



INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES AND INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

(Peer-reviewed, Refereed, Indexed & Open Access Journal)

DOI : 03.2021-11278686

ISSN : 2582-8568

IMPACT FACTOR : 7.560 (SJIF 2024)

GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION AND WORKPLACE

Ms. Sushmita Soni

Assistant Professor (Commerce),
Seth Hirachand Mutha College of Arts, Commerce & Science,
Kalyan (W.), (Maharashtra, India)

DOI No. **03.2021-11278686** DOI Link :: <https://doi-ds.org/doilink/07.2024-65184434/IRJHISIC2404014>

Abstract:

Equality in education and the workplace of women and men is a fundamental right, an essential element of democracy and an imperative of social justice. This paper finds that inequality at the workplace takes place due to lack of opportunities for higher education of girls and women because there are less educational opportunities for growth of girls and women. Gender inequality in higher education impacts the economic growth, incomes, leadership, promotion, pay scale and career development of girls and women. At the undergraduate level male's students account for 50.8% of the enrollment while female students constitute 49%. However there is a significant gender disparity in diploma programs with 65% of male and 34.9% female. Study finds that instead of having job experience, girls are not getting enough opportunities for their development because they are lacking higher education. Paper analysis defines different barriers for higher education like poverty, child marriage, bias, orthodox, different thinking of families and community, etc. That leads to increase discrimination at workplace. The conclusion discusses how these findings cast doubt on widely held beliefs about gender equality in the workplace.

Keywords: Higher Education, Barriers, Lack of Opportunities, Impacts.

Introduction:

Understanding the advantageous outcomes of education involves examining its dual roles in both workplace success and broader life achievements. Education not only provides individuals with specialized skills pertinent to their fields but also nurtures essential domain-specific abilities such as language and math proficiency. Proficiency in these areas is vital for further educational endeavors and is often evaluated through extensive surveys assessing the efficacy of educational systems worldwide.

Gender disparity in India encompasses various spheres including health, education, economy, and politics. India's standings fluctuate across these domains and are evaluated by diverse gender disparity indices, though disputes regarding their accuracy persist. Societal elements contribute to

gender inequalities, affecting India's sex ratio, women's health, educational attainment, and economic status. Both genders are impacted by this intricate issue, with some arguing that policies aimed at gender equality disadvantage men. However, a comprehensive perspective reveals significant disadvantages encountered by women in Indian society.

One of the foremost pathways to independence, financial stability, prestige, career fulfillment, and personal growth following education is equitable treatment in the workplace. Historically, women's roles were often confined to the domestic sphere, but contemporary trends indicate their increasing involvement in professional settings. Despite comparable rates of workforce participation for men and women in many countries, disparities exist in sectors of employment, levels of seniority and compensation, as well as contractual arrangements affecting job security and workplace benefits. Such discrepancies can be indicative of discriminatory treatment based on protected characteristics.

Barriers of Gender equality in higher education India:

Gender inequality is a pervasive issue in India, impacting Indian women and girls in a variety of ways. While there are many causes of gender inequality, some of the most common include:

Economic Hardship:

India, despite its recent economic growth, remains one of the world's poorest countries. This economic disparity contributes significantly to gender inequality, as families often prioritize sending their sons to school over their daughters, even when education is accessible in rural areas.

Patriarchal Setup in our Indian Society:

India has a deeply ingrained patriarchal society, where women historically have had limited agency in decisions regarding their own advancement or community development. This systemic imbalance perpetuates gender inequality, relegating women to subordinate roles within their families

Education disparities:

Gender disparities in literacy rates persist in India, with significant differences observed across different regions. While some states show better parity, others exhibit substantial gaps. The issue is not solely a lack of educated women but rather a lack of awareness among them regarding their rights and opportunities.

Lack of Awareness among Women:

A lack of awareness among women about their rights and potential for equality exacerbates gender inequality. Cultural norms that emphasize women's subservience to men often contribute to this lack of awareness. It is crucial to dismantle these barriers and empower women to advocate for their rights.

