



Gendered Society and Education System In India – A Continuing Struggle

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Abstract

Gender inequality is a major issue in India, where women have long been discriminated against and denied basic rights. This may be observed in practice in a number of contexts, such as the workplace, educational institutions, and other aspects of daily life. This includes, but is not limited to, circumstances such as receiving a lower salary than males, being denied opportunities to further one's education or career, or being exposed to physical or verbal violence because of one's gender. Sexism and various types of discrimination against women are deeply ingrained in the culture of India, and education is considered the key to unlocking economic, social, and political opportunities, which can help to create a more equitable and just society. Historically girls have been disadvantaged when it comes to access to education due to cultural norms, socioeconomic conditions, and other factors. Women in India are subject to several rules and regulations that limit the amount of personal autonomy they have. These may take the shape of both unofficial and official obstacles, it may be more difficult for women to fully express their political and economic agency within their communities as a result of these constraints. The possible solution to deal with these issues are through alteration of cultural beliefs and the implementation of legislation that safeguards the rights of women. In India, boys are much more likely than girls to be able to read and write. This could be because women are less likely than men to have finished their formal education. About 187 million people in India can neither read nor write. This is about a third of all the people in the world who can't read or write. About 75% of Indian men still know how to read and write, but only 51% of Indian women have completed high school or more.

Keywords: Gender Inequalities, NPE, Gender Equality, Equity ,Human Rights.

Introduction

A Gender Parity Index (GPI) of 1.02 was recorded for India's elementary schools in the 2017-18 school year. The number was up from the previous fiscal year. By comparing the percentage of women to the percentage of men at each educational level, the gender gap in education may be seen. On average, men had more schooling than women did. While just 31% of males do not have a four-year degree, 62% of women fall into this category. Also, as women aged, their cognitive abilities declined at a faster rate than men's. The older population and lesser education levels of the sample only served to amplify the innate gender gap in intelligence. When people talk about gender inequality in India, they're referring to the many ways in which men and women are treated differently. Patriarchal structures are largely responsible for the persistence of gender inequality. It's been called "systemic subordination," and it's said to have its roots in preconceptions about women's inferiority. In India, gender inequality is a complex issue that has far-reaching consequences for individuals of both sexes. Expanding democracies are inextricably linked to ensuring that all people have access to a decent education so that they may become knowledgeable contributors to society. Around six million children in India are not in school, with a disproportionate percentage being girls. Only 26% of women and 50% of males have graduated high school between 2006 and 2010. This gender gap is especially noticeable in low-income households. Literacy rates among young men and women in India are drastically different. The 2011 Indian Census found that 82% of Indian males and 66% of Indian females were literate. The percentage of Indian high school students that are female increased by roughly 10% between 2011 and 2017. Although there is encouraging progress, much more has to be done before we can say that girls and boys have equal educational opportunities.

Education In India

By joining the Global Fit for Children project and ratifying the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, India has set the stage for the government and people to keep working. The Indian government began the Education for all campaign to ensure that all children in the country from 6 to 14 years old have access to a free and compulsory education in response to a constitutional requirement approved in December 2002. India has certain progressive legislation and educational practices, but they are not reflected in the country's underlying institutions. Persistent detrimental gender stereotypes and outmoded societal conventions that limit girls' and women's freedom may worsen pre-existing inequality. Nearly twice as many girls as boys never enrol or are expelled from school due to behavioural or academic issues. Girls as young as eleven are frequently forced to forego their education in order to assist provide for their family by working in the fields or on road construction projects.

According to UNICEF, poverty and cultural standards are two of the main contributors to India's gender education gap. The pervasive filthiness of classrooms is another barrier to females' education. When it comes to toilet facilities, females have little choice but to use the ones designated for guys in

certain schools. Adolescent females, like younger girls, benefit greatly from having access to gender-specific restrooms. When women learn they won't have the space or resources they need to manage their periods at school, they drop out in large numbers. After reaching puberty, 23% of Indian female students drop out of school. Furthermore, menstruation may cause women to lose as much as half a year of school time if they decide to continue their education. (Rajendra 2014)

