

Gender and Disability: Theoretical Debates on Indian Education Policies

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Abstract: *The nature of gender and disability inequalities in education has changed profoundly over recent decades and, with regard to attainment in particular, has become more complex. Apart from the injustice inherent in all gender stereotyping, gender differences in education can also negatively affect social inclusion. For example, disabled girls remain a minority in public sphere, but on the other hand evidence shows that disabled boys and non-disabled girls are more likely to be amongst the superior in public sphere. These two examples illustrate that gender differences in education must be taken into account when developing policies and strategies to improve educational outcomes.*

The following paper using an intersect lens (gender and disability both) emphasizes policy making notions of robust individual capacity for strategic and self-interested action, focusing on function and efficiency. Although some phenomena are well-described by these views, they ignore important elements of educational policy that are best understood through a cultural lens. I exemplify disabled girls represent one of the most marginalized group of the society in which we live in, and subject to multiple discriminations. Unveiling, little or almost nothing is said about the reality of disabled girls in India. The country's educational policies framework so far has failed to include, treat or provide solutions to the elimination of multiple discriminations of disabled girls.

There are several studies conducted in the areas of disabled girls and education but this study accentuates on the issues that have been silenced in the research: how the educational policies in independent India have addressed the question of discrimination, deprivation and exclusion suffered by disabled girls? The study shall be based on gender analysis and try to explore the policy framework in relation to this group.

Key Words: gender, disability, social inclusion, discrimination, deprivation, exclusion and gender analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Gender equality has long been a major goal at global space. Since the 1970s, various directives have laid the foundation of equal treatment and equal opportunities in public domain. However, despite the existence of comprehensive legislative frameworks, gender equality is yet to be achieved. While disabled women and girls form the majority of students in most countries, they still earn less and lower rates than disabled men and non-disable women. With regard to education and training, gender differences persist in both attainments.

The nature of gender and disability inequalities in education has changed profoundly over recent decades and, with regard to attainment in particular, has become more complex. Apart from the injustice inherent in all gender stereotyping, gender differences in education can also negatively affect social inclusion. For example, disabled women and girls remain a minority in public sphere, but on the other hand evidence shows that disabled men and non-disabled women are more likely to be amongst the superior in public sphere. These two examples illustrate that gender differences in education must be taken into account when developing policies and strategies to improve educational outcomes. Since, Education is a powerful instrument in changing attitudes and behaviour. Education policies, therefore, play an important role in fostering equal chances for everyone and in combating stereotypes; administration have a duty to provide all children with the opportunity to discover their own identity, strengths and interests regardless of traditional gender expectations.

Despite the fact that, the review of Indian educational policies for disabled girls has shown that challenging existing gender roles and stereotypes in policy frames is not an easy task either for legislators or for experts in the field. However, as pointed out in a recent review on gender and disability (especially, disabled girls) in education policy, the attitudes of legislators or for experts in the field to gender and disability issues are often conservative and reproduce traditional gender stereotyped ideas and expectations. Mostly the National Policy on Education carried the

fundamental issue of equality cent-restage but does not concern how to uphold issue of different. Therefore, all education policies should have a core module on analyze comprehensive and layered way. Legislators or experts in the field should be assessed in their equality practices during pre-service and in-service education policies. There are, of course, many more measures to promote equality in disability zone. Not all of them may be equally important everywhere, depending largely on the state policies. Evidently any strategy or measure being piloted or adopted in this field needs to be monitored and evaluated regularly and adapted according to changing circumstances.

2. SIGNIFICANCE OF UNDERTAKING THE STUDY:

Although the educational policies have been taken by government and non-government organizations, it has not given the desired results which need immediate attention. Those are:

- Have always been ignored.
- Indian educational policies for women do not include issues of disabled women and girls.
- Indian educational policies for disabled rarely address the needs of disabled women or girls.
- Disabled women are seen imperfect, incomplete, inferior, asexual, and non-productive and denial recognition as women and human beings

3. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:

In common usage, the terms impairment, disability and handicap are tended to be used interchangeably. However, according to the authorities in this area, these terms can have different conations in different cultural contexts (United Nations, 1964). Disabled women face a triple disadvantage as women, as disabled and as disabled women (Edmonds, 2005). There was a study by (Rao, 2002) about relationship between disabled women and girls and the disability and women's movements and state policies. The study of Maqbool, S. (2003) discussing on the status of disabled women and girls in South Asian countries, Maqbool emphasis that government of these countries ratified important UN human rights instruments for disabled women and girls but these documents have not yet been implemented. They still face inequality in opportunities are excluded from the national development efforts. Focusing on the education of disabled women and girls, it is further observed that the main reason for the backwardness of disabled girls, especially in rural areas is the lack of educational facilities. In urban areas too, their access to education is limited.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

Following are the objectives of this paper:

- To analyze the educational status of disabled girls.
- To analyze the educational attainment of disabled girls.
- To review the Indian educational policies for disabled girls.

