



## Factors responsible for gender inequalities in Indian education system

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### Abstract

Gender disparity has been seen in educational institutions. Compared to their male counterparts, girls have experienced more discrimination in a variety of areas. Participation has been the main area where gender disparity has been felt. In educational institutions, participation by students is essential in a variety of activities. Gender inequality was more prevalent since girls were given less opportunities for engagement than their male counterparts. In contrast to metropolitan areas, rural areas have seen a greater severity of this problem. The major impediment to the general advancement of the educational system is thought to be gender imbalance in the classroom.

Because of this, it is essential to create policies and programs that prioritize providing women with equal rights and opportunities, not just in the context of obtaining education but also in the execution of other tasks work responsibilities. Girls require equal participation opportunities, which must be provided by both parents at home and instructors in the classroom. The primary areas that have been considered are those that contribute to gender disparity in education, those that influence educational achievement, and those that support women's education.

**Keywords:** Gender Inequality, education, child marriage, discrimination

### Introduction

When a boy is born, we proud Indians of the 21<sup>st</sup> century celebrate, and when a girl is born, festivities are typically muted or non-existent. Love for a male child is so strong that since the beginning of time, people have been killing our daughters at birth or before birth, and if she is thankfully spared, we find numerous ways to treat her unfairly throughout her life. Although women are treated as gods in our religions, we fail to see them as human beings first; instead, we worship the goddesses while abusing young women. When it comes to how we treat women, our culture has double standards; what we think and preach does not always match what we do. According to Osmani & Sen (2003) [6] there are seven types of gender inequalities at present in India. Let's attempt to comprehend the problem of gender inequality in Indian education system and also make an attempt to look for some remedies.

### Concept and Meaning of Gender Inequality

In a particular community, "males" and "females" are assigned socially defined roles and behaviours known as "gender," but "sex" refers to a biological and physiological reality that distinguishes between men and women. Gender, in its social, historical, and cultural facets, is a function of the male-to-female power differential, where males are viewed as superior to women. Therefore, gender can be seen as a notion created by humans, whereas "sex" refers to natural or biological traits of humans.

Simply put, gender inequality is the treatment of women differently than men because of their sex. Traditionally, society has viewed women as the weaker sex. She now occupies a position underneath the guys. Both inside our homes and in the outer world, she is exploited, humiliated, assaulted, and discriminated against. Jayachandran (2015)

[2], has presented the roots of gender inequality in developing countries. Everywhere in the globe, and perhaps more so in Indian society, there is this special form of discrimination against women.

The patriarchal structure of Indian society is the primary contributor to gender disparity. "A system of social structure and practices in which men rule, oppress, and exploit women" is what is known as patriarchy according to renowned sociologist Walby (1989) [8]. The exploitation of women has always been a part of Indian culture.

### Gender Inequality in Indian Education System

An on-going issue in Indian society is gender inequality in education, particularly for girls from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Education, health, employment, and compensation are only a few areas where gender inequality is significant (Klasen & Lamanna, 2008) [4]. The attainment of universal student enrollment in schools has advanced throughout the course of the last few decades. In order to overcome gender imbalance in education, regulations and processes have also been implemented. However, there have also been educational gaps in the modern era. Socioeconomic factors, ease of access to learning materials and resources, time spent on formal education, cultural perspectives on girls' education in communities and people are the main causes of educational inequalities (White *et al.*, 2015). It is common in rural areas for people to maintain the opinion that girls should stay home and take care of the domestic duties rather than attending the schools and colleges. They will eventually have to get married, and in their new houses, they will have to take care of the household duties rather than have any possibilities to apply their degree. But these viewpoints are shifting, and girls are now also encouraged to pursue an education.

