



A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF PLATO, ARISTOTLE, AND JOHN STUART MILL'S IDEAS ON GENDER EQUALITY AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO CONTEMPORARY WOMEN IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Gender inequality continues to weaken constitutional democracy and human rights in India, despite efforts in legislation and policy. This study examines the status of women in modern India through the views of Plato, Aristotle, and John Stuart Mill. Plato supported limited inclusion of women in public life. Aristotle defended traditional gender roles, while Mill put forth a rights-based case for true equality. Using doctrinal methods and secondary sources, the research looks at gender gaps in education, employment, property rights, marriage, and violence against women in India. The study argues that Mill's liberal approach offers a better basis for current gender justice than older patriarchal models. It concludes that legal reform should go hand in hand with accountability, awareness, and structural change to create real equality for Indian women.

KEYWORDS: Gender Inequality; Constitutional Democracy; Women's Rights; Patriarchy; Feminist Political Philosophy;

INTRODUCTION

Gender inequality, or discrimination based on sex, is a serious violation of civil rights in many societies. It

shows up in different ways, including sexual harassment, unequal pay for the same work, discrimination related to maternity, limited access to education and jobs, and social marginalization. Despite constitutional guarantees of equality, women in India still face structural and societal obstacles that stop them from fully exercising their rights. The Constitution of India guarantees equality before the law and prohibits discrimination based on sex. It also includes specific provisions to improve the status of women and promote social justice. However, in practice, many women in India still struggle to access the opportunities and protections that should be available to them. Deep rooted patriarchal attitudes, traditional gender roles, and societal expectations often limit women to domestic responsibilities. This restricts their involvement in economic, political, and public life. Gender disparity in India shows up in various indicators such as lower female literacy rates, unemployment, wage gaps, economic dependency, and an increase in poverty among women. According to the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Report 2025,¹ India ranked 131st out of 148 countries in gender parity. This highlights the urgent need for structural reforms and social change.

The issue of gender equality has been debated by philosophers for centuries. Thinkers such as Plato, Aristotle, and John Stuart Mill have provided different views on the role, status, and abilities of women in society. While Plato supported a relatively progressive view of women's involvement in public life, Aristotle defended a hierarchical model of gender relations. John Stuart Mill strongly argued for women's legal and social equality.² This research paper examines the ongoing gender inequality in India even seventy-five years after independence. It aims to look at the philosophical ideas of Plato, Aristotle, and John Stuart Mill regarding gender equality and evaluate their relevance in addressing the current situation of women in India. By engaging with these classical and modern

¹ <https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-gender-gap-report-2025>

² Dr. Raju, *Gender Inequality in India*, 17 PJAЕ 1, 1-2 (2020)
<https://archives.palarch.nl/index.php/jae/article/view/3272>



philosophies, the study explores how their ideas can help advance gender justice and social reform in today's Indian society.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Even with constitutional guarantees of equality under Articles 14, 15, and 21 of the Constitution of India, gender inequality is still deeply rooted in Indian society. Women face discrimination in education, work, inheritance, political involvement, and protection from violence. Strong patriarchal norms, cultural traditions, economic dependency, and institutional bias make it hard to realize women's rights effectively. Though several protective laws have been passed, gaps in implementation remain. Often, societal attitudes support subordination instead of equality. This leads to a critical question, Can classical and liberal political philosophy offer a framework for understanding and tackling gender inequality in modern India? The issue is not just the presence of laws but the ongoing structural and ideological obstacles that hinder true gender justice. This study aims to critically explore these topics through philosophical analysis and socio legal evaluation.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To examine and highlight the main issues of gender inequality in modern India.
- To discuss and explain the views of Plato, Aristotle, and John Stuart Mill on women and gender equality, and to evaluate their relevance in today's global context, especially for Indian women.
- To assess these philosophers' ideas in relation to the current situation of women in India and explore how their perspectives might contribute to national progress and gender justice.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

