



ISSUES OF GENDER FAVORITISM IN THE PRESENT SOCIETY AND BRINGING GENDER JUSTICE AND GENDER EQUALITY THROUGH EDUCATION

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Abstract

The family and the school are the two main pillars that influence the child during the process of growth, but also play a major role in the socialization of gender roles in the way they organize the environment for the child. The development of gender roles begins at birth. The children are exposed to many factors that influence their attitudes and behavior with regard to gender roles. These attitudes and behaviors are usually taught at home and then reinforced by the peers of the child and the school experience. Gender favoritism in India is a reality which cannot be conveniently ignored. Driving a change in the mindset of people is the key to end this discrimination. For ages, men have continued to dominate societal and family life in India. While this scenario is changing with increasing levels of female literacy and urbanization, in the hinterlands men continue to dominate the social life. Favoritism against the females begins when they are girls. In India constitutional provisions guarantee equality between men and women and prohibit any discrimination on the basis of sex or other considerations in the recruitment and promotion of public personnel. Yet constraints prevail preventing women from fully enjoying their constitutional rights and this paper has tried to highlight those issues. This paper has further tried to focus on how education has a direct impact on women empowerment as it creates awareness about their rights, their capabilities and the choices and opportunities available to them.

Key-words: Gender favoritism, education, higher education system, human capital.

Introduction:

The process of socialization is a very important process for both the individual and for the society. For centuries people tried to give answers to the question, whether what defines human beings are natural features (inherited) or social features (formed through contacts with other people and through the collaboration with them). The process through which people learn and acquire the characteristics of the social group to which they belong is called socialization. The socialization of individuals enables the preservation and sustainability of the characteristics, values and social norms because these are taught and transmitted from one generation to another. The American sociologist Peter Berger wrote: what happens during the socialization is that the social world is internalized on the child. The society does not only control our movements but also provides our identity, thoughts and emotions.

The gender equality is a value of socialization. The gender socialization begins before the child come to life. With gender socialization we understand the processes through which individuals, based on their sex learn to behave, feel, think according to the forms that in the social aspect are appropriate for their sex that they see the world in the light of gender differences, where every individual, female or male is placed and set objects and beings that surround him, within a social and symbolic hierarchy between men and women, between masculinity and femininity.

Gender favoritism in developing world is a crucial reality. In modern times women are performing exceptionally well in different spheres of activities. The problem of gender inequality still prevails in all spheres of life. Gender favoritism in India is a reality which cannot be conveniently ignored. Driving a change in the mindset of people is the key to end this discrimination. Educating is an immensely powerful tool through which an individual can make it big in life. The socialization of gender within our society assures that girls are made aware that they are unequal to boys. Every time students are seated or lined up by gender, teachers are affirming that girls and boys should be treated differently. When an administrator ignores an act of sexual harassment, he or she is allowing the degradation of girls. When different behaviors are tolerated for boys than for girls because 'boys will be boys', society is perpetuating the oppression of females.

Also the socialization of gender roles and the use of a gender-biased hidden curriculum lead to an inequitable education for boys and girls. A study by Kelly Jones, Cay Evans, Ronald Byrd, and Kathleen Campbell (2000) used analysis of videotaped lessons in order to introduce teachers to their own gender-biased behavior. Requiring in-service programs to address gender bias in the classroom will make teachers more aware of their own behaviors: "As a teacher, I was struck by the Sadkers' research on classroom exchanges and was forced to acknowledge the disproportionate amount of time and energy, as well as the different sorts of attention, I give to male students." (McCormick, 1995)



Once teachers have recognized their gender-biased behaviors, they need to be provided with resources to help them change. In their study focusing on how the effects of a gender resource model would affect gender-biased teaching behaviors, Jones, Evans, Burns, and Campbell (2000) provided teachers with a self-directed module aimed at reducing gender bias in the classroom. The module contained research on gender equity in the classroom, specific activities to reduce stereotypical thinking in students, and self-evaluation worksheets for teachers. The findings from this study support the hypothesis that "...female students would move from a position of relative deficiency toward more equity in total interactions...." (Jones, 2000) This demonstrates that teachers who are made aware of their gender-biased teaching behaviors and then provided with strategies and resources to combat bias are better able to promote gender equity in their classrooms.

