Ethics & Morality · GS - IV

What are the main factors responsible for gender inequality in India? Discuss the contribution of Savitribai Phule in this regard.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2020	GS - IV	Ethics & Morality

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Patriarchy, son preference, unequal education, economic dependence, gender stereotypes, violence and discrimination, Savitribai Phule, girls' education, social reform, women's dignity

Model Answer

Introduction

Gender inequality refers to unequal access to opportunities, resources, rights and decision-making on the basis of gender. Despite constitutional guarantees and legal reforms, structural and cultural barriers continue to affect women in India.

Factors responsible for gender inequality

- **Patriarchal social structures:** Traditional power relations often privilege men in family and community decisions.
- **Son preference:** Discrimination against girls can manifest in unequal nutrition, healthcare and educational opportunities.
- **Educational disparities:** Early marriage, household responsibilities and safety concerns may interrupt girls' education.

- **Economic dependence:** Unequal wages, limited property ownership and the undervaluation of unpaid care work restrict women's autonomy.
- **Gender stereotypes:** Social expectations often confine women to domestic roles and discourage leadership.
- **Violence and discrimination:** Domestic violence, harassment and unsafe public spaces limit freedom and participation.
- **Weak implementation:** Gaps in enforcement of protective laws and inadequate support services perpetuate inequality.

Contribution of Savitribai Phule

- **Pioneer of girls' education:** Along with Jyotirao Phule, she established a pioneering school for girls in Pune in 1848.
- **Challenge to caste and gender hierarchies:** She worked to expand educational opportunities for oppressed communities.
- **Social reform:** She opposed child marriage and caste discrimination and supported widows and vulnerable women.
- **Inspiration:** Her work established education as a means of emancipation and social equality.

Conclusion

Gender equality requires education, economic empowerment, safety, social reform and effective law enforcement. Savitribai Phule's legacy demonstrates that education and social courage are powerful instruments for dismantling entrenched inequality.

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