This research aims to link the ideas of Plato, Aristotle, and John Stuart Mill on gender equality with the

present Indian socio legal context. The study mainly focuses on legal principles and is limited to an analysis of philosophical writings and related secondary literature. It does not include the views of other philosophers beyond these three thinkers. The research is confined to a review of existing research papers, scholarly articles, journals, textbooks, and credible online sources. It particularly examines how John Stuart Mill's concept of gender equality can be applied to the current situation in India as a framework for social progress.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a doctrinal research methodology. The researcher conducts a thorough examination of both primary and secondary sources related to the ideas of Plato, Aristotle, and John Stuart Mill on gender equality and their relevance to modern Indian women. Primary sources include original philosophical texts, legal documents, and trusted online resources. Secondary sources consist of textbooks, scholarly articles, research papers, journals, and writings by notable authors. Through careful analysis of these materials, the study intends to evaluate how classical and modern philosophical theories apply to the current Indian context.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

E. S. Smith, "John Stuart Mill's "The Subjection of Women": A Re-Examination", JSTOR (2001)

In this article, the author examines The Subjection of Women by John Stuart Mill through textual and contextual analyses, including personal, historical, and literary perspectives. The study reviews several major criticisms raised by contemporary scholars and reassesses them through a close reading of the text and deeper contextual interpretation. The author ultimately argues that "The Subjection of Women" should be understood not merely as a philosophical treatise, but as a political intervention aimed at securing women's suffrage rights.



Sehreen Far Bokhari, “Mill and the Status of Women,” AH (2017)

In this article, the author explores John Stuart Mill’s position on the status of women from a liberal feminist perspective. The study also points out certain weaknesses in Mill’s arguments, such as inconsistencies and circular reasoning, while evaluating criticisms raised by other thinkers. It provides historical background to the development of Mill’s liberal feminist ideas, his political philosophy, and his utilitarian approach to human welfare. The author concludes that both the consistencies and inconsistencies in Mill’s thought were shaped by the socio-political environment in which he lived.

I. A. Kanu, “The Equality of Sexes in J. S. Mill Vis-à-Vis the Participation of Women in the Nigerian Labour and Economy,” AJOL (2012)

In this paper, the author investigates the participation of women in the Nigerian labour force and economy. Using empirical data, the study examines this situation in light of J. S. Mill’s argument for gender equality. While not claiming to exhaust all aspects of the issue, the paper adopts a fresh approach by arguing that gender equality, as advocated by Mill, serves as an effective strategy for enhancing women’s participation in Nigeria’s labour market and economic development.

CHAPTER- I

GENDER INEQUALITY IN INDIA

Although gender equality is a basic human right, it is one of the biggest issues affecting human rights in our society today. Gender equality helps create peaceful and strong communities, support sustainable development, and boost economic growth through women’s empowerment. India still ranks among the countries with the lowest gender equality index.

Despite many efforts over the past few decades to eliminate discrimination and reduce the gender inequality gap, it remains a serious problem. This issue persists due to attitudes, stereotypes, and the strong social norms of a male centered culture. A significant portion of India’s population is made up of women, but they often face obstacles in the country’s economic growth. According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2022, India ranks 135 out of 146 countries, which is quite low. Gender inequalities are clear and widespread in India, even though the country’s constitution guarantees equal rights for men and women. Patriarchal and patrilineal traditions are prevalent, giving men more advantages than women in these social systems. Men typically have control over property and wealth and are seen as authority figures in families and leadership roles. This is especially true regarding inheritances, where wealth and property usually pass from father to son. Dowries also reflect this dynamic, as the bride’s family often pays the groom’s family in cash or kind. The preference for sons over daughters is another important factor contributing to gender inequality. Sons are believed to have more economic value because they can better support the family farm or business.³

Poverty, unemployment, strong conservative beliefs, and lack of education are the main causes of gender inequality. Some women are in good positions, while others find themselves in vulnerable situations. Literacy is the first step toward understanding women’s rights and empowerment. It provides women with the tools they need to reach their full potential. According to data from Statista,⁴ the male literacy rate in India is about 84%, while the female literacy rate is about 72%. This gap is even more pronounced in rural areas than in urban centers. National research shows that illiterate women are more likely to marry young and end up unemployed or underpaid. Additionally, marginalized women tend to have more children, which can negatively affect their

³ CARE, <https://www.careindia.org/blog/gender-in-equality/>(viewed on Jan 12,2026,9.00 PM)

⁴ <https://www.statista.com/>



quality of life and that of their families. The results also indicate that women with less education are more likely to be controlled by their husbands.

