

# Bringing Gender Parity and Eradicating Gender Discrimination: Education as a Vital Tool

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**Abstract:** Education is a vital tool for bringing about gender parity and simultaneously catalysing national development. Gender sensitization is the process of changing the stereotype concept or idea to the modification of behaviour by raising awareness of gender equality concerns. Gender sensitization refers to the modification of behaviour by raising awareness of gender equality concerns. Gender Sensitization implies accepting the basic rights associated with Gender equality among all persons but, not against women to man. Gender sensitivity helps to generate respect for the individual regardless of sex. Through Gender Sensitization develop a cordial and amiable environment where there is mutual respect and trust between the sexes, without sexual innuendoes and obstructive chauvinism to mar the atmosphere. This paper considers that Gender sensitization seeks to question and subsequently change that very thought-process and it also aims to make people develop a sense of empathy and acceptance towards the other gender. This paper further tries to trigger a behavioral change and enabling people examine their own perceptions and attitudes which ultimately help in shaping a just and unprejudiced society.

**Key Words:** Education and Gender Parity, Behavioural Change, Gender Discrimination Factors, Gender Sensitization.

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

Education of both-boys and girls is recognized as a fundamental 'Human Right' and also a developmental necessity. Universal recognition should be given to the fact that both boys and girls receive basic education of at least 8 years and of an acceptable quality. Large gender disparity in enrolment and learning achievements persist even in the present day and the eradication of disparity is only possible with government capacity. Failure to provide this education results in a massive denial of Human Rights.

'Gender Parity' is a numerical concept. It refers to the same proportion of boys and girls relative to their respective age groups who enter the Education System and participate in full primary and secondary cycles. Gender Parity is measured by the 'Gender Parity Index'. Gender Equality is a complex notion and quite difficult to measure. Full Gender Equality refers to the situation when boys and girls are offered some chances, methods and curricula free of stereotypes. In this situation it is also assumed that academic orientation and counseling are unaffected by gender bias.

Education is a vital tool for bringing about gender parity and simultaneously catalysing national development. A UNICEF panel succinctly sums this up: "That women might have the chance of a healthier and happier life should be reason enough for promoting girls' education. However, there are also important benefits for society as a whole. An educated woman has the skills, information and self-confidence that she needs to be a better parent, worker and citizen."

Women's education is a special priority in India, with our history of gender discrimination, inequality in education and the workforce, and our current need to achieve rapid economic development.

It is true there has been a positive trend in female student enrolment at primary levels, which currently stands at 48% girls to 52% boys. Unfortunately, there is a very high drop-out rate at the secondary level, at which point the state does not enforce compulsory education, with a drop-out rate of over 30% for girls, seriously reducing their higher education participation.

What is even more alarming is that female participation in the labour force has dropped from 34% in 1999 to a low of 27% in 2015. This decline in workforce participation in recent times points to the fact that we don't just need access to education, but access to quality education, in order to overturn centuries of entrenched prejudice against women. Access to education, one of the most potent tools of empowerment, is out of reach for many women in India, especially those in the low income groups, rural or remote areas. There are several barriers to access. Traditional gender norms result in girls being kept at home to help with household chores or to look after younger siblings. Poor facilities, especially the lack of usable toilets, are deterrents to older girls attending school. Often, concerns for the safety of adolescent females travelling long distances to (secondary) school increase drop-out rates. Under-age marriage and low aspirations for education for girls are also contributing factors.

In recent times, from Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao to Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana, the government has taken several enabling, affirmative actions. Initiatives like distribution of bicycles to girls to tackle concerns regarding safety and improvement in infrastructure by adding usable toilets enhances retention of girls at schools. Digital platforms can also be used to augment access to education and can be delivered through our gram panchayat and rural development systems that are already in place, thereby ensuring access to education for women across India. It is expected that, by June 2018, there will be 500 million internet users in the country, with 87% reach in rural areas. E-learning can be the technological vehicle for women's groups to handle issues around health, hygiene, child bearing and other information they rarely have access to.

The other challenge is to improve the quality of education. Entrenched gender stereotypes—a woman's place is in the home or she isn't as smart as male peers—come in the way of women's employment. For women to break the gender prejudices that legislate against their employment, they may even need to perform twice as well as their male peers to get hired.

On one hand this calls for improving the quality of teachers, sensitizing them to gender concerns, and training them to adopt new forms of pedagogy that engage students. On the other hand it is imperative that education imparts critical thinking skills to students, both boys and girls, to equip them to face the challenges of the fast-changing environment of the 21st century. Education in India must move away from the traditional imparting of knowledge, which quickly gets outdated, to focusing on teaching students 'how to think' and to develop the ability to problem-solving in dynamic situations.

Providing women with quality education would break the existing hurdles to their employment, leading to the emergence of successful role models. The advent of these role models and leaders is critical for changing the perception of women in the community, particularly in areas where gender stereotypes are most entrenched. A corollary to this would be the improvement in self-esteem of girls, which would then enable them to actively challenge gender biases and achieve societal change. If we wish to create skilled, globalised, effective human capital based on a revived education system, we cannot afford to leave our girls behind.

