

Gender Disparity in Education and Policies of Inclusion: A Sociological Study of Zone H.C Gam of District Kulgam (J&K)

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Abstract: Gender is a nebulous concept having many overlapping meanings. It is a range of physical, mental and behavioral characteristics distinguishing between masculinity and femininity. Gender indicates the socio-cultural alias of man and woman and the way societies recognize them and disperse social role and responsibilities. History is evident that women have been a victim of serious social evils, psycho-physical torture and utmost socio-economic exploitation. They have been exposed to extreme form of crime, violence and ill treatment and have suffered a lot in the patriarchal social set up due to male superiority. Women have got respite from earlier forms of exploitation but have been caught in the whirl pool of new challenges initiated by the process of modernization, globalization and westernization etc. Present research is meant to unravel the extent of gender disparity in educational institutions especially due to privatization of education. In the present case, the researcher is supposed to survey eight schools of Zone H.C.Gam of District Kulgam, selected through random sampling method and present research is entirely based on sample survey for which Questionnaire, Interview, Observation and secondary Data Analysis are the major available tools of data collection. Moreover the situation has been analyzed by discussing the problem with family members of students and teachers. Records from ZEO's office and school documents have also been taken into consideration. The population of present study includes all the students of primary, middle and high school of Zone H.C.Gam of District Kulgam. This research is aimed to find out the gender discrimination in educational institutions with special focus on women education at primary, secondary and high standard levels. Study is aimed to find out enrollment rate of girls in educational institutions, drop out ratio, daily attendance and gender gap between two opposite sexes by determining gender parity index (GPI).

Keywords: Dropouts, Enrolment, Discrimination, Gender Gap, Policies.

1. Introduction

Societies that discriminate on the basis of gender pay a significant price in terms of higher poverty, lower quality of life, slower economic growth and weaker governance....Educating girls is strategic for achieving development.
.....Elizabeth King

Gender discrimination is the problem based on discrimination between two opposite sexes. Male members are considered superior, strong, capable and independent where as the female members are considered inferior, weak, incapable and dependent. For the last many centuries, male members have monopolized outdoor activities and kept female members confined to indoor household chorus. Gender discrimination also stands for inequality between the two sexes, the situations being favorable for the male members and unfavorable for the female members. The male members claimed favorable treatment in every way and allowing unfavorable treatment to the female members. Gender inequality or disparity therefore means unequal participation or the gap in the achievement of men and women in different spheres of life. Gender disparity hampers the overall wellbeing of society because blocking women from participation in social, political and economic activities can adversely affect the whole society. In many countries, women are not given equal rights as that of men. They are discriminated at the work place and are the victims of other inequalities. One of the main issues is that of women not being educated. Gender disparities in education cannot be eradicated without ensuring universal primary education and without removing gender disparity in education. Eliminating gender disparity in education and ensuring universal primary education

are two of the millennium development goals set forth by the United Nations (UN), which all countries must accomplish by the year 2015.

Education has been the main instrument of human development and its importance has been emphasized through fundamental rights, principles and statutes in a number of countries. The progress and prosperity of a nation and of community is determined by the level of education. This remarkable potential of education needs to be realized by every individual or social community and must go in for it (Ahmad, 1987). At the international level, attempts have been made at various congregations to focus on aspects of education as a part of fundamental human right. According to the Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) *“everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory... Education shall be directed to the full development of human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms”* (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26). The part four of the National Policy on Education (1986) clearly promised equality in education with respect to women, scheduled caste, Scheduled tribes, minorities and handicapped. The constitution of India makes provision for free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of fourteen years. The 86th Constitutional Amendment Act 2002 made education in India a Fundamental Right for children in the age group of 6-14 years by providing that *“the State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine”*. In fact, education of women has come to be considered as more important than that of men. The University Education Commission (1949) has rightly remarked *“there cannot be an educated people without educated women. If general education had to be limited to men or to women, that opportunity should be given to women, for them it would more surely be passed on to the next generations”*.