Social Customs, Beliefs and Practices:

Societal beliefs and practices perpetuate gender inequality by restricting women from

accessing opportunities available to men. These norms reinforce the perception of men as the dominant group, thereby hindering women's advancement

Challenges in Higher Education Infrastructure:

Many higher education institutions in India suffer from inadequate infrastructure, including deficiencies in classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and other essential facilities. A World Bank study revealed that only 25% of these institutions have adequate infrastructure, leading to overcrowded classrooms, limited resources, and compromised educational experiences for students. Examples of inadequate infrastructure include overcrowded classrooms, insufficient laboratories, poorly stocked libraries, and a lack of facilities such as sports grounds and hostels. These deficiencies impede effective learning, student engagement, and can lead to health and accommodation issues

Rising Cost of Education:

The cost of higher education in India is rising, driven by increased living expenses, growing demand, and decreased government funding. This trend disproportionately affects students from rural areas, making higher education increasingly unaffordable for many families. For instance, the average annual tuition cost of a private institution in India exceeds ₹1 lakh, placing a significant financial burden on students and their families.

Family and Caregiving Responsibilities:

Societal expectations regarding caregiving responsibilities often place additional burdens on women, making it challenging to balance academic pursuits with family obligations. As a result, women may opt for part-time studies or drop out of higher education altogether.

Discrimination and Harassment:

Gender-based discrimination and harassment in educational settings undermine the academic success and well-being of female students. Instances of sexual harassment, gender-based bullying, and differential treatment by peers and faculty create hostile environments that impede female students' educational attainment.

Gender discrimination at the workplace due to lack of higher education:

It refers to instances where individuals, typically women, face unfair treatment, bias, or barriers in their professional lives despite having advanced educational qualifications. Here are some specific scenarios where this discrimination may occur

Types of gender discrimination:

Employment Dynamics: Women, despite possessing equal or superior qualifications, may face obstacles in securing job opportunities or advancements compared to their male counterparts, potentially due to a deficiency in higher education. This hindrance may stem from biased perceptions regarding women's capabilities or adherence to traditional gender norms.

Compensation Disparities: Even when women possess identical educational backgrounds and professional experience as men, they often receive lower compensation. This gender-based wage gap is commonly attributed to systemic prejudices and discriminatory practices.

Leadership Barriers: Women with advanced educational qualifications may encounter challenges in breaking through the "glass ceiling" to attain top leadership positions within corporate hierarchies. Deep-seated gender stereotypes and biases frequently perpetuate this barrier to advancement.

Hostile Work Environments: Within sectors historically dominated by men, women with postgraduate degrees may confront unwelcoming work environments characterized by exclusionary conduct, harassment, and subtle forms of discrimination from supervisors or colleagues threatened by their presence.

Limited Growth Opportunities: Despite their wealth of professional experience, women may encounter restricted avenues for career development, mentorship, or networking opportunities essential for progression.

Recognition Deficit: Women's accomplishments and contributions in the workplace are often undervalued or incorrectly attributed to male counterparts, reinforcing the perception of women's inferiority and diminishing their chances of acknowledgement.

Skill Underutilization: Women with advanced educational credentials may find themselves underutilized or assigned tasks below their skill level compared to equally qualified male colleagues. This underutilization impedes their professional advancement and fosters sentiments of frustration and inequity.

Exclusion from Decision-Making: Despite possessing requisite qualifications, women may be sidelined from decision-making roles within their organizations, limiting their ability to influence strategic planning and shape their career trajectories.

Disparate Training Opportunities: Women with higher education credentials may face unequal access to training, mentorship, and professional development programs compared to men. This imbalance impedes their career growth and perpetuates gender disparities within the workplace.

Stalled Career Advancement: Women may encounter impediments to career progression, such as a lack of sponsorship, mentorship, or internal advancement opportunities within their organizations. This stagnation can lead to dissatisfaction, disengagement, and eventual attrition from the workforce.