## 2. FACTORS INFLUENCING GENDER DISCRIMINATION:

There are so many factors which are fully responsible for gender discrimination in globalized World. These factors are as follows –

### ➤ *Social Factors*

*Patriarchal Society:* Most of the country has strong patriarchal custom, where men hold authority over female family members and inherit property & this custom where inheritance passes from father to son.

*In Decision Making:* Women have less authority than men to legal recognition and protection, as well as lower access to public knowledge and information, and less decision-making power both within and outside the home. This is also one of the reasons for inequality in gender.

*Education:* The female literacy rate of developed country are satisfied while ranking position developing and under develop country not good.

*Gender-based violence:* Gender-based violence such as rape, sexual assault, insult to modesty, kidnapping, abduction, cruelty by intimate partner or relatives, importation or trafficking of girls, persecution for dowry, indecency and all other crimes are practiced on women.

*Health:* the gender discrimination between women's and men's life expectancy and women live compared to men in good health because of lots of violence, disease, or other relevant factors.

*Dowry:* The dowry system in our society also contributes to gender discrimination by influencing the perception that girls are a burden on families

### ➤ *Cultural Factors*

*Religious practice:* Religious rituals, which can only be performed by males for their parents' afterlife. Sons are often the only person entitled to performing funeral rights for their parents.

*Old age support:* - Another factor which driving gender inequality is the preference for sons, as they are deemed more useful than girls. They are supposed to support the old age security of their parents. \

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*Son Preference:* In our male dominant, boys are given the exclusive rights to inherit the family name and properties and they are viewed as additional status for their family.

### ➤ Economic Factors

**Labor participation:** There is wage inequality between man and woman in workplace. A substantial number of women enter the labor market after thirties, generally after completion of their reproductive roles of child bearing and rearing.

**Access to credit:** There are large disparities between men and women in terms of status and access to work place.

**Property Rights:** Although women have equal rights under the law to own property and receive equal inheritance rights, while, women are at a disadvantage in their practical life.

**Employment inequality:** Some common inequalities which also take place in the workplace are the gender-based imbalances of individuals in power and command over the management of the organization. Women are not able to move up into higher paid positions quickly as compared to men.

These factors are common that responsible for gender discrimination and many more factors also influence to driving gender discrimination .it also vary society to society, according to their social atmosphere.

### 3. GENDER SENSITIZATION:

We must endeavor to create a Gender sensitive society to remove Gender discrimination or inequality. We should work out strategies for prevention and control of violence against women as well as change in the cultural mindset about them and create a peaceful world. Gender sensitization is the process of changing the stereotype concept or idea to the modification of behaviour by raising awareness of gender equality concerns. Gender sensitization refers to the modification of behaviour by raising awareness of gender equality concerns. Gender Sensitization implies accepting the basic rights associated with Gender equality among all persons but, not against women to man. Gender sensitivity helps to generate respect for the individual regardless of sex. Through Gender Sensitization develop a cordial and amiable environment where there is mutual respect and trust between the sexes, without sexual innuendoes and obstructive chauvinism to mar the atmosphere.

### 4. GENDER SENSITIVITY AND ROLE OF TEACHERS:

Teachers play a very important role in the early upbringing of a child. Their idea and beliefs can change the thought processes of young children. Children in the formative years easily nurture values and virtues taught to them. Gender sensitivity training should be mandatory for teachers. The training will enable them to disseminate the desirable attitude based on mutual respect and trust between girls and boys.

Classrooms need to be gender sensitive. Teachers can play the following roles:

- Encourage both male students and female students to be class leaders (perhaps one of each gender). Appoint two monitors in each classroom, a boy and a girl
- Address and call on girls and boys equally. Do not segregate boys and girls in the classroom in primary classes
- Make mixed groups including both boys and girls for group activities and games
- Try to 'switch role' for breaking down gender barriers and stereotyping of gender roles
- Make both boys and girls share activities like cleaning, moving furniture, to the chalkboard during a lesson.
- Plan and conduct activities that give opportunity to all children accepting one another as equals.

### 5. CONCLUSION:

Gender disparities are deep-rooted and negative gender stereotyping is reflected in our day-to-day lives. Gender sensitization is possible with the help of education. Education helps in changing the mind of a person by teaching and training in the following way:

1. Enhancing self confidence level by various participation in social, political and economical area.
2. Education raising the status in the family and society.
3. Reducing dependability by self activities performing in various fields.
4. Education develops the leadership quality among women by self confidence and self esteem.
5. Social awareness, Political awareness, health awareness can be better understood in the higher level with the help of higher education.

In conclusion, it can be said for eliminating gender disparities we need to consider the followings-

- Strong political commitment to support women in both development and education.
- Related to this, policy development has been informed and influenced by demands of strong women's networks and other key stakeholders such as teachers and parents.

- Along with key and universal access for all groups, comprehensive strategies are implemented which tackle the key cause of gender inequalities in education.

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