Education helps in generating awareness among women about their legal, social, political and economic rights, provisions and privileges to fight against all sorts of social discrimination. It enables them to realize their potentialities, developing skills, seeking employment and improving their nutritional and health conditions. Therefore, educating women encourages not only their political participation and economic independence but also improves their quality of life and through them of the whole family and then of whole nation in a broader sense. Various studies (Roy: 1979; Agrawal: 1986; Hassan and Menon: 2004) have shown that education has made a significant contribution in improving the status of women. Education of women is the most effective channel for reducing the inequalities between men and women and ensuring the maximum participation of women in the developmental process. Recent research suggests that female schooling is more important than male schooling for social outcomes such as fertility, child health, and infant mortality (Subbarao and Raney: 1995; Drèze and Murthi: 2001). Thus there is need for removing the barriers in the women’s education which will consequently help in bringing them in the mainstream of society.

However, despite this significance of education for removing seclusion, the participation of women in the field of education is not very satisfactory. There is a wide gap between male and female literacy rates in India. Gender disparity has been a major issue in India’s pursuit for achieving the goal of universal elementary education. In order to address this problem and develop appropriate interventions, it is necessary to understand the nature and extent of the problem as well as possible explanations for the disparity in the educational system. Women almost everywhere are not given the same opportunities which men enjoy for personal growth and social development in education, employment, marriage and the family professional and political life. Mrs. Nevitt Maybee, wife of the Canadian High Commissioner in India, remarks about the position of Indian women *“I have studied Indian women with great interest. In a big industrial complex in the South, I saw women unloading ships with big basket of ore on their heads. I asked the company official there, “Do women work only less hard than men?” Oh, no he said in fact our women are some of the skilful workers we have, they are more nimble, they climb up and down much more quickly and they carry every bit as much. So I asked, ‘do you pay them the same?’ ‘Oh, no, he said “They are only women”* (Jayashree: 1980).

While women in India share many of their disabilities with women in the developed countries, their experience of discrimination or disparity is more extensive because of the sex segregated character of society, the conditions of poverty and the traditional value system. Regarding sex-segregated status of women in India, Papanek (1973) said *“there is a preoccupation with the sexual and reproductive behavior of females. Allowing for variations of behavior across regions and*

between higher and lower castes, it is generally true that in India a women's sense of personal worth is related to her fertility performance and the social standing she achieves as a mother of son". The problems of women's education have also been examined during the last decade by a number of communities like the National Committee on Women's Education, the Committee on Differentiation of Curricula between Boys and Girls and Bhaktavatsalam Committee which studied the problem in six states where the education of girls was less developed. The new Education Policy (1986) document has observed that there is an urgent need to measure performance essentially on the basis of enrollment retention

A. Historical problems of girls or women education in Kashmir

The educational status of women in Kashmir like their counterparts elsewhere in the country is also depressing and quite dismal. Women in the traditional Kashmiri society were generally subjected to discrimination, inequality and oppression. The role of women remained confined to domestic affairs and so they were also debarred from education (Dabla: 2007). People were highly conservative and the realization that women need to be educated was totally lacking. In the 1890s, a girl's school was started in Kashmir by one of the woman from the British Church Mission, only to close due to an incident where girls flung themselves out of a window when people on the street shouted that Europeans only want to kidnap girls. The efforts to educate Kashmiri girls regained momentum in 1912, when a Church Mission Society Girls School opened with 17 students. The principal of this school noticed in 1914 that not a trained Kashmiri woman teacher is to be found in Srinagar.

The development of women, no doubt has been a part of the development planning process right from inception of Five Year Plans but the shift in approach from welfare to development towards women took place in a focused manner in the 6th and 7th Five Year Plans. The 8th Five Year Plan promised to ensure that benefits of development do not bypass women. The 9th Five Year Plan changed the strategy for women from development to empowerment and emphasis on preparation of separate Women Component Plan (WCP) by identifying specific Schemes/Projects having direct bearing on welfare and development of Women. The 10th Five Year Plan further strengthened the implementation of Women Component Plan (WCP). Moreover, the Women and Child Development Department in the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has also enjoined upon the states to monitor closely the flow of benefits of various schemes for the empowerment of women on regular basis. These initiatives have helped in improving the status of women in various spheres to a great extent, but the imbalance still exists which needs to be addressed over the years. Despite its linkage to so many positive outcomes and the progress made over the past 50 years, female literacy remains low in J&K State as compared to men.

