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GENDER INEQUALITY IN EDUCATION : IT'S PERSPECTIVE, PROVISIONS AND CAUSES - AN ANALYSIS

Mustafa Ahmed

Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Juria College, Nagaon, Assam

Abstract:

The national development can only be desired if girls' enrolment has been increased equally with boys in educational institutions. Girls were provided with less participation opportunities and it leads to prevalence in gender inequality. In rural communities this problem has been severe as compared to urban communities. Gender gap in education is regarded as the major issue of overall progression of the system of education. Therefore it is vital to study and formulate measures and programmes that are focused upon making provision of equal rights to girls' education. The major areas that have been taken as important are factors causing inequality in education and factors influencing educational attainment and programmes promoting women education. It is apparent from the study that there is a remarkable gender disparity in education and many reasons for which it exists. Concerted effort should be made for expansion of girls' education and removal of obstacles in inequality and it will promote equal opportunities for girls' education.

Keywords: Attainment, Education, Girls, Inequality, Opportunity, Progression, Prevalence Etc.

INTRODUCTION:

"Education of a boy is education of one person and education of girl is education of entire family". - Jawaharlal Nehru.

Women have an important role to play in the advancement of the country or a nation. It is only through education of girls that the level of a nation can be raised. Education is a measure of the stage of development of the nation in general and its social development in particular. The total population of India is 146.39 billion according to the April 2025 UN report. The percentage of India's population living in rural areas was approximately 63.64% in 2023. On the other hand, males constitute about 51.56% of the population, while females make up 48.44%. It is therefore necessary to ensure the progress of girls' education in the development plans as a prime focus. A social movement requires to be revived to create a necessary atmosphere for the equal speed of girls' education. The gender disparity is of great importance because of its impact on the process of the total educational system and national development of the country.

India is a democratic country and education is considered as a constitutional right to be provided equally instead of sex. Concerned efforts should be made for expansion of girls' education and removal of obstacles to girls' education. Gender disparity between boys and girls will disappear soon if compulsion is enforced for all boys and girls at all the stages of education, otherwise inequality will remain. In this respect equal educational opportunity should be given in accordance with the socialistic goals of our democratic society. A wide disparity is mainly remarkable in the various rural backward areas of the country, states and various districts of the same states.

Significance of the study of Inequality in Education:

It is of great importance because of spreading mass literacy which is a basic requirement for economic development, modernization of social structure and the effective functioning of democratic institutions. It also represents an indispensable step towards the provision of equality and opportunity to all its citizens. Moreover, the constitution of India in Article-15(1) provides that the state shall not discriminate any citizens on ground only of sex. Instead of sex, every individual has to be equipped with necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to discharge his duties as a responsible and co-operative citizen.

In India, a significant literacy gap persists between males and females. While overall literacy rates are improving, a considerable disparity exists in the literacy rates of men and women across different regions and rural backward areas.



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Again 100% literacy in case of girls is needed for overall economic and social progress. Social status and education of girls are interdependent. By removing disparity between boys and girls we spread the education of the girls which leads to important improvement of their status and that leads to further development . Thus equal opportunity is very essential.

OBJECTIVES:

- To find out the clear picture of gender inequality especially in rural backward areas.
- To study and find out the reasons for which the gap between boys and girls have been continued.
- To know exiting disparity position and short falls in girls education.
- To aware about the implementation of government policies and various reports in gender disparity .
- To find the difference in attitudes of the people for boys and girls education specially remote areas .

METHODOLOGY:

In this study secondary method is used and sources of data collected from different reference books, Educational journals, Magazines, News papers periodicals, Records and various Websites etc. In this study also based and adopted historical, descriptive and experimental method of research.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:

Several provisions of our constitution, Acts, Educational policies, National surveys, Reports have discussed and analysed from various perspectives, however yet to apply and consider importance of need of the study inequality in education. Inequality in education emerges as a vital focus, this paper attempts to bridge the gap in inequality related to education.

DISCUSSION:

Inequality in Education and Various Provisions:

Pre Independence period

Conforming to the low status of girl's have been enjoying in our society, the education of girls has always been neglected in backward areas of the country. During the Muslim period of Indian history girls were not enrolled to the Mosques and Pathshalas attached to Temple. During the advent of the British rule nothing was done for girls in the beginning . It was 1854, that 'Woods Despatch advocated the promotion of girls education. With the establishment of municipalities and local fund committees in 1870 that to promote girls education through local public funds. The Hunter Commission (1882) endorsed the view that "Through girls education a far greater proportional impulse is imparted to the educational and the moral tone of the people then by education of boys ." It is true that India made some progression in the field of girls education during the rule of East India Company , But compare to the total requirement of the country , this progress was very slow .

Educational policy and resolution of government of India 1903 , February 21 , also recommended special curriculum for practical utility of girls . There was no proper provision for girls education and there was enormous disparity in proportion in education of girls and boys. There were very limited school for girls especially in rural areas.

Post Independance Period

It was post independence period that education of girls has received attention at the hand of the central and the State Governments. The female literacy just after independence was a mere 7.9 percent compared to the male literacy rate of 24.9 percent.

