



## **TEACHER TRAINING THROUGH GENDER LENS: TOWARDS GENDER SENSITIVE PEDAGOGICAL DISCOURSES**

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The **National Policy on Education**, which strengthens education progress and development, is measured as a burst through to address gender issues. The national policy chapter entitled Education for Women's Equality states: "The National Education System will play a positive, dominant role in the empowerment and strengthening of women. It will foster the expansion of new values through redesigned curricula, textbooks, the training and orientation of teachers, decision-makers and administrators, and the active involvement of educational institutions. The removal of women's illiteracy and obstacles inhibiting their access to, and retention in, elementary education will receive overriding priority."

What happens in educational circumstances is at all times exclusive because it is reliant on the intercommunication between teacher and students. The condition explicitly includes time/space situation. The rationale of using gender cognizant pedagogical models in the classroom is to motivate self-governing dialogues and make powerful the students through this process. In general, classroom dialogue is based on the controlling role the teachers represent, but vigorous gender pedagogy helps to break the silence in the class room and neutralize the custom of listening only to institution. Thus, knowledge and awareness is created in the classroom by a two-way communication between teachers and students. Conversation through "gender dialogues" target at fulfilling, systematically, deeper meaning of the experiences as well as amplified acceptance of shared experiences that extend in the teaching context.

Research suggests that teachers who are trained on gender issues are better to address personality needs in the classroom of the male and female learners as well as promote their achievement in academics. (Aikman, Unterhalter, & Challender, 2005; “Challenges for Teacher Training”, 2005; Mlama et. al, 2005).

FAWE’s 2005 Teacher’s Manual for Gender- Responsive Pedagogy, suggests that the teacher’s interface manner and pedagogy confines unfair non-verbal or verbal communication; promotes equal questioning of both boys and girls; and highlights strategies for selecting gender neutral textbooks and materials. A ‘gender-responsive pedagogy’ (“Challenges for Teacher Training”, 2005, p. 3), takes into deliberation the particular organic needs during puberty of both girls and boys. It allows for a classroom set-up that promotes the equal participation as well as equal access to all instructive resources.

In the international framework, the classroom pedagogy and day to day discourses and dialogues used by teachers is constantly seen as ‘the vital variable for humanizing learning outcomes’ and is significant in any reform to improve quality (UNESCO, 2005, p.152). Over the last two decades, many developing countries have embarked on major curriculum and pedagogical reforms to meet the EFA goal, often with donor involvement. However, even when well-planned, their implementation and execution has not always been as successful as desired, and evidence suggests that a wide gap exists between the expected goals of curriculum reforms and actual progress achieved in classrooms, schools and numbers of teachers (Chisholm and Leyendecker, 2008 ; Dembélé and Lefoka, 2007; World Bank, 2008).

Kane (2009) studied the role of educators and teachers as Change Agents and concluded that Gender issues are existing in society in all areas of life. To curtail these gender issues we require to start changing the mindsets of the younger age group of humanity as they are those who can bring about further change in society, with their innovative ideas, thoughts and practices. To do this we need good educated teachers who have a sound knowledge regarding gender issues. It has been observed that teachers strengthen gender roles also in the diverse prospect that they have for boys and girls in their classes. Teachers may also generate learning environment in which boys are expectant to succeed while girls are allowed to fail. In acute cases.....What’s more, many teachers may be completely unaware that they treat girls and boys differently. But

none of these habits, when they occur, should be surprising. We all grow up in the midst of the pressure of our family and culture, and as teachers, we may see ourselves, truly, in the role of instilling artistic values in the children in the classrooms.

Woolfolk, Winne and Perry (2009) emphasizes, because of lack of training in gender sensitivity, boys learned that they are more valued and feel comfortable taking risks while girls feel that not much is expected of them and are not as confident in speaking out in the class.

According to Jones (2013) in order to be critical practitioners, we have to route the discourses of what is considered private and personal, of how differences are constructed and the power structures that maintain discrimination and oppression. We need to be able to inspect and remark on our personal and professional histories, our past and current practice, and how problems are collectively constructed.