B. Policies of Inclusion

In Five Year Plans, high priority has been accorded to inclusion of women in educational system. During these Plans, great emphasis was laid on UEE (Universalization of Elementary Education) and UPE (Universalization of Primary Education). In order to achieve it, the government of India launched the District Primary Education Program (DPEP) (Srivastava: 2005). Based on the Fourth Educational Survey, the Sixth Plan emphasized that achieving elementary education was a major problem not due to non-availability of schools but socio-economic reasons in rural areas. The Sixth Plan stated the program of UEE (Universalization of Elementary Education) would be specially directed towards high enrolment and retention of girls in schools. The Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90), stressed on enrolment and retention of girls at the elementary stage specially belonging to rural areas, the Schedule Castes/Schedule Tribes and other weaker sections. The key issue which characterized the Seventh Plan was the economic independence of women and this was followed by the evolution of beneficiary oriented programs for their development. The Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97), tried to ensure that the benefits of development do not bypass women and it implemented special programs for women to complement the general development programs and to monitor the flow of benefits to women in education, health and employment. The Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002) and the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007), took up empowering women as agents of socio-economic change and development as a major commitment. Education was considered to be most important factor leading to their empowerment (Das and Sagar: 2007).

2. Objectives

Present research is aimed to find out the gender discrimination in educational institutions with special focus on women education at primary, secondary and high standard levels. This study attempts to find out enrollment rate of girls in educational institutions, drop out ratio, daily attendance and gender gap between two opposite sexes. This study also aims to identify the policies and programs framed from time to time in favor of women education.

3. Methodology

The present study was conducted in rural, urban and tribal areas of Zone H.C.Gam of District Kulgam (J&K) where from the researcher has surveyed eight schools selected through random sampling method. Since this research is entirely based on sample survey for which Questionnaire, Interview, Observation and secondary Data Analysis are the major available tools of data collection. The population of present study includes all the students of primary, middle and high school of Zone H.C.Gam of District Kulgam. The variables selected were enrollment rate of girls in educational institutions, drop out ratio, daily attendance and gender gap between two opposite sexes and Gender Parity Index (GPI). Moreover the situation has been analyzed by discussing the problem with family members of students and teachers. Records from ZEO's office and school documents have also been taken into consideration. Results have been summed up by making use of certain statistical tools.

4. Results and Discussions

The following data presents the analysis and interpretations of the "Gender Discrimination in Educational institutions" in Zone H.C Gam of District Kulgam with respect to chosen variables and assumptions. For the present research, gender disparity in each level is measured by calculating the gender parity index or female to male ratio (FMR) in number of institutions, enrolment rate, dropout rate, daily attendance and gender gap.

GPI= Number of females/Number of males

The following data presents the analysis and interpretations of the "Gender Discrimination in Educational institutions" in Zone H.C Gam of District Kulgam with respect to chosen variables and assumptions.

Table: 1
Gender Literacy Rate in District Kulgam

	Males	Females	Total
Population	254273	239294	493567
Literacy Rate	126668	86180	212848

Source: Census of India, 2011

Total population of Kulgam in Jammu and Kashmir was 493567 in 2011 out of which, 254273 were males and 239294 were females. Kulgam district accounted to 3.4 percent of Jammu and Kashmir's population in 2011. Population between age group of 0 and 6 in Kulgam district was 70,386 in 2011, out of which 37400 were males and 32986 were females. Table 1 indicates that the total number of literates in district Kulgam is estimated to be 212848 in 2011 census, out of which 126668 were male literates and 86180 were female literates. The Kulgam district has reported the lowest literacy rates of less than 60%. On the whole there has been an improvement in education of women in cities and towns while as in rural and flung areas the situation is still unsatisfactory.

