
HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA AND GENDER INEQUALITY

ZEBA ASALM KHAN

Abstract: The purpose of this paper to exploring the current situation concerning gender discrimination in the higher education institutes. The word gender is used to explain those features of men and women that are socially resolute, in compare to those that are biologically determined as sex. The different aspect of gender is dynamic and vary with in culture, community, family, socio-economic environment, employment, stage of growth over time and space as well as at disaster. In most common sense, gender inequality refers to the conditions by which women have underprivileged, including their economic opportunities, political standing, legal status, personal independence, household responsibility, access to education, and cultural illustration. Thus, gender inequality refers to the clear or hidden difference between individuals due to gender.

Gender inequality in developing world is a critical reality. In modern times women are performing exceptionally well in different spheres of activities. The problem of gender inequality still prevails in all fields of life. Gender inequality in higher education in India where the condition is contradictory. Gender inequality is a universal experience. This difference is not just with respect to prospect and assets but also in rewards, and exists in all regions and classes. Gender gap survives in the ground of education as well. Males represent the majority of the faculty of higher education institutes across the globe. Professional roles are generally held by males, who not only have more judgment making authority but also have more opportunities of social networking. Women have to attain a successful career at the cost of their family life. The paper tries to highlight the challenges facing by girls in higher education like in their ambitions, career choice, gender discrimination in the family, family back ground, use of facilities or allowance given by the government, etc.

Keywords: contradictory, discrimination, gender, inequality, opportunities.

Introduction

Gender inequality remains a major barrier to gender empowerment. Girls and women have made major step since 1990, but they have not till now get gender equity and still women and girls are facing discrimination. In addition, regularly women and girls are facing discrimination in health, education, political demonstration, labour market, etc. Educated female constantly play a vital and essential part in every fields of life. The progress of female higher education practices has led to worldwide debate of how to transmit an equal education chance for all devoid of any kind of inequity. The female higher education is left behind in spite of the detail that it is most effective and smart investment for economical growth and expansion of any country about the globe. There is need of strategy formulation focused on women empowerment in higher education for the purpose of career improvement, employment, decision-making and providing legal, political, economic and social rights to women.

Higher Education is commonly defined as education afar secondary school, i.e. education provided by colleges, universities and professional institutes. It is well-known that higher education is a key to accomplish economic and socio-cultural growth and human development in any country. It is also necessary that access to higher education should exist to every citizen of the country, apart from, of gender or caste. The pillars of human development: equity, sustainability, productivity, empowerment, cooperation and security cannot be achieved in a

system where only a piece of the population has access to equality higher education. Hence, the same access and opportunity to all is the basic necessities for building maintain societies.

Higher education is one of the most helpful profits of plummeting poverty and encouraging sustainable expansion. However women in developing countries generally obtain less education than men. Further women enjoy less employment opportunities than men. In recent years, higher education in India has seen an immense enlarge, in establishment of institutes and universities, student enrolment, and particularly enrolment of women students. The Government has launched a variety of schemes to promote education among women. On the other hand, gender inequalities in education still prevail. These are mainly socio-economic and socio-cultural problem in nature.

The dilemma of girls' education needs to be situated in the overall situation of women on our society. Gender differences arise due to expectation of conventional roles. Girl's lack of entrée to education is not for all time related to shortage of places in schools. It also emerges from outlook, attitudes and prejudice in communities and families. Financial expenses, communal customs, spiritual and intellectual beliefs bound girl's educational opportunities. Still in educated families, there are conventional role expectations from women, mostly, married women. As a result, there is a high drop-out rate of to-be-married or just-married women. A survey published by the Times News Network in 2011