Despite the growing recognition of the importance of education, especially for women, the literacy gap remains unaddressed by government policies and programs.

There is also a lack of awareness among women about their rights and their ability to achieve equality, particularly for rural women. Social customs, beliefs, and practices further contribute to gender inequality.

CHAPTER II

PLATO, ARISTOTLE AND JOHN STUART MILL'S VIEWS ON WOMEN

Plato's Idea on Women

Plato shares his views on women mainly in Book V of the Republic. Here, the discussion focuses on justice, governance, education, and the ideal state's structure. Through Socrates, Plato raises important questions about marriage, education, family organization, and jobs. This marks one of the earliest philosophical discussions on gender equality.

From a feminist standpoint, Plato's ideas seem progressive for ancient Greece. He argues that women should receive the same education as men, especially in the guardian class. He claims that if both men and women are to perform the same roles in society, they must be trained similarly. According to Plato, the main difference between the sexes lies in biological differences, not in intelligence. Education should therefore depend on personal skills and natural talents, not gender.

Plato famously maintains that women who have the right natural abilities should be allowed to become

Guardians and rulers. He thus opens up political participation and intellectual growth for women, which was rare in Greek society. Many scholars view Plato as an early supporter of female education and some degree of gender equality.

However, a closer look shows contradictions in Plato's philosophy. While he acknowledges women's intellectual potential, he still holds onto certain patriarchal views. In his vision of society, women are often categorized with children and slaves, suggesting a hidden hierarchy. Furthermore, Plato claims that women, as a group, are generally weaker than men, although he admits that some individual women may be stronger and more capable.

Plato's idea to eliminate the traditional family among the Guardian class adds complexity to his views. He recommends communal marriages and the sharing of women and children to promote unity and prevent divisions within the state. Following a eugenics principle, he suggests that the "best" men and women should be matched to produce superior offspring, while less desirable pairings should be avoided. Though this aims for political stability and equality among Guardians, it restricts individuals, especially women, from choosing their partners. The idea of women being held "in common" implies they are primarily seen as tools for ensuring social unity and political order.

Thus, Plato's philosophy shows a tension between promoting educational inclusion and maintaining patriarchal control. While he recognizes women's intellectual abilities and political potential, his arguments come from a male centered viewpoint, prioritizing the state's stability over women's freedom. Still, including women in philosophical discussions marks a significant step toward acknowledging them as subjects worthy of political and intellectual focus.⁵

⁵ Hiling Wang , *Plato on Women* , ACADEMIA (Viewed on Jan 13, 2026, 10.00 PM)

https://www.academia.edu/19661294/Plato_on_women



Aristotle's Idea on Women

Aristotle offers a very different and more hierarchical view of women. His ideas rest largely on his biological and metaphysical theories, particularly in *Generation of Animals* and *Politics*.

Aristotle believes that the male principle is superior and more "divine" than the female principle. In his biological theory, he argues that women are "defective" or "misbegotten" males because they cannot produce semen, which he sees as central to reproduction. According to him, females contribute only material, while males provide form and soul. This biological view serves as the basis for his broader social theory.

Although Aristotle admits that women have rational souls, he believes they lack the full ability to use reason independently. He claims that women are naturally passive and need male leadership. In *Politics*, he compares the husband-wife relationship to that of a ruler and a subject. As a result, Aristotle confines women to the home, assigning them roles related to household management and child-rearing instead of public or political life.⁶

Aristotle's view of gender is clearly hierarchical. He regards men as rational, active, and fit for political power, while he identifies women as irrational, passive, and naturally inferior. For centuries, this philosophical framework profoundly impacted Western thought and supported patriarchal social systems.