Gender Gap in Education In India:

In 2019, the BCom program witnessed parity between genders, with 100 women for every 100 men. However, this balance shifted by 2020, with a decrease to 94 women per 100 men, nearing the enrollment levels of 2016, where the ratio was 93 women to 100 men. Similar trends were evident in various other academic domains. For example, in the field of medicine, the ratio of women to men

dropped from 110 to 100 between 2019 and 2020. Likewise, in pharmacy, there was a decline from 93 women per 100 men in 2019 to 66 women in 2020. Fields traditionally associated with female dominance, such as nursing and education, also experienced notable decreases in female enrollment. Specifically, nursing saw a decrease from 385 women per 100 men to 308, while education dropped from 215 to 185 from 2019 to 2020. The gender gap persists in fields like computer science, business administration, pharmacy, technology, and law, where men historically hold greater representation. Despite an overall increase in higher education enrollment from 3.85 crore in 2019 to approximately 4.13 crore in 2020-21, with 51.3% male and 48.7% female students, gender imbalances endure.

Literature Review:

Historical Context and Theoretical Frameworks:

There is a long history of gender disparity in the workplace and in school. Gender norms and stereotypes have been reinforced historically by the fact that women were frequently kept out of formal education and confined to domestic duties. But over time, notable advancements have been achieved, like the women's rights movement and the increase of women's access to education. Notwithstanding these developments, issues including discrimination, pay disparities, and underrepresentation in leadership positions still exist. Feminist theory is one theoretical framework that emphasizes the patriarchy, power relations, and societal institutions that support gender inequality. The focus of social constructionism is on the social construction and maintenance of gender roles and norms. According to intersectionality theory, gender inequality is exacerbated and compounded by intersecting identities such as race, class, and sexual orientation.

Gender Disparities in Educational Attainment:

Studies show that women consistently outperform men in terms of enrollment and completion rates in school, resulting in persisting gender disparities in educational attainment. These differences can be attributed to a number of factors, such as institutional hurdles including discriminatory laws and limited resources, cultural norms that value males' education, and societal expectations surrounding gender roles. Furthermore, prejudices and stereotypes might affect students' educational paths and result in differences in their academic performance.

Gendered Patterns in Academic Fields and Majors:

Research reveals the distribution of genders in majors and academic subjects, with some disciplines having a strong bias in favor of one gender over the other. Stereotypes regarding gender roles and interests, the dearth of female role models in professions where men predominate, and perceived entry barriers including discrimination and unfriendly environments are some of the factors driving these tendencies.

Gender Bias in Education:

Gender prejudice in education has been shown to exist and has an impact on classroom interactions, grading policies, and disciplinary actions. Gender inequality can be sustained by implicit bias, stereotype threat, and micro aggressions, which have a detrimental effect on students' academic experiences and results.

Gender Disparities in Employment and Occupational Segregation:

Women frequently experience occupational segregation, lower pay, and restricted access to leadership roles due to persistent gender disparities in the workforce. Gender-based occupational segregation is a result of discrimination, socialization processes, and structural barriers, which sustains inequality in the labor market.

Gender Wage Gap and Pay Inequality:

Research continuously shows that women are paid less for equivalent jobs than men are. Occupational segregation, discrimination, and the devaluation of work traditionally undertaken by women are among the factors that lead to pay inequality. The fact that women frequently suffer consequences for taking time off work or working part-time to fulfill caregiving responsibilities is another factor.

Work-Life Balance and Caregiving Responsibilities:

Women's career paths, job happiness, and work-life balance are all impacted by the persistent gendered division of labor in caregiving and household responsibilities. Studies underscore the necessity of enacting laws and implementing procedures that assist caregivers, like flexible work schedules, inexpensive child care, and paid family leave.

Policy Implications and Future Directions:

Institutional, organizational, and societal policy initiatives are required to overcome gender imbalance in the workplace and in education. Gender-sensitive curriculum should be implemented, diversity and inclusion programmes should be supported, anti-discrimination laws should be enforced, and career support services should be funded. Future studies should carry out further investigation into the many aspects of gender disparity and assess the efficacy of programmes meant to advance gender fairness.

Impacts of non opportunity of higher education:

Economic Disadvantage: Without access to higher education, people's chances of advancing economically may be limited, especially for women. Greater earning potential and greater employment prospects are frequently associated with higher education. As a result, the lack of access to higher education can keep people and their families trapped in cycles of poverty and economic hardship.