The first five year plan of 1951-56 advocated the need for adopting special measures for overcoming the barriers of Girls education. The Government of India set up a national committee on women's education in 1958. On the recommendations of this committee ,the Government of India constituted a National Council for Girls Education in India in 1959.

During the third five year plan of 1961-66 more incentives such as free text Books and Scholarships were provided for Girls. The trend continued in the fourth five year plan 1969-74. The National Policy on Education NEP of 1968 also stressed the importance of Girls education.



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The Kothari Commission of 1964-66 recommended that effort should be made to face the difficulty involved and to close the existing gaps between the education of boys and Girls. In the seventh five year plan of 1985- 90 steps were taken to eliminate gender bias. The NEP of 1986 emphasised female literacy .Thereafter ,also a centrally sponsored district specific need based programme for universalisation of primary education namely District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) came into operation in Assam along with other selected States of the country since 1994.

The parliament has passed the 86th amendment act in 2002 to make education a fundamental right for children in the age group of 6-14 years. The Sava Siksha Abhiyan SSA was evolved from the recommendations of State education. Ministers conference held in October 1998 to peruse universal education in a mission mode. The SSA in 2000-2001 has special focus on girls and children of weaker sections. It aims to remove gaps at primary stage by 2007 and universal retention by 2010. In 2004, a program was known as Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya KGBV. The major objectives of this program was to establish upper primary schools with housing accommodations for the for rural areas. The majority of the places in schools are reserved for girls belonging to disadvantaged and rural communities.

The RTE ,Right to Education Act of 2009 which makes free and compulsory education a fundamental right for children aged 6-14 years. In 2015, the United Nations built upon 17 SDG goals, and two goals are primarily related to promoting education among women which are to eliminate gender differences at all levels of education.

A scheme known as Rastriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan RMSA,was initiated in 2009 and it aimes to eliminate gender impediments by providing support and assistance to backward section of society.

The scheme Beti Bachao ,Beti Padhao was launched by our prime Minister in 2015 on 22nd January,to prevent gender- biased ,ensure the survival and protection of child girl. It focuses the empowering the girls to achieve their full potentials.

The National Education Policy NEP 2020 stresses gender disparity by focusing on equitable and inclusive education. The policy aims to provide increased access, improved infrastructures for girls.

Causes of Inequality in Education:

The main hindrances responsible for Gender inequality at different stages of educational institutions in India are caused by social, economic, cultural, religious and political factors. These causes may be pointed out as –

- ❖ Gender disparity is in rural backward areas is continuing and the reason for that is Boys are considered as better investment than Girls.
- ❖ In backward rural area the illiteracy among the women folk is also considerable factor in continuing this gap.
- ❖ In rural backward areas till today it is remarkable that there are some social evils like orthodoxy and conservatism against girls education.
- ❖ Another major cause in gender disparity is extreme poverty due to which most of the people not able to continue their daughters for education
- ❖ Another cause is that the people particularly in backward areas are totally unaware of the provisions of the law for equal opportunity in the field of education.
- ❖ Prevalence of child labour among girls belonging to weaker sections and the hard domestic chores is also important factor responsible for continuous gender disparity.
- ❖ Feeling of dependency fostered by Indian culture in boys is another factor which leads to gender disparity.
- ❖ Unsuitability of curriculum is also creating some issues in the education of girls. More or less same curriculum followed in our education system for boys and girls.
- ❖ It is also due to the backwardness of female education they compel their daughters to stay at homes and look after domestic work and household activities and disparity exists.
- ❖ Wastage, Stagnation and Dropouts etc. are very common in the field of girls education. Dropout rates among girls are higher than boys in rural backward areas.
- ❖ Indifference of government defective educational administration is also a cause for the disparity. Moreover, sufficient money and administrative reforms in favour of girls education is not available.
- ❖ There is neither earnestness for girls education, sustained efforts to enforce the act. This may be due to lack of insistence on the panel provisions of the acts and the endeavour to provide suitable background for educating public opinion.



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- ❖ Another important cause of gender disparity is lack of separate girls school. Illiterate parents feel uneasy to send their daughters with the boys to the same schools especially in the remote areas.

SUGGESTIONS:

It is vital to ensure and make provision of equal rights and opportunities to women main suggestions are

- ❖ The quality and quantity should be related to the total literacy and emphasise should be given on equalising the education of girls and boys.
- ❖ Area level operation should be made and attention should be paid to the girls.
- ❖ To raise the status of the family and the standard of living proper education in case of parents should be given .In this connection continuing education and adult education are very needful.
- ❖ Emphasise should be given for the development of attitude towards girls because it is the general belief of the illiterate parents that boys are more helpful than girls in their future life.
- ❖ Proper educational facilities should be provided by the government for improving girls enrolment of the backward areas.

CONCLUSION:

Inequality in education regarded as the major barrier in the progression of the system of education. The major factors that are poverty condition, social and traditional attitude, discriminatory treatment among girls, violation of acts, child marriage, occupation of parents, illiteracy of parents, household responsibilities and lack of interest. To overcome all these issues we have to make awareness on programs and schemes for girls education encouraging equality in enrolment and retention. When we will provide equal rights and opportunities to the girls then it would promote the growth and development of the entire education.

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