## Gender parity index for gross enrollment ratio in tertiary at schools in India from 2000 to 2021

Table 1

Year	GPI	Year	GPI
2000-2001	0.69	2011-2012	0.87
2001-2002	0.70	2012-2013	0.95
2002-2003	0.69	2013-2014	1.00
2003-2004	0.68	2014-2015	1.00
2004-2005	0.72	2015-2016	1.01
2005-2006	0.73	2016-2017	1.04
2006-2007	0.71	2017-2018	1.07
2007-2008	0.72	2018-2019	1.10
2008-2009	0.72	2019-2020	1.11
2009-2010	0.74	2020-2021	1.07
2010-2011	0.80	-	-

Source: www.data.worldbank.org

In financial year 2021, the Gender Parity Index (GPI) at the primary school level in India was 1.07. It was lower than the value obtained in the previous fiscal year. The Gender Parity Index is the ratio of the number of females by the number of males enrolled in a given stage of education. A GPI of greater than one signifies education access in favour of female students.

Policies and programs have been created in the present to guarantee that girls have access to equal rights and opportunities. In the past, people held the belief that male family members should receive an education. The boys would make a substantial contribution to fostering kindness and the welfare of society once they had obtained an education and career possibilities will help them to support their family. Thomas (2013)<sup>[7]</sup> has highlighted in his paper the state of gender based inequality in the modern India. However, in the modern world, both in urban and rural communities, people and groups have changed their opinions and attitudes, and they are pushing girls to pursue an education as well.

Girls and women can equally make a significant contribution to enhancing the well-being of their families and communities. They can only pursue a high-quality education when their parents support them.

### Objectives of the Study

- To identify the factors which are responsible for the gender inequality in Indian education system.
- To give suggestions to reduce gender inequality in Indian education.

### Factors Affecting the Gender Inequality in Indian Education System

There are numerous and various links between gender equality and the realisation of the fundamental right to education. Jha & Nagar (2015)<sup>[3]</sup> have examined the gender discrimination in India on the basis of demographic, social, economic and political context. Women and girls are denied rights not only in India but in other countries as well the opportunity to receive an education (Gender Discrimination in Education, 2012).

Two of the main causes of a lack of education worldwide are poverty and isolation from other people. Geographic isolation can have an impact on a child's eligibility for an education. Children in rural areas might have to travel for hours to get to school. Rural schools do exist in some areas, but they often offer a poor education. The child could have

to drive several hours to a school if there isn't one in the rural area. Problems with getting the youngster to school and concerns about their safety while traveling while their parents are at work are involved. The World Bank reports that throughout Africa, South Asia, and the Middle East, parents worry about their daughters' safety while traveling to and from school. This might be a effects of young girls being subjected to sexual violence or harassment on public transit (UNICEF, 2019). Many developing nations lack free education, which prevents their low-income inhabitants from receiving an education. This might be a result of the nation's inability to generate enough cash to fund great education. Families are financially burdened when there is no free schooling available (Right to Education, 2023). Both boys and girls are impacted by a lack of income, although more girls drop out of school due to other circumstances.

The following have been listed as contributing factors to gender imbalance in education

### Status of Poverty

When people live in poverty-stricken circumstances, they face a variety of difficulties and hardships just to get by. They occasionally even have trouble getting all the nutrition they need each day. The main goal of those living in poverty is to make enough money to maintain their standard of living. This is true for both individuals and families. Usually, they don't have the resources to pay for the expenses of continuing their education. Even if education is free, students still need to cover other costs associated with it. These include things like office supplies, books, baggage, uniforms, and transportation expenses. Individuals who are living in poverty have trouble covering these costs.

The people who live in poverty have the belief believe continuing one's education is essential to sustaining one's standard of living. As a result, they intend to enroll their sons in school .They therefore hope to enrol their sons in schools. They hold the opinion that sons should receive an education so they can pursue good work possibilities in the future. While girls receive training in performing domestic chores and minor occupations so they can help their families financially. For instance, when parents participate in the creation of products, they urge their children to assist in the production and sale of those products. The guys need to go to work on this project after school. Due to their low financial resources, girls are typically deterred from pursuing an education. The primary purpose of what their male siblings teach them is to improve their young brothers' fundamental literacy abilities in reading, writing, and mathematics.