Gender Inequality In Education And Social Status In India

The obvious differences between the sexes in health, education, economics, and politics in India are a prime example of the pervasive problem of gender inequality in the country. The gender gap persists when patriarchal standards are institutionalised. As an example of this kind of all-encompassing subjugation, consider the common practise of treating women as second-class citizens from the time of their conception forward. India's gender inequality problem is complicated, as it affects both sexes. Gender parity and educational justice are essential for the well-being of any democracy because of the need for educated people who can put their skills to work in the economy. Some have argued that sexism persists because of institutionalised forms of discrimination, such as biased legislation and cultural standards. Once again, this year, India's secondary schools have been hit hard by the country's pervasive illiteracy. The research's results will guide initiatives to expand and improve access to higher education for women and girls. We need to enact and strictly enforce policies that remove barriers for women to enrol in and graduate from college. If we want to fix the power imbalances that have developed in a culture dominated by men, we must do something about women's low levels of education and autonomy. The Indian government should investigate cultural norms and socioeconomic variables that favour equal school enrolment for girls and boys to guarantee that all citizens of India have equal access to education. India's government has made and will make significant contributions toward reducing the country's widening education gap. (Sen, 2001)

Government programmes in India are stressing the value of education to improve the country's infrastructure, services, and employment opportunities. Access to public transport, improved sanitation, clean water and air, and focused investment in schools are just some of the ideas put up to better the lives of low-income families. Disparities in wealth, social status, social context, technology, location, and ownership are all possible causes for this issue. It's not hard to identify where India's educational system falls short, and its underlying problems are widely understood. Increasing financing for education is just one part of the solution to the problem of educational inequality, we also need to strengthen the government's ability to administer, monitor, and enforce laws and educate and train teachers.

Education Disparities In India

1. Schooling:

Furthermore, inequality in educational possibilities is a major contributor to reluctance to change. Members of society with the greatest education, such as the ruling class and bureaucrats, actively oppose any changes in the status quo. They are against any change for the better in society and want to retain things as they are. The main reason for this is because they do not want anybody to threaten their position in society. The children living in the countryside do not have easy access to better

educational opportunities. The level of education offered varies widely since most schools lack even the most basic types of infrastructure, such as furniture or personnel like teachers. Because there aren't enough middle schools or high schools, it's quite unusual for kids to give up on their education after finishing elementary school. For the most part, women in rural India still face more barriers to education than men do. There is evidence that children from low-income families are less likely to continue their education after high school, which suggests that the mother's educational background is also important for her children's academic performance.

2.Secondary Schooling

Secondary school dropout rates in rural India are much higher for girls than boys, illustrating the persistence of the gender gap in education. According to statistics collected between 2006 and 2010, girls made up more than 70 percent of primary school dropouts. Female students had a greater dropout rate than male students because of difficulties getting to and from school and because of peer pressure. Several parents expressed worries for their daughters' safety and security when questioned about the duration of their daughters' daily trips. Families in rural areas sometimes have higher standards for their daughters' responsibilities as wives and mothers, and they want to marry them off as early as their twenties for this same reason. (Siddhu, 2011)

3.Post-Secondary Education

There has been a steady increase in the number of Indian women attending and completing degrees in post-secondary schools. College enrolment among women has increased during the last several decades. Distribution still varies widely amongst disciplines, however. Unlike male students, who may be found in almost any academic discipline, female students are heavily concentrated in a small number of disciplines. When compared to girls, teenage boys are more likely to quit school. Predictors of male college dropout rates include the degree to which they feel the necessity and urgency to get employment. After landing a job, males may be more likely to abandon their college education than women since the pressure to quit is greater for them.

4.Literacy

Women in India continue to have a lower literacy rate than men notwithstanding recent gains. The 2011 census indicated that just 65.46 percent of Indian women could read and write, whereas 82.14 percent of Indian men could do so. Women have a lower rate of school enrolment and retention than men do. Data from a state-wide sample study in 1997 shows that only Kerala and Mizoram have female literacy rates close to the world average. Experts believe that expanding educational opportunities for women in Kerala is the best way to improve their economic condition. Only 26.6% of women and 50.4% of males achieved the educational benchmark between 2006 and 2010, respectively. (Parag and Nikita 2018)

5.Reservation Of Female Students

Non-Formal Education is offered exclusively to women in around 40% of state facilities and 10% of union territory centres. Since the beginning of the century, around 0.3 million NFEs have cared for a total of 7.42 million children, of which roughly 0.12 million catered only to young women. The Indian state of Orissa has allocated 30% of all undergraduate seats at its publicly funded colleges of

engineering, medicine, and other disciplines to female students. The Prime Minister of India and the Planning Commission gave their blessing to the creation of the Indian Institute of Technology as a women-only institution. While the number of educated women in India grew considerably in the 1990s, they still face obstacles to furthering their education.

