this way even the events happening anywhere in the world initiated influencing the lives of people in either good or bad way.

Thus, westernisation is not limited to a particular section of population in India. Those who got the access to western education and employment in British Government were the privileged ones to undergo westernisation. It was only later that other sections of the society comprehended that westernisation was essential.

Do you Know ?

Mysore Narsimhacharya Srinivas (M. N. Srinivas) was a student of G. S. Ghurye, who is known as father of Indian Sociology. Srinivas has written several papers and books and contributed immensely to Indian Sociology by introducing concepts like Sanskritisation and Dominant Caste.

M. N. Srinivas

Carriers of Westernisation

The British as well as Indians can be considered as the carriers of Westernisation. Among the British there were three groups who helped spread westernisation. These were:

Soldiers and civilians occupying high ranks

Traders and owners of orchards

Missionaries

**British Officers**   **British Traders**   **British Missionaries**

On the other hand, Indians who came in direct and indirect contact with the British also helped in the process of Westernisation. These were:

- Those who came in the direct contact were influenced by their life style. These were those Indians who either were employed in the households of the British or those who abandoned Hinduism and espoused Christianity.
- Those who came in indirect contact included the persons who received new education and served as bureaucrats under the British.

Features of Westernisation
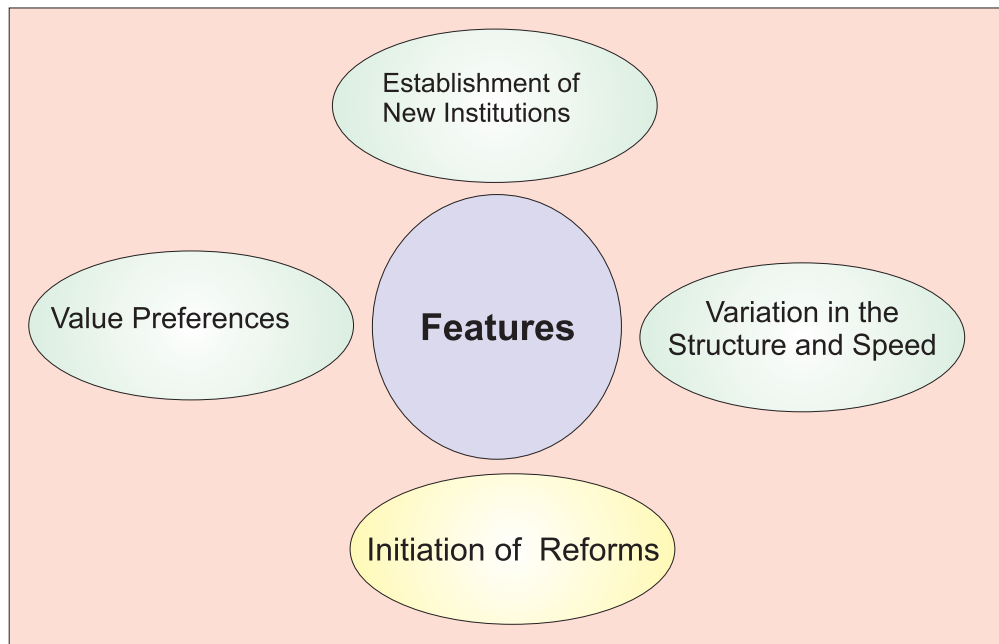
Following are the features of Westernisation

1. **Establishment of New Institutions:** Westernisation not only established new institutions in the society but also brought changes in old institutions. For instance, India had educational institutions even before the arrival of the British. But those institutions were quite different from the ones introduced by the British. It is a fact that earlier only upper caste children were having access to education in those institutions which transmitted mostly traditional knowledge.

2. **Variation in the Structure and Speed:** Impact of westernisation process is not only different from region to region but also from one section of population to another. Its form and speed varies in India. For instance, some sections of population accepted the western dress and their education system. But they did not accept the British diet, dancing and such other habits.

3. **Initiation of Reforms:** The process of westernisation set off by the British attacked the social evils which characterised the Indian society. For instance, the introduction of British law put an end to certain inequalities that were part of Hindu and Islamic laws. The institutions of sati, untouchability and purdah were denounced due to the spread of the notions of equalitarianism and secularisation.

4. **Value Preferences:** Westernisation is loaded with 'certain value preferences', which in turn subsumed a value, like humanitarianism. Humanitarianism means concern for the welfare of all irrespective of their sex, age, caste, religion, economic status etc. In the first half of the nineteenth century, humanitarianism became the basis for the introduction of several reforms by the British. The introduction of various laws by the British put an end to various existing inequalities.

Impact of Westernisation

Westernisation has influenced the Indian society in the following ways:

1. **Reduced Caste Differences**: Westernisation has great impact on the Indian caste system by bringing people from different castes closer to each other. With the process of industrialisation and urbanisation people started working and living together, forgetting the caste differences.

2. **Modern Education:** The most important impact of westernisation is the introduction of modern form of education. Many schools, colleges and universities were opened during British period. Many newspapers and periodicals were published which put forward new thoughts and view points. The new education system disseminated modern values of equality, fraternity and liberty.

3. **Change in Status of Women**: Westernisation has given a fillip to the status of women. They have access to education and enjoy equality of opportunity in all fields.

4. **Change in Dress and Food Habits**: By adopting western dress and food habits different castes tended to be similar.

Girls going to School

5. **Closeness due to Public Transportation:** Modern means of transportation