Health and Well-being:

A higher level of education is frequently linked to improved general well-being and health outcomes. Higher educated people typically lead better lifestyles, have easier access to healthcare, and have lower rates of illness and death. Therefore, differences in health outcomes and general quality of life may be exacerbated by the fact that some genders are unable to access higher education.

Economic Development:

Having access to higher education is essential for promoting development and economic prosperity. In a globalized economy, creativity, productivity, and competitiveness depend on having a workforce that is educated and trained. Thus, denying some genders access to higher education can obstruct both overall economic growth and the pursuit of sustainable development objectives.

Social Cohesion and Stability:

Social cohesiveness and stability may be jeopardized in countries where a particular gender is often barred from pursuing higher education. Education gaps between the sexes can heighten social unrest and feed marginalized groups' discontent and disillusionment. This in turn has the potential to erode societal cohesiveness and fuel conflict and instability.

Inter-generational Impact:

Lack of access to higher education can have an impact across generations, extending cycles of disadvantage and poverty. A generational cycle of inequality is created when children of parents with low levels of education are more likely to face comparable obstacles in their own pursuit of higher education.

Wealth Accumulation:

Increased income potential and job growth chances are frequently linked to higher education. Thus, the potential of women to acquire money over the course of their lifetimes is limited by gender differences in access to higher education. Women's retirement savings, financial stability, and general economic well-being are all impacted by this.

Economic Growth and Development: Growth and development of the economy as a whole are hampered by gender inequality in income because of differences in access to higher education. Productivity is hampered and creativity is stifled when a sizable segment of the population—women—is unable to fully participate in the labor force and get higher-paying employment. Therefore, addressing gender differences in higher education access and income is crucial to advancing sustainable development and inclusive economic growth.

Conclusion:

In essence, the pursuit of gender equality in both the realms of workplace and education

transcends mere moral obligation; it stands as a critical imperative for fostering economic advancement, upholding fundamental human rights, and propelling societal progress as a whole. However, despite the global acknowledgment of these principles, persistent disparities continue to impede the realization of true gender equity. The unequal access to higher education based on gender not only perpetuates cycles of socioeconomic disadvantage but also undermines efforts to promote health and well-being among marginalized populations. Moreover, such disparities serve to destabilize the very fabric of social structures, perpetuating systemic inequalities that hinder overall progress. Specifically, the lingering gender gaps in education contribute to a broader spectrum of economic challenges, constraining opportunities for wealth accumulation and exacerbating intergenerational disparities. By addressing these entrenched inequalities and fostering inclusive educational environments, societies can unlock the full potential of all individuals, thereby fostering greater prosperity, resilience, and cohesion for generations to come.

References:

1. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infrastructure>
2. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/challenges-higher-education-india-ritesh-kumar>
3. <https://www.futurelearn.com/info/courses/understanding-gender-inequality/0/steps/66845>
4. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/gender-gap-education-india-sohit-kumar-pandey>
5. <https://www.oecd.org/education/48111145.pdf>
6. <https://www.oecd.org/education/48111145.pdf>
7. D. Roebig, Taylor. "How Gender. Discrimination Affects Women in the Workplace." Florin, 20 Mar. 2022, [discrimination-women/](#).
8. Dijkstra; Hanmer (2000). "Measuring socio-economic gender inequality: Toward an Alternative to the UNDP gender-related development index". *Feminist Economics*
9. Bhattacharya (2013). "Gender inequality and the sex ratio in three emerging Economies". *Progress in Development Studies*.
10. Choudhry, I. S. & Rahman, S. U. (2009). 'The Impact of Gender Inequality in Education on Rural Poverty in Pakistan: An Empirical Analysis'.
11. *European Journal of Economics, Finance and Administrative Sciences*, 15. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/349811473_The_Impact_of_Gender_Inequality_in_Education_on_Rural_Poverty_in_Pakistan_An_Empirical_Analysis
12. USAID, (2008). Education from a gender equality perspective. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED511674.pdf>