### Traditional Viewpoints are Common

Traditional beliefs on females' education were typically held by the people and communities. They held the view that money should be preserved for the daughters' marriages and should not be used for education, especially when they had low financial resources.

Another argument was that girls would not be able to use their educational opportunities in married homes. Talents would be primarily responsible for carrying out the home duties. They begin teaching their girls about carrying out home duties at a young age, taking this element into consideration. Girls and women were previously only restricted to their houses and barred from taking part in any social activities or gatherings. They were prohibited from

expressing their opinions in situations involving decision-making. They were expected to follow the norms and decisions made by men because they relied on their wages to support their living conditions. As a result, they experienced discrimination and were denied access to some possibilities due to the dominance of traditional perspectives.

Traditional adolescent behaviours frequently have an impact on how girls learn to read and write. Certain traditional customs are more common in some rural communities, which can make it difficult for girls to pursue their education (Linda, 2014). Girls are prevented from acquiring an education as well as achieving self-independence due to the prevalence of traditional ideas and perspectives. In other words, there are obstacles to obtaining possibilities for empowerment. Therefore, it is essential to modify old attitudes and grant women and girls equal rights and chances in order to create opportunities for female empowerment.

### **Infrastructure in Schools**

The establishment of a suitable and pleasant learning environment and the pursuit of academic goals are considered to be significantly influenced by the school infrastructure. The staff of educational institutions are capable of doing their duties in an organised manner thanks to the provision of suitable infrastructural facilities. Additionally, the pupils are able to enjoy themselves in school and become more motivated to learn. According to research, a lack of adequate infrastructure amenities causes students to frequently drop out before honing their academic talents. For girls in particular, this is true. Restrooms, public amenities, transit facilities, playgrounds, classrooms, library facilities, labs, and general school environment conditions include furniture, equipment, materials, and technology are among the crucial school infrastructure facilities that are necessary to improve the educational system.

The educators, employees, and students will feel happy and content in their working environment when these infrastructure amenities are well-maintained. It is obvious that schools need to provide suitable teaching and learning resources, library resources, science-related labs, and computer facilities centres in order to assist learning. Both instructors and students will be capable of conducting the educational processes in an organised manner when they have access to these facilities. In India, urban regions typically have well-developed infrastructure. These, however, are not well established in rural areas. Therefore, it is crucial to develop policies to enhance the physical amenities in rural schools. The availability of suitable infrastructure facilities would enhance student enrolment and improve the retention rate.

### **Discriminatory Behavior toward the Girls**

According to research, girls and women typically face discrimination in the underprivileged, marginalised, and socioeconomically disadvantaged areas of the society.

Numerous facets of the treatment of girls with discrimination are shown. These include being denied access to education, employment opportunities, and opportunities for empowerment, as well as being denied the right to own property, the ability to participate in decision-making processes, the ability to express their opinions, being discouraged from engaging in social, economic,

cultural, and political activities, being confined to their homes, performing household chores, and attending to the needs and requirements of others. Additionally, they are subjected to prejudice in regard to food, medical services, and even health care facilities.

The men members received high-quality food, whereas the female members received plain cuisine. The persistence of discrimination against women in relation to these issues hinders not only their advancement but also the progress of their localities and the nation. No matter what positions women and girls have whether they are managing or domestic duties, seeking an education, participating in employment possibilities or supporting their parents in the family business. Equal opportunities and rights must be provided to them. Making sure their girls receive equal rights and opportunity is the responsibility of the parents. the development of knowledge, skills, and resources in the fields of education, health care, medicine, diet, nutrition, and other opportunities should be made equally available to girls. Giving girls the same rights and opportunities as boys will enhance their wellbeing and opportunities for empowerment.