Some modern scholars suggest that Aristotle's arguments were influenced by the scientific limitations and competing biological theories of his time. Nevertheless, his writings provided a philosophical justification for women's subordination.⁷

⁶ IVYPANDA <https://ivypanda.com/essays/aristotle/> (viewed on Jan 13, 2026, 11:00 PM)

⁷ LFC

John Stuart Mill's Idea on Women

John Stuart Mill offers one of the strongest and most organized cases for gender equality in modern philosophy. In his important work, *The Subjection of Women*, Mill criticizes the legal and social oppression of women in Victorian society and advocates for complete equality between the sexes.

Mill argues that the current social relations defining men and women, marked by legal subordination, are unfair and hinder human progress. He rejects the idea that women are naturally inferior, asserting that their perceived shortcomings come from social conditioning and lack of opportunities. According to Mill, society has never permitted women to develop their abilities, so any claims about their natural limits are unfounded.

Mill compares married women's situation to a form of domestic slavery. Under Victorian law, married women had no property rights, and their legal identity merged with that of their husbands. Mill strongly disagreed with such laws and supported reforms like the Married Women's Property Bill. He believed that marriage should be a partnership between equals, not a situation of dominance and submission.

Moreover, Mill advocated for women's right to vote and political involvement. He reasoned that since women make up half the population, they should have an equal say in the laws that affect them. He believed there was no rational or moral basis for denying women the right to vote. Mill also makes a practical case for women's freedom. He argues that society benefits when women are educated and empowered. Educated women improve relationships within marriage, enhance child care, and contribute to social progress. Unlike Plato and Aristotle, Mill focuses on women's independence and individual rights rather than subordinating them to state interests. In this way,

<https://www.lakeforest.edu/news/everybodys-a-little-bit-sexist-a-re-evaluation-of-aristotles-and-platos-philosophies-on-women> (Viewed on Jan 14, 2026, 2:00 PM)



Mill's philosophy marks a significant shift from traditional hierarchical models to a modern view of real equality based on liberty, justice, and human development.⁸

Comparative Critical Analysis and Relevance to Contemporary India

The philosophical views of Plato, Aristotle, and John Stuart Mill represent three different stages in the development of gender thought. This progression goes from conditional inclusion to structured subordination and finally to full legal and political equality.

(a) Plato

Conditional Equality within a Patriarchal Framework
Plato's philosophy is progressive for its time. He recognized that women have intellectual abilities similar to men. His argument that women should receive the same education as men and could become Guardians challenges the deeply rooted patriarchal norms of ancient Greece. However, Plato's idea of equality is functional and state-oriented rather than rights-based. Women are included in public life primarily to strengthen the unity and efficiency of the state. His concepts of communal marriage and sharing women highlight the lack of individual freedom, especially for women. Thus, Plato supports educational and political involvement, but not personal liberty.

Relevance to India: Today in India, women have constitutional equality, access to education, and political representation in local governance. Yet, similar to Plato's model, women's empowerment is often justified in terms of national development instead of individual freedom. Women are encouraged to contribute to economic growth, but issues like marital autonomy, reproductive rights, and personal liberty still face challenges. Therefore, Plato's ideas

reflect India's transitional stage progressive in structure but limited in social change.

(b) Aristotle

Naturalization of Female Subordination Aristotle's theory is fundamentally hierarchical. He bases women's inferiority on biological claims and argues that women are naturally subordinate to men. His approach legitimizes male dominance by framing it as "natural." This philosophical view has historically shaped patriarchal legal systems and social norms, reinforcing domestic confinement and exclusion from public power.

Relevance to India: Many gender inequalities in India still reflect assumptions similar to Aristotle's ideas. Cultural practices such as son preference, restrictions on women's movement, dowry, and domestic decision-making power stem from the belief that men should be the heads of households. Even when laws ensure equality, social structures often treat women as secondary members of society. Aristotle's philosophy helps us see how deeply ingrained biological justifications can sustain inequality.