Reasons For Gender Inequalities

Inequality between the sexes is not something that humans created, and it has no foundation in how people believe they should be treated. Cultural and gendered norms that place constraints on families have far-reaching implications for human interaction, relationships, and the subjugation of women. (Amartya,2001) pointed out how important it is to look at the underlying social and cultural forces that keep gender inequality alive and well. Having a boy is more highly valued than having a girl in Indian culture for a number of reasons, including maintaining family connections, carrying on a family's heritage, creating one's own identity and place in society, and securing one's family's financial future. No matter how affluent or prominent a person is, prejudice against women exists in every society. Putting it bluntly, a woman's self-respect and marital chances are at stake if she deviates from the accepted gender standards. There are several facets of Indian society that contribute to the widespread practise of son preference, a core component of the neglect of daughters. (Victoria A 2011)

Pervasive mindset- Economically, the most significant factor contributing to the gender pay gap is the dowry system, which is why sons are so valuable to families. The son might likewise be a dowry recipient. Another aspect is the worry that one's parents or other relatives won't be able to take care of them financially when they become older. It is often assumed in modern society that adult sons would pay for their elderly parents financially. Prejudice stems from many such irrational assumption.

Further contributing to the gender gap is the fact that males often have more access to resources such as manpower and physical strength and get more support from their partners when it comes to meeting their familial responsibilities. Gender disparity exists for a number of other reasons as well, such as retirement benefits, advancement in one's career, and the fulfilment of one's familial responsibilities. Another contributor to gender inequality is the widespread beliefs of today's society, which state that having a male is important to earn recognition. Nonetheless, society as a whole would likely come to the conclusion that they are just unfounded assumptions if additional investigation were conducted.(Sahni& Shankar, 2012)

Socio- cultural set up-

Lots of things may happen in the world of politics, society, and the economy. Despite its common use to describe patriarchal nations, "Father's Law" more accurately describes a social order in which men have control over all aspects of life, including the naming of children and the distribution of wealth. Consequently, "Patriarchy" is a term for misogyny and the subjugation of women. Patriarchal values and norms go so deep in a society that stigmatises women that parents will always put their children first. Many young women in developing countries like Bangladesh start their working lives in domestic service because of the discrimination they face at home due to cultural conventions. In

rural areas, the idea that males should have an education is pervasive since, unlike women, men are traditionally expected to provide for their families after marriage.

Cultural conventions and concepts from the past contribute to the continued gender disparity in both the workplace and the classroom. Economic, racial/ethnic, physical, and gender norm hurdles all limit women's and girls' ability to exercise their rights. Millions of girls are prevented from continuing their education above elementary school because of factors such as early marriage, gender-based violence, and discriminatory laws and regulations. Women and girls' education is becoming more important in the fight to remove discrimination based on gender as a result of their large and rising engagement in income-generating activities. Safeguarding economically vulnerable families, raising productivity, and closing the gender gap in the workforce are all goals that may be achieved via education. (Amartya, 2001)

There is a need of ensuring that women and girls have equal access to and participation at all levels of secondary and higher education. The completion of secondary education "has a substantial correlation with women marrying later and deferring first birth," according to research conducted by the German Foundation for World Population. Not only should women and girls be given the same educational opportunities as males, but they should also be taught and encouraged to challenge gender bias in the classroom. (Kingdon, 2007)

Representation of women in politics

It's possible that this manifestation of discrimination is to blame for the pervasive underrepresentation of women in positions of leadership. India has the lowest gender disparity in political empowerment of any major economy in 2013, ranking higher than nations like Denmark, Switzerland, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom. This achievement gave India the title of the most politically empowered nation overall. This is due to the fact that India has a higher percentage of women serving in political office than any of these other nations. (Wichterich, 2012). Since quite some time ago, women have held positions of responsibility in every level of the Indian government, from the office of the prime minister to the offices of the chief ministers of individual states. These positions range from the prime minister's office to the offices of the chief ministers of individual states. 65.63 percent of eligible voters cast their votes in the parliamentary general elections that were conducted in India in 2014, which is a lower percentage than the 67.09 percent who did so in the elections that were held in 2009. In India's 16 different states, women now have greater voting power than their male counterparts. During the parliamentary elections that took place in India in April and May of 2014, a total of 260,6 million women cast their votes. 2014 was the year that these elections were held. (Williams & Gurtoo, 2011)

National Policy On Education (NPE)

The foundation of the NPE is the belief that societal evils and degrading behaviours, along with other fundamental ideas regarding family values, gender equality, and so on, must be eradicated. Early childhood care and education (ECCE) is emphasised in the NPE and plan of action as a crucial part of Universal Elementary Education with the goal of enhancing the social, nutritional, and health outcomes of girls and increasing their access to support services such as clean water, fodder, and fuel (UEE). The action plan emphasises the adoption of a gender-sensitive curriculum that tackles both

genders and their various responsibilities in society for pupils to internalise the ideal of gender equality. This involves updating textbooks to remove sexism and training teachers to be more aware of and responsive to gender concerns in the classroom.