### **Occurrence of Violent and Criminal Acts against the Females**

Women and girls have endured violent crimes to a significant level both in rural and urban regions. These offences include child trafficking, domestic violence, sexual assault, rape, acid attacks, female foeticide, female infanticide, physical assault, sexual harassment, and other forms of discrimination. Girls and women who experience these acts suffer effects on both their physical and psychological wellbeing. The degree to which people have experienced these acts typically determines the level of their pain. For instance, girls who face verbal harassment from other pupils at school typically do not leave. However, if students encounter sexual harassment or any illegal act, they may decide to leave school.

Therefore, the incidence of illegal and violent acts is considered to be one of the main obstacles to obtaining education. The students, particularly the girls, have also been the school-based victims of violent and criminal crimes. These behaviours have reportedly been seen in teachers, staff members, and other pupils, according to study. Consequently, it is crucial to create laws that would reduce violent and criminal acts in schools, particularly those directed at women and girls, encourage equality of rights and opportunities among them, and treat them with decency and respect in order to advance women and improve the educational system. The parents are accountable for making sure that the development and growth of their kids' boys and girls take place successfully. They must be sure to treat their girls with compassion and respect in order to fulfil this responsibility.

### **Child Marriage**

When a couple marries while they are under the age of 18, it is known as a child marriage. Child marriage has a harmful impact on people, especially girls. Young girls who get married are typically prevented from pursuing an education, engaging in work prospects, and taking part in other childhood activities. All that is expected of them is that they stay in their houses, carry out household duties, and attend to other family members' desires and requirements.

Research indicates that girls typically express resistance to obeying their parents, despite this requirement. Due to the presence of traditional beliefs and attitudes, people and organisations, particularly those from rural areas, marry their daughters off young. They hold the belief that as females get older and more educated, it will become more difficult for them to find appropriate grooms. They even teach their daughters how to implement domestic duties from the beginning for this reason.

This practise is common, thus girls are prohibited from pursuing an education. Programs and initiatives to prevent child marriage have been put into action. The Government stepped up its efforts in 2006, and India passed the Child Marriage Prohibition Act. Due to this, the penalties for performing a child marriage rite were increased, child marriages were rendered and the courts were given the opportunity to get involved in certain circumstances, and the marriage was voidable by the wedded party up to two years after achieving adulthood. In this nation, males must be 21 years old and females must be 18 years old before getting married.

### **Training for Parents**

Parental education is essential for supporting children's education, establishing moral and ethical ideals in them, and assuring their wellbeing. It goes without saying that parents who have a strong education and work for renowned organizations will provide their children a good education. Parents who have gotten a good education will also understand the importance of ensuring that boys and girls are given equal rights and opportunities. They enroll their children in respectable schools as a result, giving them the chance to advance their careers.

On the other hand, two things generally occur in such circumstances when the parents are uneducated and lack the core literacy skills of reading, writing, and math. First, they place a high importance on education and promote equal rights and educational opportunities for males and girls. They start to form the belief that women shouldn't be viewed as liabilities and that it's crucial to provide them with equal access to education. Another problem is that they discriminate against girls, especially when it comes to getting an education, while discouraging their guys from going to school.

### **Employment Status of the Parents**

According to research, encouraging parental employment is a key element in encouraging females' education. Due to the parents' inability to find work, the daughters are prevented from obtaining an education. In order to maintain their living conditions in a sufficient manner, work possibilities are the main goal of any person. By engaging in employment opportunities, one can generate income to support their standard of living. It's challenging to find acceptable work opportunities in the current job market. The people must work hard to get recommendations or locate suitable career possibilities. It is believed that one key element in helping children's education acquisition is the parents' jobs and career chances.

When boys and girls enter in school, it becomes clear that they must study hard to achieve their educational goals. They must devote enough time to their studies and cultivate the virtues of perseverance, creativity, and conscientiousness. Other significant elements exist in

addition to these. These include student admittance, student retention, and academic achievement. The parents' profession has a significant impact on these variables. There is a rise in the admission and retention rates of the pupils when the parents work in well-paying and reputable jobs. Additionally, they are able to get high marks on their projects and examinations. On the other side, there is a reduction in the admission and retention rate of the pupils as well as setbacks in their academic performance when parents are employed in low-paying minority employment or are jobless. In order to protect their financial situation, it is crucial for the folks to engage in work options.