(c) John Stuart Mill

Equality as a Principle of Justice and Utility
In contrast, John Stuart Mill promotes a rights based and freedom centered theory of gender equality. In *The Subjection of Women*, he argues that the legal subordination of women is morally wrong and socially harmful. Unlike Plato, Mill does not justify equality for state efficiency; unlike Aristotle, he does not link inequality to biology. Instead, he attributes women's subordination to historical oppression and unjust social conditioning. Mill emphasizes: Equal education, Property rights within marriage, Political suffrage, Freedom of choice, Intellectual companionship in marriage His theory is rooted in liberalism and utilitarianism, asserting that society

⁸ Sehreen Fan Bokhari, Mill and the status of women, 57AH 27, 30-41(2017)

http://pu.edu.pk/images/journal/phill/pdf_files/3_v37_17.pdf



improves when both men and women can fully develop their abilities.

Relevance to India: Mill's philosophy is very relevant to modern India. While constitutional provisions assure equality, the ongoing presence of structural inequality shows that legal reform alone falls short.⁹ Mill's focus on: Changing social attitudes, Giving women a political voice, Ensuring economic independence, Reforming marriage laws remains directly applicable. His ideas align closely with contemporary feminist constitutionalism and human rights discussions in India. Conclusion of Comparative Chapter Plato initiated the philosophical acknowledgment of women's intellectual abilities. Aristotle established biological determinism that justified subordination. Mill challenged both state centered and biological arguments and pushed for complete equality grounded in justice and freedom. For today's India, Mill's model offers the strongest basis for reform. However, Plato's emphasis on equal education remains crucial, and Aristotle's framework helps identify the cultural roots of discrimination. Thus, advancing women in India requires: Structural reform -Plato, Cultural transformation- challenging Aristotle, Legal and political equality- Mill.

CHAPTER III

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE IDEAS OF PLATO, ARISTOTLE AND JOHN STUART MILL IN THE CONTEXT OF PRESENT INDIAN WOMEN

This chapter examines gender inequality in India across several key areas: education, political empowerment, economic participation, marriage and family, religion, sports, and crimes against women. It uses data and recent reports to assess how the ideas of philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, and John Stuart Mill can be applied in the Indian context. The chapter also

critiques the shortcomings in each philosopher's views.

A. Education

Education is crucial for empowerment and social mobility. Despite improvements in enrollment at the primary level, gender gaps still exist in secondary and higher education. The Global Gender Gap Report 2022 from the World Economic Forum ranks India 107 out of 146 countries in educational attainment. Data from NFHS-5 shows that male literacy is around 84.7%, while female literacy is about 70.3%, indicating a significant difference. In many rural and economically disadvantaged areas, girls' education is often deprioritized because of the belief that daughters "belong" to another family after marriage. This leads to viewing investment in their education as economically unwise. John Stuart Mill argued for equal access to education in *The Subjection of Women*, stating that social prejudice not nature limits women's intellectual growth. Similarly, Plato believed that if women are expected to do the same jobs as men, they should also receive the same education.

Mill's argument remains highly relevant. Denying education keeps people unaware of their rights, dependent on others, and socially vulnerable. Aristotle's claim that women have inherent intellectual limits contradicts evidence showing women's academic success in India. Therefore, Plato's and Mill's ideas on educational equality provide a solid basis for closing India's literacy gap.

B. Political Empowerment

Political representation is a sign of real equality. India ranks 48th out of 146 countries in political empowerment (Global Gender Gap Report 2022).¹⁰ Though women's representation in Parliament has gradually increased to around 14–15%, it still falls

⁹ Deepika Mishia, *John Stuart Mill's view on women and its relevance*. 8 IJCR 811, 810- 812 (2020)