states that around 26% of the students interviewed for the survey of drop-outs attributed their stepping back to financial problems at home. Girls mainly are in a dilemma as they get into marriage and start a family. In the Indian society marriage is traditionally supposed as an occasion of extreme value in the life of a woman, and the whole thing also, job, profession, and education is frequently considered as passive. Social and family background leads to lesser enrolment of women in higher education, particularly in professional courses like engineering and technology, which are traditionally looked at as the male sphere. This stereotyping continues to prevail in technical and professional fields. Financial Inequalities survive to an extremely large degree in the country beside with a high population. Large families often cannot provide for the education of all the children, still to give pReferences to the male child when it comes to give educational opportunities. These disparities begin at the school stage, with more figures of girls dropping out than boys, which are socio-economic in nature. The socio-cultural concept is supreme importance, as gender inequality begins at home at a tender age even in educated homes. This begins with small things like the tasks assigned to boys and girls at home, difference in the toys given to both, rituals of religious and societal nature and the general overall upbringing. The psyche of the people, the traditional patriarchal society, and the too much importance attached to the marriage of the girl child as the crucial point of her life, every require to be changed so that women as a majority will be able to get the fruits of the rising economic growth in the country. Specialists believe that the government expenditure on higher education in India is very low down as compare to the necessity of the sector and the population. The Indian Government has a variety of schemes for the profit of women in higher education. These include the Scheme for Development of Women's Studies in Indian Universities and Colleges, Scheme for Women's Hostels for Colleges, Scheme for Capacity Building of Women Managers in Higher Education, and so on. However, the reach and spread of these schemes is still not as much as required. A significant and increasing proportion of higher education institutions have been established by the private sector, and most are co-educational. This inhibits the access of women and girls from traditional communities. In some areas there are many co-education institutions where female/males can get higher education but due to strict family, tribal and religious customs forbid female to obtain education with males. This is main hurdle in female higher education which creates differences. In some, parents do not spend in the education of their daughters and in very poor households, girls are

withdrawn from school. Mostly of the families do not permit and spend on the girls higher education but give pReferences to spend on boys because according to them instead of girls, investing on boys is advantageous output because girls are not allowed to do job so its waste less investment on them. The location of institutions affects girl's education more than boys. The availability of institutions/universities within reach is a main determinant. Travelling lengthy distances in public transport is an important safety concern and this is mostly considerable in societies where girls are not permitting to travel alone. It should be noted that female teachers, as well as students, can be the victims of violence. Gender-based violence both reflects and reinforces inequalities between men and women and cooperation on the health, self-respect, safety and independence of its victims. It includes an extensive variety of human rights violations, including sexual abuse of children, rape, domestic violence, sexual assault and harassment, trafficking of women and girls and numerous destructive customary practices. Any one of these abuses can leave deep psychological scars, damage the health of women and girls in general. Through Education awareness can be generate in this regard which uplifts the simple women originate today. Women generally feel that the intrinsic benefits of college are high, and they are more likely than men to report that college and improve the class of their lives. This will encourage the smooth running of the economy. India's economy has grown fast over the past two decades with the services sector accounting for a large share of growth. Early marriage, household tasks, demands to work, family honour and related issues restrain girls and women from entrance and completing school. Early female marriage is based on the assumptions that 'good marriage' is the most important way to secure a girl's well being, security and respect. Marriage of a girl is the second name of respect and execution of wishes and emotions in Muslim society. In addition it is believed that the duty of parents to make an early preparation of marriage to complete the responsibility of being as parents in most of areas in India. Though, according to Islamic law, "a woman cannot be forced to marry against her will. After marriage she enjoys similar rights in most of the affairs. The Quran says; (women) have rights similar to those (of men) over them' (2:228). According to the Prophet (P.B.U.H) men have no pReferences over women and women have no pReferences over men, both have equal rights on each others. "In many societies a young woman's place is seen as in the home after minimum education. Yet, she is doubly disadvantaged because her youth reduces her status within her household and community. Because she does not have the same standing as her male peers,

she is not perceived to have the same skills or capabilities, higher studies, and so there is less value in educating her for higher studies. For families facing chronic poverty, marriage often seems like the best way to safeguard girls' futures and lighten their economic burden. The high costs of higher education and the perception of girls' potential to earn an income as comparatively poor, pushes girls out of their homes and schools and into marriage, marriage of school-aged girls was considered the main barrier to achieving higher education and promoting gender equality for girls, (Myers and Rowan Harvey, 2011). Higher education based interventions interrupt and prevents early and forced marriage. Domestic Work As Well Entry Into The Workforce Prevent Female Towards Higher Education. "Economic dependency upon men, and therefore the low level socioeconomic status of women had also limited their entry into the employees and out of higher educational Institutions" (Wikipedia, 2011). "The world bank states that girl higher education is important for development of the nation. As the girl empowerment, equality and gender concerns are central to the new education strategy" (2020) Learning for all. Schooling of girls has much importance like income, employability, children growth and their own ability to for good livelihood. Education policy has to be taken in the correct form and kind to facilitate women contribution in higher education in order to decrease the inequality in the gender gap established in our country. It is found that there exist varying quality standards of education provided in institutes with low level of authorization. This may be a hindrance to tapping the quality of the skill portrayed by the potential in our economy. On analysis the following are some of the measures that can be viewed in order to reduce the gender inequality gap and promote economic growth. Every individual is born unique in all his/her human characteristics. Therefore, equality and inequality, only when properly comprehended, are both engines of liberty. One should analyze and respond with the right action to the present situation of gender differences in all areas of the higher education institution.