From the above literature review, it is obvious that a teacher plays a very important part in the early rearing of the children and his/her thoughts and attitude can change the thought processes of young students. A teacher must therefore continuously be aware of the fact that his or her proceedings, approach, performance, viewpoint, approach, mode and mind-set will help to shape a child's gender role and socialisation. He / she may make use of manifold strategy and intervention during pedagogical discourses in the day to day conversation to ensure that students have equal opportunities to both create and obtain their goals. Studies have shown gender differences to have a direct relationship to preferential treatment, classroom dynamics and academic success. Teachers have to be serious about the gender issues and ways to tackle them in the classrooms. For the teachers to bring about a change in the social order they should be given pre hand knowledge over the issue. Teachers need not only gender responsive curriculum and textbooks but also gender impartiality education and training in teacher training institutes.

Gender equity has been the most prevalent form of prejudice operating across cultures in developed and developing countries. When the present context of gender discourses is analysed, the only tool that is education has the inbuilt prospective of bringing about the social change in the context of gender relations and identities. Keeping in mind these, some very mindful interventions have been put ahead by the Government of India to deliberate on gender equality in education at the centre and state level. A milestone proposal was undertaken in 1986, with the enactment of the **National Policy on Education (NPE)** and its revised **Programme of Action**

**1992.** The philosophy of gender equality has also been initiated in the **National Policy on Empowerment of Women 2001.**

The policy lays emphasis on promoting **gender sensitive curriculum** for addressing and rethinking gender discrimination at all levels of education. The new draft of National Policy also lays emphasizes on the three E's that is "**Encourage, Educate and Employ**", all irrespective of the socio-economic background.

Gender concerns and issues in education have also been reflected and emphasised time to time in **Curriculum Frameworks** developed National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). In this context, the curriculum frameworks (1975, 1988, 2000 and 2005) have made specific expedition towards gender discrimination in education. The policy of considerable inclusion and equity was the motto of the journey. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF 2005) conveys and articulates a new vision of the school curriculum as a comprehensive space that extends ahead of the conservative textbooks into the sphere of teaching-learning processes and pedagogies. No doubt, this vision and image has the potential to enable education to become a vital catalyst in the process of societal alteration, it fails to fit into place enough with a most imperative and crucial link – **the teacher**. So the missing link in the whole process has been the teacher.

Apart from the National Curriculum Frameworks, many constitutional commitments, policy initiatives, programmes and schemes have been conceptualized by Centre and State Governments at different points of time and various educational levels to address gender barriers in education. Very promising initiatives and schemes like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidhayalya, National Programme for Education of girls at Elementary level (NPEGEL), Mahila Samakhya, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyaan (RMSA) were implemented in the Educational sector but the issue of gender disparity and difference still persists in our country.

The below mentioned table clearly shows the disparity in terms of enrolment of boys and girls.

**The enrolment scenario of girls at secondary stage of education is mentioned in Table 1.**

**Table1: Gross Enrolment Ratios**

Years	All Categories					
	Class VI-VIII (11-13 Years)		Class IX-X (14-15 Years)		Class XI-XII (16-17 Years)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
2006-07	77.59	69.64	58.57	47.44	31.53	26.09
2007-08	81.48	74.36	62.62	53.23	36.26	30.40
2008-09	82.7	76.6	64.8	55.5	37.2	31.6
2009-10	84.53	78.30	66.65	58.45	38.31	33.31
2010-11	87.7	83.1	69.0	60.8	42.2	36.1
Scheduled Castes						
2006-07	83.14	67.33	58.30	44.57	29.18	21.84
2007-08	82.07	78.08	55.81	48.99	30.12	25.31
2008-09	86.8	83.3	66.2	58.7	35.6	30.7
2009-10	90.51	86.59	71.19	63.50	37.42	33.48
2010-11	93.8	90.6	74.0	67.5	40.3	36.1
Scheduled Tribes						
2006-07	80.22	68.22	47.48	35.49	23.39	14.72
2007-08	81.09	70.16	48.84	37.22	24.25	16.20
2008-09	85.7	76.4	51.7	40.7	27.7	19.4
2009-10	87.81	78.81	54.24	44.22	31.36	22.32
2010-11	90.7	87.0	57.1	49.1	32.7	24.8

*Source: Statistics of School Education, MHRD, GOI, New Delhi. Various years' reports*

The difference depicted in the table in numbers (disparity) may not essentially point out gender inequality but leaves the message behind. The author is of the opinion that there are limitations of gender parity indicators and strongly agrees with the view that prescribed equality measures only numerical gaps between female and male outcomes.