Table: 2
Gender wise enrollment at different levels of education in Govt. Schools

Levels of Education	Enrollment rate of boys	Enrollment rate of girls	Percentage of boys	Percentage of girls
Primary School	12	24	33.3	66.6
Middle School	25	21	54.3	45.6
High School	49	30	62	37.9

Source: Primary data

Table 2 shows the comparative figures of enrolment number of boys and girls at different levels of education. It is only up to the level of primary education we see a sound enrollment of girls. The enrollment of girls keep on declining as we move from primary to higher standards of education as shown in table 2 above. The reason behind this problem is that the parents are still maintaining biased attitude towards the upbringing of male and female children. Right from the beginning, female student is supposed to be a liability and male child an asset. Most of the girls at a tender age are admitted to schools for the sake of giving up the responsibility of taking their care and the same responsibility is performed by teachers in schools especially in government institutes where the children get free services for their upbringing. As soon as the girl child crosses the age of infancy and is able to work, she is asked to quit schooling either by repressive apparatus or by ideological apparatus so that her services can be better utilized in the household chores. On the other hand male children are admitted a bit late in the school and the responsibility of their care and nurturing is done at the hands of their own parents. Thus there exists gender disparity in education right from childhood as shown by inconsistency in the enrollment number in the above table. Rajan (2010) in his analysis found that the gender disparity in enrolment for all categories of students has not improved gradually. The gender disparity is higher at secondary and higher secondary level of education as compared to other level of education such as primary and middle level.

Table: 3
Enrollment status of girls in Government and Private schools

Gender	Government Schools	Private Schools
Boys	86	134
Girls	75	50
Percentage of Girls	46.5%	27%

Source: primary data

The table 3 shows discrimination on the part of parents for their girl children. The data indicates that the percentage of girl students reading in government schools is about 46.5 percent while as it is only about 27 percent in private schools in comparison to boys. The boy's percentage is about 53.5 percent in government schools while as it is about 73 percent in private schools. Thus in both private and government institutes, we see sound enrolment of boys but it shows a lot of variation in private schools where girls contribute a very little proportion. We can say that parents are giving more preference to boy's education and better carrier facility than that of girl's and they prefer private quality education for male folk. While in case of girl's education they usually prefer government schools where there is low fee and cheap education. We find least number of girls enrolled in private institutes due to high expenditure of schooling in comparison to the boys of the same area that result in the high gender gap in private education especially in rural areas as shown in table 3. Comparatively good enrollment of girls in government schools is due to the fact that the education is free of cost. Besides this, mid day meals scheme has enhanced the roll of girl students in the government schools.

Table: 4
Gender Parity Index in Government and Private schools

Gender	Government Schools	Private Schools
Boys	86	134
Girls	75	50
Gender parity index	0.87	0.37

Source: primary data

Further the present study in table 4 revealed that the gender parity index is low in private schools which means girls are lesser in number than boys. In government schools gender parity index is comparatively high as indicated by high enrollment rate of girls in these schools. It is to be mentioned here that the enrollment status of boys on the other hand is better in private schools than female children. The main reason behind this fact is the indifferent attitude of parents and society towards the education of female children that prevents the assurance of quality education in favor of girls and results in gender disparity in education. On the whole, gender disparity in education is declining due to entrance of a large number of female students to the formal system of education in government schools but women are still lacking quality education that becomes a negative factor for ensuring their higher studies.

Table: 5
Distribution of gender based class wise enrollment of students in Govt High School Mohammadpora

Classes	Male Students	Female students	% Girls
1st	6	7	53.8%
2 nd	1	4	80%
3 rd	1	5	83.3%
4 th	2	4	66.6%
5 th	2	4	66.6%
6 th	9	8	47%
7 th	8	7	46.6%
8 th	8	6	43%
9 th	32	20	38.46%
10 th	17	10	37%

Source: primary data

It is clear from table 5 that the number of girl students is about 53.8 percent in class 1st, 80 percent in class 2nd, 83.3 percent in class 3rd, 66.6 percent in 4th and 5th classes, 47 percent in 6th, 46.6 percent in class 7th, 43 percent in 8th, 38.46 percent in 9th and 37 percent in 10th. So it is evident that up to primary level in schools, the percentage of girl students ranges from 54 to 83 percent. But from 6th class onwards, the dropout rate of girl students increases as we move to higher levels of schooling as indicated in table 5. This means girls fail to continue their education and the reasons responsible are parental illiteracy, poverty, sibling care duties, agricultural activities and traditional outlook of family and society.