<https://www.ijcr.org/papers/IJCR2012088.pdf>

¹⁰ Global Gender Index, 2022



short compared to their share of the population.¹¹ Mill focused on women's right to vote and argued that excluding women from politics slows societal progress. He insisted that democracy cannot be genuine if half the population is left out of legislative processes. While Plato did not advocate for modern democracy, he acknowledged that capable women could serve as Guardians and leaders.¹² Aristotle's belief that women are naturally unfit for leadership is contradicted by India's political history, which includes successful leaders like J. Jayalalithaa and Mamata Banerjee, who have shown strong leadership abilities.¹³ Mill's ideas align closely with the need for reforms like better legislative representation and reservation policies. Including women in politics strengthens democratic legitimacy and makes policies more responsive to gender concerns.¹⁴

C. Workplace Discrimination and Economic Participation

India has a significant gender gap in economic participation. Reports highlight wage differences, job segregation, and a low rate of female participation in the workforce. Discrimination affects pay and career opportunities heavily.¹⁵ Mill criticized wage inequality and the laws that denied married women control over their earnings. He argued that economic

independence is key to women's freedom. Plato similarly asserted that women who can perform the same jobs as men should get equal training and opportunities.¹⁶

Aristotle's view that women belong in domestic roles continues to shape societal attitudes in India, where women's jobs are often seen as secondary to household duties. Mill's call for equal pay and changes to marriage laws is particularly relevant in India, where motherhood and unpaid care often hamper women's career growth. Economic empowerment benefits not just individuals but also national productivity and social stability.¹⁷

D. Marriage

Family Marriage is a major area of gender inequality in India. Studies show that many women leave the workforce after having children, and only a small number return to leadership positions.¹⁸ Practices like dowry, early marriage, and unequal domestic responsibilities remain widespread. Plato's communal family setup limits individual freedom and reduces women to mere tools for state welfare. Aristotle saw

¹¹ Dr Santosh Kumar Mohapatra, *Faltering on the road to close the gender gap*, SAMBA (Viewed on Jan 16, 2026, 8.00 PM) <https://sambadenglish.com/faltering-on-the-road-to-closing-the-gender-gap/>

¹² Deepika Mishia, *John Stuart Mill's view on women and its relevance*. 8 IJCRT 811, 810- 812 (2020) <https://www.ijcrt.org/papers/IJCRT2012088.pdf>

¹³ Marj Maceda, *Women in Politics, the contemporary issue of women representation*, ACADEMIA (viewed on Jan 16, 4.00PM) https://www.academia.edu/34153187/Women_in_Politics_The_Contemporary_Issue_of_Women_Political_Representation

¹⁴ Fauzia Khan, *Indian politics was a clear gender imbalances : That's why we need the women's reservation bill*, THEWIRE (viewed on Nov 24,2022, 2.00 PM) [https://thewire.in/women/indian-politics-has-a-clear-](https://thewire.in/women/indian-politics-has-a-clear-gender-imbalance-thats-why-we-need-the-womens-reservation-bill)

[gender-imbalance-thats-why-we-need-the-womens-reservation-bill](https://thewire.in/women/indian-politics-has-a-clear-gender-imbalance-thats-why-we-need-the-womens-reservation-bill)

¹⁵ THETIMESOFINDIA, <https://m-timesofindia-com.cdn.ampproject.org/v/s/m.timesofindia.com/business/india-business/gender-discrimination-reason>, viewed on Jan 17,2026, 3.00 PM)

¹⁶ Deepika Mishia, *John Stuart Mill's view on women and its relevance*. 8 IJCRT 811, 810- 812 (2020) <https://www.ijcrt.org/papers/IJCRT2012088.pdf>

¹⁷ Andrea Borghoni, *Plato and Aristotle on women : Selected quotes*, THOUGHTCO (viewed on Nov 22, 2022, 3.00 PM) <https://www.thoughtco.com/plato-aristotle-on-women-selected-quotes-2670553>

¹⁸ THEQUINT, <https://www.thequint.com/neon/gender/india-ranks-low-at-135-in-world-economic-forum-global-gender-gap-report-2022> (viewed on Jan 22,2026,4.00 PM)



marriage as a hierarchy between ruler and ruled.¹⁹ In contrast, Mill viewed marriage as a partnership among equals and criticized the legal subjugation of wives.²⁰ Mill's ideas offer the strongest basis for reform. Issues like marital rape (still poorly addressed), unequal household labor, and minimal paternity leave stress the need for shared parenting responsibilities. Aristotle's hierarchical view strengthens patriarchy, while Mill promotes equality in the private sphere.