### **Management of Domestic Responsibilities**

According to the various research works, people from disadvantaged, marginalised, and economically disadvantaged areas of society typically discourage their daughters from pursuing an education, mostly due to their involvement in the administration of family tasks. There are many things that need to be taken care of in the houses. These include cooking, cleaning, laundry, gardening, and other daily tasks. Individuals in rural families must also complete a number of extra chores. These duties include taking water from water sources and taking care of livestock. Domestic helpers and cleaners are frequently employed in big cities. the use of domestic employees typically enables the family members to participate in other projects and activities. However, people are expected to do home duties on their own in rural communities. People typically urge their kids, especially the ladies, to assist in performing household chores. Due to having to manage household responsibilities, they are discouraged from continuing their education. Other tasks and activities that girls and women commonly engage in in rural areas include addressing the demands and needs of other family members. The populace is often involved in farming and the agriculture industry. Girls are therefore given the duty of making sure that all home duties are carried out properly when parents are away at work and that they are able to effectively care for their younger siblings and senior family members' medical and other requirements. They receive training on how to carry out home duties starting in the early stages of childhood. Consequently, they are prevented from enrolling in school and obtaining an education.

### **Not Being Interested in Studying**

In the modern day, people from all origins and categories have come to understand the value of education. The people understand that through acquiring knowledge, a foundation would be built, helping them to sustain their living conditions in a sufficient manner. Creating awareness of these factors would make a significant contribution to helping the parents enrol their kids in school. Learning at school is not simple. People must pay close attention, especially while the teacher is lecturing, be consistent in their academic pursuits, and have access to the educational tools necessary to reach their academic objectives. Students are unable to develop an interest in their studies when they lack suitable resources and when they do not effectively comprehend academic subjects. Therefore, one of the key reasons of gender inequality in school is a lack of interest in academic pursuits.

Students must cultivate interest and excitement if they are to learn and be able to accomplish their academic goals. It is

crucial for them to seek help and guidance from others when they feel they are having scholastic difficulties and are unable to effectively comprehend the concepts. When they are financially stable, they offer coaching lessons for their kids in challenging topics. When parents are educated, they also make time for and teach their kids. The youngsters typically seek assistance from professors and other pupils when their parents are uneducated or do not have enough financial means. They typically leave school before honing their academic talents when they are unable to overcome obstacles and hurdles. Therefore, it is believed that one key element Students' lack of interest in learning is one factor that contributes to the gender disparity in their studies.

### Conclusion & Suggestions

The main obstacle to the advancement of the educational system is seen to be the presence of gender disparity in the classroom. The main causes of gender inequality in education are poverty, the predominance of traditional beliefs, school infrastructure, the treatment of girls differently, the occurrence of crimes and violent acts, child marriage, parental education and occupation, household management, and a lack of interest in academics. Girls and women are typically affected physically as well as psychologically when they experience one or more of these events. Programs and schemes have been developed with the main goal of raising awareness among people from all origins, classifications, and groups to treat girls and women with respect and provide them with equal rights and opportunities. Girls' effective growth and development, as well as the health of the communities and the entire country, would be facilitated when people and communities accord them equal rights and opportunities.

It is crucial for the girls to have support and encouragement from their family members when they are urged to enrol in school and pursue an education. In other words, they must be effectively equipped to pursue their academic objectives. In addition to giving their children support and encouragement, parents must make sure they give their kids access to educational materials and care for their wellbeing in order to help them reach their academic goals. Additionally, schools should create an appropriate learning environment with resources, infrastructure, and facilities that would promote student enrollment and retention. The government should implement tactics and regulations to prevent sex identification and abortions. In light of the aforementioned, NGOs might be crucial in the fight against gender inequality. Regarding this topic, politicians should establish measures to boost social welfare development. The campaign initiated by the Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao" can be successful, when the overall mind set of the society will be changed towards the females.

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