Table: 6
Periodical dropout Rate in Government schools

S. No.	Period	Classes	Dropout Rate
1	2005-2013	10 th	25%
2	2005-2013	9 th	21%
3	2005-2013	8 th	22%
4	2005-2013	7 th	11%
5	2005-2013	6 th	05%
6	2005-2013	5 th	Nil
7	2005-2013	4 th	Nil

Source: primary data

Table 6 also gives the dropout rate in both the genders from the period of 2005 to 2013. The dropout rate keeps on increasing as we move from lower to higher levels of education. In comparison to boys, dropout rate among girls is far exceeding as per information received in the present research. The increasing dropout rate among girls may be due to the indifferent attitude of teachers and parents, and their family circumstances. Since the launch of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Mid Day Meal Scheme (MDMS) and initiation of host of steps like provisions of free textbooks, scholarships, various educational facilities at an easy reach etc to reduce the dropout rate, the dropout rate in the state has declined to 11% in 2012-2013. It is believed that the dropout rate will certainly come down in future and that too quit steeply in near future at elementary level. But in high schools, girls still suffer in many ways like inadequate access to education because of large distance or unsafe conditions and they are more likely to dropout or withdraw due to economic or due to one or the other reason.

Table: 7
Gender gap in Govt. primary school khee Jogipora

Class	Boys	Girls	Total	Gender Gap
1 st	1	2	3	1
2 nd	6	7	13	1
3 rd	7	8	15	1
4 th	2	5	7	3
5 th	3	4	7	1

Source: primary data

Table: 8
Gender gap in Darul Hudda Model Institute English Medium Hadigam in 2013

Class	Boys	Girls	Total	Gender Gap
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5 th	5	4	9	1
4 th	4	1	5	3
3 rd	9	1	10	8
2 nd	8	4	12	4
1 st	4	4	8	0

Source: primary data

Table 7 and table 8 shows that the enrollment of girls in government schools is better than private schools due to high cost of education and the least preference of parents to send their female children to private institutes. Table 7 and 8 reflects that the roll of boys and girls in government and private schools shows a lot of variation. Good enrollment of girls in government schools is due to the fact that the education is free of cost. The above data in table 8 reveals that the literacy rate of girls at the primary standard is far low than that of their male counterparts in private schools and there exists a lot of gender gap that need to be bridged. Parents are also indifferent to send their female children to the schools. Parental illiteracy, poverty, sibling care duties, agricultural activities and traditional outlook of family and society are the main responsible reasons. It is further mentioned here that in rural areas, least number of girls are enrolled in private institutes due to high expenditure of schooling in comparison to the boys of the same area that results in the high gender gap in private education in rural areas as shown in table 8. Further, gender gap in all the primary secondary and high standard private institutes is very large than that of government schools.

Table: 9
Daily attendance of students

S. No.	Classes	No. of admitted Students	No. of absent students	Absent girls	Absent boys
1	1st	13	4	3	1
2	2 nd	5	0	0	0
3	3 rd	6	1	1	0
4	4 th	6	2	1	1
5	5 th	6	3	2	1
6	6 th	17	5	3	2
7	7 th	15	4	3	1
8	8 th	14	3	3	0
9	9 th	52	6	4	2
10	10 th	27	4	3	1

Source: primary data

Table 9 gives the daily attendance of boys and girls in different classes. Data clearly indicates that among absentees most of them are girls. The reason behind this is that they have to perform certain household activities also with prime importance and their education is taken as for granted at all. Girls often skip schooling due to their role in agricultural activities, domestic activities, sibling care duties and many more. In this way daily attendance of students gives us an idea of discrimination on part of parents towards their girl children who are most of the times asked to stay at the home. In some cases, girl students skip schooling due to fear factor developed by indifferent attitude of teachers for girl students.