5. METHODOLOGY:

This paper is an exploratory research. It allows the researcher to familiarize with the problem or concept to be studied and generates relevant research questions to be explored in detail.

This paper is qualitative in nature. In this paper seeks to explore the educational policy frames are not address on the issue of double jeopardy of those girls who are suffering from disability.

Data Sources: This paper uses only secondary data. The secondary data collects in the form of published and unpublished sources. The published sources in the form of government's reports, books, eBooks, journals, eJournals etc., accessed through the concerned web sites.

This paper is mainly focuses on gender analysis. It tried to understand the relationships between men and women, their access to resources, activities and the constraints faced by them. Gender analysis also provides the information on gender and its relationship with race, ethnicity, culture, class, age, disability, and/or other status, which helps to

understand the different patterns of involvement, behavior and activities of women and men who are the patterns in the economic, social and legal structures in the society.

6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

This paper is basically exploratory in nature. In this paper, it focuses mainly on the double jeopardy (as girl, and disabled) of disabled girls and reviews the Indian educational policies for disabled girls. This paper does not explore beyond the above focuses analysis. These are all the limitations of this paper.

7. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION:

National Policies of Education represents an educational policy document of the Government of India, which reflects the main directions to achieve equality, and for an effective fight against social stigma. The goal of this strategy is to present the ways and institutional mechanisms for the inclusion of disability issues in the public sphere for the mitigation of discrimination. In the analyses of the educational attainment of girls in India, there is no reference to the educational attainment of disabled girls, who represent a category that is totally left out of the education system as a result of the prejudice and stigma of the education system. As well as, the comparative overview of policy concerns identified and measures taken, we can see that In India lack an overall strategy and implementation plans which would form part of an effective gender equality policy.

Despite the fact that, there are contesting theories about equality and inclusion. The dominant paradigm of liberalism undermines the issue of difference. This paradigm ignores the issue of gender and disability. It is based upon the idea of normality, based upon white, male, abled people, European etc. Normality ignores the contextual condition of particular groups and led to exclusion. There is no space for exercising particular roles in the society. The structure of society constructs the whole system based on the idea of normality and similarity. The Indian policy framework guaranties the rights of disabled girls and women under the general term of “women and girls” or alternatively has included them under vulnerable groups. There is insufficient lack of attention by the legislator regarding the conditions and specifics of this category, and their regulation through by-legal acts. It is affecting non-disabled women and disabled women differently, but is largely ignored in *equality debates*. *In terms of education*, which aims at fostering the participation of disabled women and girls in the education system. *In the Rawlinson paradigm*, Okin, S. M. has argued that injustice against women within the house hold is invisible. Justice of not viewed within the family can only result in strengthening patriarchal norms. We noted that the specificity of disabled women status has been linked to the general group of disabled, thus meeting the policy of their claims to the experiences of different disabilities, for instance, those with hearing problems have commonality of issue, which are not gendered. We realized that within this setting, the placing of women within the general understanding of disability sector, whether visual, locomotors or any other is fragmented, as far as they were seen with gendered lenses. The disability alone categorization was therefore insufficient to understand their problems. This is proved by the fact that disabled women are nearly invisible element, not only in the general disability movement as well as in the women’s movements. Disability is a feminist issue, but is largely ignored in *citizenship debates*. Disability is gendered, affecting men and women/boys and girls differently. The public imagination perceives of most disabled people’s, especially women, as passive citizens. They represent a source of increasing demand for facilities in an environment of ever-diminishing state educational policies. Dominant ideologies within the disability arena are changing from welfare to rights, yet disabled people still do not appear as active members of the community. Their rights however have emerged as an important concern for the state as well as the civil society. But in India, it is extremely turbulent that their genuine citizenry rights have been marginal.

Certainly, highlighting these groups (for example, disabled children, especially disabled girls) as being in need of specific attention may ensure that their needs are being encountered. However, making them stand apart also exposes them to marginalization from mainstream developments, and there is a danger that they are not accounted for within the framework of general education.

8. CONCLUSION:

This paper shows that there are not many initiatives in place to address disabled girls related patterns in achievement. This might be because the relationship between cause and effect is complex in this context since attainment is influenced by a series of factors. Interestingly, many countries have developed measures targeted at disabled girls with low social status. Although these initiatives taken alone might not be sufficient to tackle all forms of under-achievement, they are nevertheless crucial.

Certainly, attempting to transform the negative impact of certain society sub-cultures and poor attitudes to societies which are based upon the idea of normality might also be contributing positively towards gender equality. Strategies include encouraging more mature behavior and attitudes towards society, and facilitating a societal culture where (disabled girls) pupils can achieve opportunities without fear of ridicule or disruptive behavior. Thus, this paper highlights that both gender and disability (especially, disabled girls) have both are related to complex and multilayer problems. So, approaching such concerns also tackle with various approaches and taking it through the different perspective.

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