



GENDER DISCRIMINATION: AN ENDANGERING ISSUE IN INDIA IN THE PRESENT ERA

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“I raise my voice not so I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard...We cannot succeed when half of us are held back.”

-----Malala Yousufzai

Abstract

In this present era also we have not been able to achieve gender equality. Subordination of women is still a problem, and somewhere men's subordination also aggravates the problem. Hence the present paper aims at identifying the trends of gender discrimination and strategies to overcome the problem through the instrumental role of education. The study reveals that gender discrimination is found in the society in many dimensions like birth, care, education, employment and politics. Relevant Acts must be implemented, and our mind set up be changed so that not only women subordination but also men subordination can be checked. Education is a great tool in this regard.

Keywords: *Gender Discrimination, Gender Equality, women Subordination, Education.*



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Introduction

Women Studies was recognized as a field across the globe by the early 20th century. The Gender Studies has emerged as the new subject to the academics across the world. The reason is that it is essential to achieve the realistic approach towards the exploration of ills in the society. Therefore, Gender Studies is simply the paradigm shift focussing the studies of both men and women. It is only in the 1970s that the American and English feminists started using the terms ‘gender’ and ‘gender relations’. The CEDAW (Conventions on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women) of the UNO held in 1979 has opened the eyes of all the countries and has made them feel the urgency of removing gender discrimination within the shortest possible period. Along the line, in the early 1980s the thoughts and activities relating to the field developed in a remarkable pace.

Related Studies

A few studies that have been consulted in connection with the present study may be presented as below:---

Kaushal (2012) shows that despite the initiatives from both the Central and the State Governments gender gap in India has persisted in our country since independence. A variety of variables pertaining to open schooling—the structuring of the programme and its requirements, the inbuilt facilities created for the learners, course material design, etc.—all influence the enrolment and retention of both male and female learners in open schooling. However, the author admits that the situation continues to improve, and asserts that the open schooling system may help in bridging the gap between the male and female learners in respect of enrolment and retention.

Shukla and Pandey (2016) emphasise that gender concepts have evolved from biological, psychological, social and economic analysis, and that sex and gender have equally been identified as components of social conditioning. They assert that discrimination which is the reason behind existence of glass ceiling seems to be the outcome of differentiation. The authors attempt to develop a positive treatment of differentiation in order to remove glass ceiling, the invisible and intangible barrier that keeps women from reaching beyond.

Khan (2014) sought to compare the achievement of boys and girls in Science and Mathematics at the primary level. The sample comprised of 119 students (57 boys and 53 girls) from the affiliated schools of AMU. The data were collected through two self-developed achievement tests. The same were analysed with the help of statistical techniques like Mean, SD and 't' value. The findings show that performance of boys is better than girls in both Science and Mathematics, and the difference is significant.

Gnandeva and Sevaraj (2016) wanted to study the level of youth problems in different dimensions of youth problems of H.S. students studying in Adi-dravidar welfare schools and to find out whether male and female students differ significantly in the various dimensions of youth problems. The sampled students have average level of total youth problems, and they do not differ significantly with respect to total youth problem. The male students have low family problem and high personal problem, while it is reverse in case of women.

Rationale

Still now in a very few societies women do enjoy the same opportunities as men. They work for longer but are paid less than men at given ages and levels of education; when they work

harder at home, it is thought of as their duty at home; and they are called house wives, if they do not do any government or private job. The unpaid work which they undertake at home to manage the house does not get any attention and importance to their male counterparts in most cases. The root- cause may lie in inequality in access to and performance in education. This deep-seated problem does exist not only in our country but in almost all the countries. Feminine, which is the opposite of masculine and which seems to be the suppressed gender is in the brink of realization. A few decades ago also they were confined within walls; but now the situation has changed a lot; they have started, though late, capturing the male dominated domains, but yet miles to go.