E. Religious-Based Discrimination

Religious customs have historically influenced gender roles in India. Practices like temple entry restrictions and inequalities in personal laws highlight patriarchal readings of religious texts.²¹ Mill warned against using tradition and religion to justify oppression. Plato's focus on equal capabilities would likely lead him to reject exclusion based on biological factors like menstruation.²²

Legal actions, such as challenges to discriminatory practices, echo Mill's logical critique of tradition. Gender equality should take precedence over customs that infringe on fundamental rights.

F. Discrimination in Sports

There are clear gender disparities in sports, including unequal pay, inadequate representation, and lack of institutional backing. Plato supported physical training for women in both Republic and Laws, arguing that civic excellence requires developing all citizens.²³ Mill's principle of equality also advocates for equal participation. Aristotle's belief that women are physically weaker and should avoid rigorous activities continues to perpetuate stereotypes.²⁴

Modern scientific research disproves Aristotle's claims. Women athletes in India have gained global recognition, challenging the idea that they lack capability.²⁵ Equal funding, representation, and support are essential to dismantle bias in sports.²⁶

G. Crimes against Women

Data from the National Crime Records Bureau shows that over 400,000 cases of crimes against women were reported in 2022,²⁷ with increases in domestic violence, assault, and rape. These figures highlight systemic vulnerabilities.²⁸ Aristotle's view of women as weaker beings feeds into cultural narratives that normalize control and violence. Mill believed women are socialized into submission, making it hard for them to resist.

¹⁹STC, <https://www.savethechildren.in/others/gender-discrimination-in-the-indian-society/> (Viewed on Nov 22, 2026, 5.00 PM)

²⁰ Luci Brisson, *Women in Plato's republic*, 9OEJ 130, 129-136(2012) <https://journals.openedition.org/etudesplatoniciennes/277?lang=en>

²¹ Ayush Mishra, *Plato and Gender Equality : In context of Sabarimala*, MPNLU (viewed on Jan 24, 2026, 5.00 PM)

²² INDIATODAY, <https://www.dailyo.in/politics/sabarimala-triple-talaq-why-religions-in-india-discriminate-against-women-27052> (Viewed on Jan 24, 2026, 4.00PM)

²³ Hannah Smith, *Sexism started with Aristotle*, JSS (viewed on Jan 23, 2026, 9.00 PM)

²⁴ Deepti Kohli, *Gender Discrimination in Sports : Depleting respect of women Players in India*, 6IJSR 1493, 1494 (2012)

<https://www.ijsr.net/archive/v6i12/ART20179052.pdf>

²⁵ Heather Reid, *Plato on women in Sport*, 47JPS 344, 344(2020)

https://www.academia.edu/44072342/Plato_on_Women_in_Sport

²⁶ Deepika Mishia, *John Stuart Mill's view on women and its relevance*. 8 IJCRT 811, 810- 812 (2020)

<https://www.ijcrt.org/papers/IJCRT2012088.pdf>

²⁷ National Crime Record Bureau, 2022

²⁸ TOI,

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/womens-safety-in-india-between-official-data-and-lived-reality-in-2025-year-ender/articleshow/126190067.cms> (Viewed on Jan 30, 2026)



Legal frameworks, including the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, exist, but there are implementation challenges. Mill's focus on social reform, legal equality, and dismantling oppressive customs is vital for addressing gender-based violence. Achieving structural change requires gender-sensitive training for police, judges, and administrators.