A. Government Policies and Programs for Promoting Gender Equality in Education

State government realized that for bringing the holistic development of women, elimination of gender disparity in education is a prerequisite and therefore launched various schemes/programs to improve the educational conditions of women. These include Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), National Program for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV). Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) promotes girl's education through equalization of educational opportunities and elimination of gender disparities. The State joined Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan a little late in 2003 owing to its circumstances, particularly disturbance due to militancy and typical topography (sparsely populated habitations) of state. During 2006-07, 148 primary schools were upgraded to upper primary schools. The National Program for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) is a focused intervention of Government of India to reach the 'Hardest to Reach' girls, especially those not in school through the development of a 'model school' in every cluster with more intense community mobilization and supervision of girl's enrolment in schools. The Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya is a program to establish residential schools for girls in all the districts which have a particularly low female literacy rate has been announced. The central government has also decided to grant financial incentives and scholarships for the girl child born in families living below the poverty line. Several central and state level initiatives have been in operation from early 1950's. While the design of these projects varies substantially, all of them address the objectives and strategies of the National Policy on Education 1986 (NPE-86). They pay special attention to increasing girl's enrolment, improving educational outcomes, strengthening community involvement, improving teaching and learning materials and providing in-service teacher training. All these programs especially SSA has raised the enrollment of girls in the said zone and helped in bridging the gender disparity in education.

5. Suggestions

After finding the above mentioned problems, following suggestions can be put in use to eradicate the ongoing discrimination in educational institutions.

1. Special emphasizes on female education has to laid down at both the state and country level as well.
2. Govt. should with the help of school administrations implement those acts which are meant for the emancipation of female education.
3. Separate educational institutions should be established with female staff so as to deal with religious restrictions.
4. Parents at large should be communicated the importance of female education.
5. Emphases have to be laid down on the female higher education so that the drop down could be dealt with.
6. Participation of girls in school activities has to be made mandatory with respective of their physical condition.
7. Seminars in the importance of female higher education should be arranged on regular intervals.
8. Girls themselves should understand the importance of higher education.

6. Conclusion

The enrollment of girls keeps on declining as we move from primary to higher standards of education. The reason behind this problem is that the parents are still maintaining biased attitude towards the upbringing of male and female children. Right from the beginning, female student is supposed to be a liability and male child an asset. Most of the girls at a tender age are

admitted to schools for the sake of giving up the responsibility of taking their care and the same responsibility is performed by teachers in schools especially in government institutes where the children get free services for their upbringing. As soon as the girl child crosses the age of infancy and is able to work, she is asked to quit schooling either by repressive apparatus or by ideological apparatus so that her services can be better utilized in the household chores. Thus the dropout rate of girls keep on increasing as we move from lower to higher levels of education. In comparison to boys, dropout rate among girls is far exceeding as per information received in the present research. Data shows discrimination on the part of parents for their girl children. In both private and government institutes, we see sound enrolment of boys but it shows a lot of variation in private schools where girls contribute a very little proportion. We can say that parents are giving more preference to boy's education and better carrier facility than that of girl's and they prefer private quality education for male folk. While in case of girl's education they usually prefer government schools where there is low fee and cheap education. In government schools gender parity index is comparatively high as indicated by high enrollment rate of girls in these schools. It is to be mentioned here that the enrollment status of boys on the other hand is better in private schools than female children. On the whole, gender disparity in education is declining due to entrance of a large number of female students to the formal system of education in government schools but women are still lacking quality education that becomes a negative factor for ensuring their higher studies. The daily attendance of boys and girls in different classes clearly indicates that among absentees most of them are girls. The reason behind this is that they have to perform certain household activities also with prime importance and their education is taken as for granted at all. Girls often skip schooling due to their role in agricultural activities, domestic activities, sibling care duties and many more. In this way daily attendance of students gives us an idea of discrimination on part of parents towards their girl children who are most of asked to stay at the home. In some cases, girl students skip schooling due to fear factor developed by indifferent attitude of teachers for girl students.

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