Now at the global level, considering **Education for All (EFA) goal 5**, which aimed to eliminate gender disparities and inequalities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and then aspired to achieve and accomplish gender equality by 2015, it is and should be realized that initiatives and policies on the part of Government only are not sufficient and enough to achieve the desired target but that the teachers are a critical force for meeting the goal at all the levels. Educationists, academicians and faculty greatly influence gender socialization and sensitize and mould gender roles of students, thus having a great impact on excellence of education, quality of life and power allocation in the society.

Keeping in view the above discussion, it is evident that the main challenge in education has been to put the gender sensitive policies into practice in the classroom, school management, learning environment and implementation of the gender responsive curriculum. In addition to this, purposeful efforts need to be put in place to move away from paying lip-service to gender issues

of equity and equality and begin to act in a gender sensitive way at all levels from the policy makers to the teacher in the classroom. Meaning hereby is to bridge the gap between policies and teachers. Obviously, any changes in the national curriculum, content of the textbooks, teaching and learning methodologies must be linked up with classroom teachers through orientation and with simultaneous changes in teacher training institutions, as it is not only curriculum content but the teaching learning process that will have a positive impact on boys and girls. As far as Indian scenario is concerned, many teachers have not had the opportunity of receiving gender sensitive training in order to effectively deliver the engendered curriculum. The teacher training curricula also need change and modification as many teacher trainers are still insensitive to gender issues in the pre-service training of teachers.

The present article poses many questions to the educators as follows:

- Does the present teacher education system in India challenge or reinforce normative gender discourses through curriculum materials and classroom practices?
- To what extent are gender equality issues included in the current curriculum in the colleges of education?
- How teachers and stakeholders understand "gender sensitive pedagogy"? What do they think gender sensitive pedagogy is and what problems do they think it will solve?
- Do teacher training about curricular/extracurricular activities equally attract the participation of both boys and girls?
- Which gender responsive training components need to be included in teacher training programmes?
- How can teacher education best support effective gender responsive pedagogy?

Course content with respect to gender in colleges of education is another indication that gender issues are not a priority in teacher education in India. Another significant apprehension that has also emerged in the framework of gender receptive pedagogy is the segregation of Educational Research and Teacher Training from the significant research done in the universities on this issue.

## **Recommendations:**

- Teachers and teacher educators should look at their syllabuses with the outlook of incorporating a gender aspect by:
  - Including the preliminary themes on gender; and
  - Exploring gender issues within some of the topics of existing syllabus.
- That the MHRD in collaboration with other agencies should consider a continuity in funding workshops, or seminars to make students and teacher educators gender sensitive in the area of instructional materials, teaching approaches and classroom management.
- Capacity building centres for teachers and administrators should be established in all the regions.
- That the Ministry of education should build up and share out extensively gender sensitising publications to promote gender awareness and sensitivity in the educational system. These resources should contain important course of action that can be used by any educationist who desires to promote gender consciousness and sensitivity.

*The author is working towards the development of a module in the form of publication which may be useful in this context.*

## **Conclusion:**

The intend of this piece of writing is to reproduce on how teaching with gender perspectives (gender conscious pedagogy) in education can sustain students to be more positive about gender issues and, as a result, become gender actors outside the institutions in their personal and working lives. Research argues that, by using a gender conscious pedagogy, teachers can motivate the students to make gender-reflections, create better equality in the classroom, and encourage students to become gender-actors in society at large. So this has implications for students as well as all the stakeholders of education. In the present scenario, mainstreaming gender-responsive pedagogy in teacher training institutes is viewed as a unique way to bridge the gender gap in education. This article in addition will help to raise consciousness, spark deliberations among teachers and support sensitive and fruitful learning environments for students of all genders.

Gender responsive teachers recognize and counter to the explicit requirements of girls and boys in the teaching and learning process. They do this by being conscious of the special needs of girls

and boys such as sexual maturation issues and by encouraging equal contribution and involvement of boys and girls in class and school activities and ensuring equal access to learning materials. The major obstruction faced by teachers today is an apparent lack of gender skills for education, yet the ability of the teacher to use gender responsive pedagogy effectively and successfully can be strengthened if the teacher is well equipped in gender responsive teaching skills. The recognition of this gap is addressed in the present article. It provokes the stakeholders to explore the various ways of making the teaching and learning processes respond to the specific needs of girls and boys thereby improving the school environment to enable the girls to develop their potentialities and make contribution towards social good through positive socialisation.

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