The school environment influences the gender differentiation through two sources: teachers and peers. Teachers have a direct impact on the gender difference in the way how they differ boys and girls in the process of opportunities offered to them and the way of evaluation. Teachers use the curriculum that uses gender stereotypes behaviours and peers manifest this behavior and attitude of gender stereotypes. The children internalize gender stereotypes and turn them in preference and common attitudes. Teachers contribute to the development of gender stereotypes. Often teachers during teaching in class perform stereotypical gender behavior. Women teachers can exhibit behaviors about phobia for mathematics. Teachers have often different expectations for male and female students. Teachers facilitate children's gender biases by marking gender as important by using it to label and organize students. Peers affect the socialization of gender differences in different ways. At the moment when the child begins school, he meets with many of his peers, many of whom behave according to traditional gender roles thus re-enforcing gender stereotypes. Peers also use punitive verbal and non-verbal behaviors against those students who did not meet the expectations of gender roles, for example, long hair are for girls and not for boys. While "bad girls" are considered those who do not apply behaviours pursuant to the expectations of teachers. Girls are more open to new ideas, boys are closer. Girls are more controlled while boys are out of control and reckless.

Gender Favoritism and Important Issues related to Gender Favoritism:

For ages, men have continued to dominate societal and family life in India. While this scenario is changing with increasing levels of female literacy and urbanization, in the hinterlands men continue to dominate the social life. Favoritism against the females begins when they are girls. Parents often don't send girls to school while boys in the family are provided access to education. Many who are sent to school are asked to dropout and help their mothers in household work. Parents spend time in grooming girls for becoming good wives and concentrate very little on providing them learning and knowledge. Elders of the family hold the view that girls have to be eventually married off and there is no point in spending much on their education. Education for male, on the other hand, is seen as an investment as they are viewed as future "earning members" of the family. Females are only considered fit for performing household chores. It is this mindset which needs to change so that girls are not denied their chance to learn and grow in life.

Gender issues in the employment sector need critical analysis. In India constitutional provisions guarantee equality between men and women and prohibit any discrimination on the basis of sex or other considerations in the recruitment and promotion of public personnel. Yet constraints prevail preventing women from fully enjoying their constitutional rights and guarantees. Hence the need to sensitize and make employers responsive to needs and concerns of women, some constraints as follows:

- **Family responsibility-** Family responsibility mostly lies with the women and often she has to choose between family and career, wherein she gives priority to family. A working woman bears the double burden because she has to look after her office and house. Childcare is another main issue for working mothers, as a result she is usually mentally occupied with the children and household work while she is at work, disrupting her official work.
- **Lack of favorable work environment** - One of the main reasons for the low presence of women in administration/civil service. Problems include sexual harassment, unavailability of an individual room to work, lack of separate rest room facilities, absence of a congenial working environment, inadequate transport facilities, etc.
- **Domination** - Males have a tendency to dominate female colleagues and in many cases female officers receive unequal treatment in distribution of responsibilities.
- **Lack of security** - Most females feel insecure when having to work after the normal office hours, compounded by a transportation problem.
- **Social prejudices and cultural conditioning** - Even among the general public sometimes there exists a notion that women are unsuitable for administrative and challenging jobs, as a result of which they are not accepted as a 'magistrate' or 'police officer' by the public.

Eradication of Gender Favoritism:

Education of girls is vital not only on grounds of social justice but also because it accelerates social transformation. Promotion of gender equality in education is essential for human resource development. By educating a woman you educate the whole family. Given that a woman has the responsibility of the whole family on herself, an educated woman is better capable of taking care of the health, nutrition and education of her children and more so be an active agent in the social and economic development of the country.