Objectives

The study based the following objectives: -----

- (i) To explore the meaning of gender discrimination,
- (ii) To identify the latest trends of gender discrimination,
- (iii) To assess the present status of women in context of gender equality,
- (iv) To find the strategies to overcome this problem, and
- (v) To know the instrumental role of education in the respect.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in the study:--

- (a) What is meant by gender discrimination in the real sense of the term?
- (b) What are the different trend areas that are being observed in the field?
- (c) What is the present status of women in relation to gender equality?
- (d) What are the different ways and means to minimize the discrimination?
- (e) How can education play its crucial role to bring gender parity?

Sources and Method

Review was based for the data sources of the study. Mainly the secondary sources were consulted for the purpose, and some primary documents were also used for the study. The analytical method was adopted to treat the same.

Explored Meaning

Gender, which is the social structure of masculinity and femininity, refers to both men and women and their relations. According to Srivastav, gender is a social construct that impacts attitudes, roles, responsibilities and behaviour pattern of both genders in all societies. It functions as the determinant of politics of knowledge production. It indicates the roles and

responsibilities of men and women created by our families, societies and cultures through the process of socialisation.

Gender bias is a behaviour which shows favouritism towards one gender over another which may be conscious or unconscious. And gender discrimination is a discriminatory attitude towards men and women that affects the lives of both. It is the practice of treating a particular group of people based upon their sex. In other words, it can be said that it is the unfair treatment of a person because of gender.

Observed Trends

Gender discrimination is being found in different areas which may be enumerated as follows:----

- ❖ Gender discrimination in determining the birth of a baby
- ❖ Gender discrimination in the nourishment of a baby
- ❖ Gender discrimination in providing education for the child
- ❖ Gender discrimination in providing medical care to the child
- ❖ Gender discrimination in providing food and dress to children
- ❖ Gender discrimination in recruiting the employees
- ❖ Gender discrimination in treatment in the field of jobs
- ❖ Gender discrimination in participating politics
- ❖ Gender discrimination in participating sports.

Present Status

The cultural construct of Indian society has led to the continuation of India's strong preference for male children in most cases and places. The Census of 2011 shows the decline of female population i.e. it stands at 914 against 1000 male population. This indicates that the female population has dropped from 927 in 2001 and has been the lowest since India's independence. The desires of some wealthy parents are being fulfilled by the medical community through determining foetal sex illegally and aborting sex-selectively. According to the Census 2011, literacy rate for female population stands at 65.46% compared to 82.14% for male population; and it was 53.67% against 75.26% of the male population as per the Census 2001. However, it is also true that in some cases, males are the victims of gender discrimination which establishes the truth that both the genders become the victims of discrimination in our country; but the difference is that in most cases the females are

victimised. India ranks 127th on the gender inequality index and 108th on the global gender gap index as per The Asia Foundation.

Overcoming Strategies

The following steps may help in the process of wiping out gender discrimination from the society:-----

- Ensuring severe punishment to the Sex-determiners
- Enforcing The Civil Rights Act to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex.
- Enforcement of The Equal Pay Act to bring equality between men and women
- Ensuring equality in providing education for both sexes of the society
- Removing gender discrimination in the field of employment
- Not treating the males as enemies of discrimination.
- No encouragement to the discrimination done against men
- Eradicating discriminating behaviour through attitudinal change
- Proper gender sensitization which may treat the ill in the best way
- Women empowerment in the real sense of the term

Conclusion

It is evident that women's education can play a key role in reducing discrimination against them. It is obvious that higher level of maternal education decreases gender difference in infant mortality. Only true education can bring about behaviour changes that will ensure the gender equality by giving women the same rights and liberties as men. But the problem is that more number of girls drops out in comparison with boys, and the reason is that most of the girls are expected to help at home in household work cleaning, washing, cooking, sibling care, etc. For this, the roles and responsibilities of female members may be shared by the male counterparts with a new outlook. The same must be true to the male counterparts where they are subordinated. According to The Asia Foundation, many women are able to get education, but the idea of doing job is still culturally hard to accept. Women in our country work more than men, but are not properly paid. Actually, the mind set of our patriarchal society must be changed to give them a space to ensure gender equality. If we fail to utilize their intelligence and creativity, it is a great loss to the society as a whole.

“A gender-equal society would be one where the word ‘gender’ does not exist: where everyone can be themselves.”

----- Gloria Steinam

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