ANALYSIS

Aristotle's framework upholds patriarchal hierarchy and is not useful for advancing gender justice. Plato's framework supports educational and civic inclusion, but is limited in personal freedom. John Stuart Mill's framework offers the most complete and relevant basis for gender equality, emphasizing freedom, legal reform, political involvement, and economic independence. For meaningful gender equality in contemporary India, we need: 1. Equal access to education and work 2. Political representation 3. Revisions to marriage and personal laws 4. Elimination of discriminatory religious practices 5. Protection against violence 6. Changing patriarchal attitudes While Plato recognized women's capabilities and Aristotle reflects historical oppression, Mill provides the most relevant model for today's Indian women

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This research looked at gender inequality in India through a philosophical and socio legal views, focusing on the ideas of Plato, Aristotle, and John Stuart Mill. The study aimed to see if classical and liberal philosophical frameworks can effectively address the current situation of Indian women. Gender inequality in India continues despite constitutional promises of equality. Disparities are clear in education, employment, political participation, property rights, and protection from violence. Patriarchal norms, preference for sons, economic dependency, and deep cultural practices shape women's experiences. Plato recognized that women have intellectual potential and pushed for equal education and participation in public life. However,

his ideas were state-focused and conditional. Aristotle viewed women's subordination as natural and biological, reinforcing hierarchical gender roles. His framework does not hold up in today's democratic societies. In contrast, John Stuart Mill presented a rights based theory of gender equality based on liberty, justice, and individual autonomy. Mill rejected biological determinism and argued that women's subordination comes from historical oppression and social conditioning, not from natural inferiority. The analysis showed that many structural inequalities such as limited political representation, wage gaps, workplace discrimination, domestic violence, unequal marital power dynamics, and crimes against women reflect persistent patriarchal attitudes similar to those endorsed by Aristotle. Plato's focus on equal education and civic participation provides some guidance but does not address autonomy in private life. Mill's framework, however, offers a solid foundation for reform, especially regarding legal equality, economic independence, political representation, and marital partnership.

The study concludes that while legal reforms in India have promoted gender justice, ongoing violence, economic marginalization, and institutional bias highlight the gap between formal equality and real equality. Gender inequality in India is not just a legal issue but also a structural and cultural one. Mill's liberal and rights based approach offers the strongest foundation for transforming Indian society towards true gender justice. However, lasting change needs more than new laws. It requires changes in social attitudes, accountability from institutions, and empowerment through education and economic participation. The fight for gender equality in India is ongoing, and achieving women's equal status requires continued philosophical thought, legal reform, and social commitment. This research shows that philosophical inquiry is still highly relevant to today's socio-legal challenges. While Plato began the intellectual acknowledgment of women's abilities and Aristotle highlights the historical roots of subordination, John Stuart Mill presents the most compelling framework for achieving true gender



equality in modern India. The path toward equality is gradual but necessary. Legal reform, educational improvement, economic empowerment, and social change must work together to make gender justice more than just a constitutional promise, it must become a lived reality.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings of this research, here are some recommendations:

Strengthening Legal Implementation Mechanisms-

Laws that protect must be effectively enforced through accountable institutions. Police officers, protection officers, medical professionals, and judicial authorities should handle gender-based complaints with care and fairness. Mandatory gender-sensitivity training should be instituted in enforcement agencies.

Promotion of Equal Education-Equal access to quality education for girls, especially in rural and marginalized communities, should be prioritized. Education is essential for understanding rights, achieving economic independence, and facilitating social mobility.

Economic Empowerment and Equal Pay-

Government policies should aim to increase women's participation in the workforce, ensure equal pay, and support women's entrepreneurship. Economic independence is key to lowering vulnerability to domestic violence and exploitation.

Political Representation-

More women should participate in legislative bodies and decision-making institutions through effective enforcement of reservation policies and leadership development programs.

Reform of Marital and Family Laws-

Marriage should be viewed as a partnership of equals. Legal reforms must address issues related to marital autonomy, shared domestic responsibilities, and acknowledgement of unpaid care work.

Elimination of Discriminatory Social Practices-

Strict enforcement of laws against dowry, sex-selective abortion, and child marriage is essential. Public awareness campaigns must challenge son preference and patriarchal stereotypes.

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