Legal System And Gender Disparity In India

Even though the law can't solve all of society's problems, it can protect those who are less fortunate from unfair treatment. Even though there are laws against discrimination, the justice system can and should do more to make sure they are followed. The Indian Constitution is a modern document that makes sure all citizens, including women, have equal rights and are protected from abuse. It protects and defends the rights of women in many ways, and the Indian legal system has always given high priority to addressing their concerns. India's highest court, the Supreme Court of India, made sure that its constitutional duty to protect women's rights was carried out. This was especially important because India's social norms and situations were changing. (Srinivasan, 2004)

The Indian Constitution says that women have the right to equality, which means that they have the same rights as men under the law and have the same chances in employment, education, and other areas. Article 14 of the Constitution says this is the case.

Article 15 of the Constitution also says that people can't be treated differently because of their gender. This means that women can't get different jobs, go to different schools, or be treated differently in any way. Article 19 of the Constitution says that women have the right to freedom, which includes the right to speak, write, and work in any field. Article 21-A of the Indian Constitution says that women can go to school. This means that the government must give all children, boys and girls, a free education. The Indian Constitution also says that women can't be hurt at home. The goal of the Domestic Violence Act of 2005 is to protect women from abuse in their own homes, including physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, and financial abuse. The rules for how the government works are written down in Part IV of the Constitution. These principles are very helpful for building constitutional feminism because they require the government to protect women's human rights, like the right to equal pay for equal work, the right to health care and clean working conditions, the right to maternity benefits, and the respect of international agreements. (K,&Prakash, 2017)

There are parts of the Indian Constitution that protect women's rights. This led to the creation of laws like the Dowry Prohibition Act (1961), the Equal Remuneration Act (1976), the Maternity Benefit Act (1961), the Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act (1994), and the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act (1994). All these rules were made to protect the rights of women.

The incorporation of the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution of India in 1993 represented a significant advance for the participation of women in democratic life throughout the country. (Gaurav, 2011). In the past, India's judicial system has paid special attention to the protection and advancement of women's rights and problems. The Supreme Court was highly concerned about maintaining its legal and constitutional commitments and safeguarding the rights of women while the world and society around it underwent significant changes. (Chudgar& Sankar, 2008)

If the nation's highest laws give a venue for robust discussion on the woman issue and the presenting of answers to difficulties facing women, then maybe the care and protection that is provided for women can be enhanced. The rights of the underprivileged may be protected by law, but laws by themselves are not enough to create a society that is really equitable. There are legal protections against discrimination based on a woman's gender in addition to other social and biological features; nevertheless, these protections do not exist in a vacuum and there are exceptions to them. Since it was first established, the legal system in India has consistently shown a high level of sensitivity toward concerns about gender equality and the treatment of women. The Supreme Court put a high priority on defending the legal rights of women and maintaining the integrity of the legal system in the face of shifting expectations from society. Overall, the Indian Constitution has a strong set of rules to protect the rights of women. But there is still a long way to go before Indian society is truly equal between men and women, and more needs to be done to protect and uphold women's rights fully. (Rajendra 2014)

Conclusion

Gender inequalities in the Indian education system have been a persistent issue for many years. The imbalance of genders that occurs in classrooms in this day and age is the key cause that is inhibiting the educational system from making further advances. The main causes of gender inequality in education are poverty, traditional beliefs, a lack of school infrastructure, the way girls are treated differently, crimes and acts of violence, child marriage, parental education, and occupation, running a household, and not wanting to go to school. All these factors contribute to a lack of opportunity for girls to receive an education that is equal to that of boys. When a young girl or woman experiences one or more of these traumatic situations, she often suffers harm not just to her mental health but also to her physical health. People from all backgrounds, classes, and groups have made plans and programmes with the main goal of showing girls and women respect and giving them the same rights and chances as men. Most programmes and schemes have been made because of this effort to raise awareness.

The government has implemented several programs and initiatives aimed at promoting girl's education. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE Act), the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV), and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) are some of these initiatives. It is crucial for the girls' family members to provide them support and encouragement while they are being convinced to enrol in school and pursue an education. In addition, educational institutions have a responsibility to create appropriate learning environments, which should include the necessary resources, infrastructure, and facilities, to promote both the enrolment of new students and the retention of the ones they already have. Overall, while progress has been made in promoting girls' education in India, there is still much work to be done to ensure that all children, regardless of gender, have access to quality education and equal opportunities for success.

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