It is evident that economic success everywhere is based on educational success. Literacy is the basic building block of education. It is a basic component of social cohesion and national identity. It leads to an improvement in the depth and quality of public opinion, as well as to more active participation of the marginalized in the democratic process. No society has ever liberated itself economically, politically, or socially without a sound base of educated women. Education has a direct impact on women empowerment as it creates in them awareness about their rights, their capabilities and the choices and opportunities available to them

Promoting Gender Equality and Eradication of Gender Favoritism in Higher Education:

- i) Motivate women to seek leadership positions. Active participation by female academics in all areas of their jobs will culminate in an interest to even play leadership roles in universities.
- ii) Confirm and affirm the status of women in the workplace. In the light of an assault criticism of women in general and women's leadership capabilities in particular, it has become imperative that the status of women in universities be affirmed and confirmed as equally important as men.
- iii) Empower women in leadership skills. Any job requires adequate training if those doing the job are to excel. There is need to extend leadership training to more female academics in order to give them the skills and power needed to lead.
- iv) Create networking opportunities for female academics. Networking has been regarded as an opportunity laden event. Opportunities for female academics to meet and share issues that affect them need to be created.
- v) Promote an all-out advocacy for female academics. It is important to recognize that if attitudes towards female leaders are to change, men have to get involved. It cannot just be women who advocate for female leadership in universities.

Building Gender Justice and creation of Human Capital:

More people are being encouraged to enter higher education as part of the globalization, knowledge economy and the need to increase the supply of highly skilled workers. While this is often the result of a commitment to human capital rather than social inclusions, more women are entering higher education.

Moreover, Internationalism is taking place. This takes the form of profession and academic networks and enhanced mobility of students and staff across national boundaries. It provides opportunities for policy transfer and borrowing and communication of ideas and program for gender equity. It also takes the form of international policy initiatives and conferences to promote gender equity, for example, the impact of the fourth world conference on women in 1995, where gender mainstreaming was one of the agreed critical areas of concern and the UNESCO world conference on higher education in 1998 in which women enrollment and curriculum change were highlighted.

Conclusion:

Gender Sensitivity is to change the perception and creates a mindset in men that remove the stereotypical image about women. The men who were reluctant to acknowledgement of women's contribution, come forward under the influence of sensitization to recognize their contribution. As a result women's contribution becomes more and more visible. Today mass media and social network have key role to play in bringing modification of human behavior in our society. By this (mass media & social network), we are able to create gender sensitivity and remove violence against women and make a peaceful world. School plays a vital role in modification of human behavior and bringing gender sensitivity in the following ways:

- The school is the second institution, after the family that influences the process of socialization.
- In the process of socialization in schools teachers and peers have an influence.
- The school and teachers are institutions that can and should govern and possess the gender education to all meanings.
- It is important to look at all school curricula and to be prioritized the gender education.
- Parents should seek educational settings for their students that are gender integrated and that make use of curricula that directly teach about, and challenge, gender bias and inequality.

However, in recent times there has been a change in the aspirations of young persons. Both men and women are in a hurry to finish studies and start earning. Money making has become the most important value for them. For this reason, they prefer to take up courses which are linked to jobs and pursuing studies for academic purposes is no longer the aim. The revolution in values cuts across strata, i.e. young person even from the upper and middle strata want to earn as early as possible. The daughters of city based professional parents have really undergone a sea change in their socialization. Parents are giving the best education to their daughters and expect them to be independent and follow careers. This revolution in values contrasts with those values which dominated prior to the nineties, i.e. education and its linkage to the job market early on in life was only for those men who needed jobs and was certainly not for women. In this changed situation, the priorities of women have also changed. They too want professional higher education and are, therefore, entering the so called masculine disciplines.



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