On the one hand girl students are performing very well in all sense of education, many of them are topping the merit lists, the percentage of passing is more than the boys, but at the same time according to 2011 Indian census, 35% women are illiterate, out of the remaining 65% literate women the percentage of higher education is very low. Again there are educational disparities on the ground of rural-urban, poor-rich; higher-lower caste etc. women are most commonly found on the faculties of junior colleges, liberal arts colleges and the like rather than at high prestige universities. Women faculty members tend

to cluster in a few fields of study - education, home economics, the health professions library science etc. Predictably, women professors are extremely rare in those fields which our society has sex-typed as male, such as law and engineering. Institutions of higher education must help all students develop a new image of women as human beings, able of substantial contributions to the academic, scientific, and political world around them. They must too begin to make the changes necessary to facilitate the full pursuit of education and professional training by women.

Conclusion: Not any area of the developing world, women are equivalent to men in educational, social, and economic spheres. Here the study visibly witnesses the shadow of gender inequality in case of employment in higher educational institutions. Majority of the employment opportunities are being enjoyed by men irrespective of their community, caste and category. This differential distribution in educational system makes teaching as a gender specific occupation, especially in higher education. Teaching is the profession where educational qualification, command over subject, dedication toward profession and teaching skill should be value than gender, but unfortunately these values are ignored in practice.

Noticeably, the present study does not find gender inequality in higher education and income at the basis level. But inequality between men and women in several aspects like improving educational qualifications, possibility of earning additional income, possession of assets, economic freedom, saving and investment trends, etc. can be observe to a considerable extent. Education improves the socio economic status of women's as education is believed to be an significant chance for bringing about social change and gaining entrance into esteemed occupations. Gender inequality and discrimination in higher education may reduce economic growth and gender development. Gender inequality may have adverse impacts on a number of valuable development goals. First, gender inequality and discrimination in higher education and access to resources may prevent a reduction of child mortality, of fertility, and an expansion of education of the next generation. Gender bias in higher education may thus generate instrumental problems for development policy-makers as it compromises progress in other important development goals. Secondly, it may be the case that gender inequality reduces economic growth. This is a main issue to the extent that economic growth furthers the improvement in well-being.

Acknowledgments: I would especially like to thank my supervisor Ms. Shadab Bano for guiding me and encouraging me. Special thanks to my fellow scholars Deeba, Nadeem, and Samien. Thanks to my beloved parents and brother for always supporting me.

References:

1. Devi Indira M: Women Education, Employment, Family Living, Gian Publishing House, Delhi (1987).
2. Lal Sunder: Social Status of Women, ABD Publishers, Jaipur (2005).
3. Malhotra Meenakshi: Empowerment of Women, Isha Books, Delhi (2004).
4. Reddy Raghunadha C: Changing Status of Educated Working Women, B R Publishing Corporation, Delhi (1996).
5. 'Higher Education in India: Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-2017) and beyond' (2012), FICCI Higher Education Summit 2012.
6. 'Higher Education Outlook Survey: Leaders Optimistic About Institutions' Financial Future, KPMG, 2012.
7. 'Towards Excellence: Higher Education in India' (2006) Collaborative Research carried out by the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations, New Delhi.
8. Dr. Sushma Garg, "Gender Inequality and women in India" Reader Political Science Deptt R.G.P.G College, Meerut.
9. Dandapat, Asis Kumar, Sengupta, Debjani. 'Women and Gender Stereotyping in Higher Education: A case study of Vidyasagar University post-graduates', west Bengal International Journal of Research Studies in Education 2013 January, Volume 2 no.1
10. Aggarwal, J. C. Indian women: Education and status. New Delhi: Arya Book Depot, 1987.

* * *

Zeba Aslam Khan, SN Hall, RCA Hostel, Aligarh/Research Scholar/Aligarh Muslim University/