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A Study of Gender Discrimination in Higher Education in West Bengal

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the nature, scope, and effects of gender discrimination in West Bengal. The study focuses on access, participation, academic possibilities, institutional practices, and socio-cultural impediments. Even though there has been significant progress in the number of women enrolling in higher education, gender-based disparities continue to have an impact on the educational experiences of women. These disparities manifest themselves in a variety of ways, including unequal opportunities, stereotypical expectations, restricted mobility, under-representation in leadership roles, and organisational structures that are discriminatory. The research analyses the ways in which factors such as patriarchy, socio-economic inequality, family expectations, technology access, and campus environment influence the academic advancement of female students. The research makes use of qualitative methodologies. Even within the realm of higher education, gender stereotyping, social conditioning, and restricted support structures continue to be obstacles to women's empowerment.

Keywords: *Advancement, Conditioning, Enrolling, Stereotypical, Disparities, Inequality.*

INTRODUCTION

Discrimination against women and girls persists in many regions of the globe. All around the globe, women and girls are impacted by gender inequality. In most countries, men and boys are seen as having higher social, economic, and political status than women and girls. The home, the school, the office, and the wider community are just a few of the numerous places where violence against women and girls can manifest. Persistent sexism begins the moment a woman is born. In civilisations where men hold most of the power, women are known to experience prejudice. Gender discrimination manifests itself in many forms around the world, including but not limited to: son preference, cultural devaluation of girls and women, sexual harassment, domestic violence, dowry, child marriage, infanticide, foeticide, and so on. More than one billion people, mostly women, are living below the poverty line in the developing world today.

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When applied broadly, the term "gender discrimination" describes any form of prejudice towards an individual solely on the basis of their gender. Discrimination based on gender disproportionately affects women. Gender disparity in literacy rates in India is a sobering reminder that everyone should have access to quality education. According to the 2011 census, the effective literacy rate for adults aged 7 and above was 82.14% for males and 65.46% for females. As a result of the widespread belief that women should submit to their male relatives, many families see the expense of sending their daughters to college as unnecessary.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GENDER INEQUALITY

- Gender inequality happens when men and women are given different rights, resources, power, and chances because of social traditions and norms.
- Gender inequality is the trend to give one gender better chances than another or limit one gender's chances in areas like society, family, politics, and the economy.
- Gender imbalance gives one gender more power, resources, and rights than the other, which leads to one gender being in charge of the others.
- Gender inequality, or the level of male dominance and female subordination, has not been the same everywhere and at all times, making it an asymmetrical idea.
- Gender injustice has been around for a long time because people never thought about it. It shows that women are always seen as second-class in families and society.
- At times, gender disparity is referred to as a gender-neutral term. In some areas, women are preferred over men, which leads to gender inequality for men.

Prof. Bina Agrawal has identified three characteristics of gender inequality.

- ✓ Gender inequality exists everywhere and specifically within the household.
- ✓ The difference in how much men and women earn is not only caused by sexism in the workplace but also by sexist ideas, beliefs, and social norms that favour one gender over the other.
- ✓ New rules, procedures, and structures, as well as an old-fashioned way of organizing society, cause gender inequality.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Basu Priyanka and De Manasi (2024). Specifically, the focus of this research is on the gender bias that exists in current American culture. In the realm of the economic and social growth of the Indian subcontinent, this is a topic that is being discussed extensively. Gender discrimination is the term used to describe the way in which men and women are treated differently within of our culture. It is common for nations that have high rates of gender discrimination to have infrastructure that is of lower quality. A gap of this kind is widespread in many countries, and India is not an exception to this rule. According to the findings of this study, discrimination may be found in every facet of the society that exists in the Haora District. This study's objective was to investigate the various manifestations of gender discrimination, as well as the factors that led to their development and the effects they have on society. Furthermore, it makes an effort to provide solutions that can assist in reducing the effects of this gender bias and elevating the position of women in society.

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Mahata Bubun (2024). Education is a crucial component in the process of empowering women. As a result of the pervasiveness of masculine ideas, women frequently face challenges when attempting to achieve the objective of getting equal opportunities. Disparities between the sexes in areas of education continue to be a significant problem in India. Before determining the present educational state of women in West Bengal in terms of enrolment and drop rate, the primary objectives of this study are to first analyze the regional variation of gender disparities in education in West Bengal and then to determine the current educational position of women in West Bengal. This study relies on secondary sources of information. Every piece of information has been gathered from a variety of sources within the Government of India and West Bengal. In order to conduct the data analysis for this study, the simple statistical method and the cartographic methodology were utilized. According to the findings of this study, the gender gap in enrolment is quite small in primary school. When it comes to upper primary education, the gender difference is quite small, and the enrolment rate for girls is higher than that of boys in virtually all of the districts that make up the state of West Bengal. On the other hand, when it comes to the examinations for secondary and upper secondary education in West Bengal, there has been a significant improvement in the education of our female students. The findings of this study will assist government officials and policymakers in developing a variety of strategies for the advancement of female education.

Bhunia, A. K. (2023). It is only through the education of women that our nation will be able to attain its entire expansion with success. Education is beneficial to women in many ways, including the improvement of their health and nutrition as well as their economic development. The purpose of this study is to investigate the current position of women in India in terms of their academic ladder. An overview of the evolution of higher education, the significance of female education, the position of female faculty, the factors that have contributed to this evolution, and other topics are included in this article. In this study, descriptive approaches are being utilized, and secondary data will be collected in the future. For the purpose of this investigation, a wide variety of sources, including books, essays, periodicals, journals, and online resources, were combed through. Additionally, the University Grants Commission (UGC) as well as the Indian and West Bengali government entities that are responsible for higher education supplied reports and information. In conclusion, the findings of the survey revealed that women have made significant progress in the field of higher education thanks to their efforts.

Singh et al. (2023). In the course of their research, they investigated the changing landscape of gender bias in education spending within families, as well as the underlying socioeconomic factors that contribute to these phenomena. In addition, the study has demonstrated the significance of socioeconomic factors in the phenomenon of gender prejudice, as well as the gap in educational spending that exists between male and female students. For the purpose of addressing the aforementioned challenges, this article makes use of the unit-level statistics from the 52nd, 64th, 71st, and 75th rounds of the National Service Officers' Organization (NSSO), which take place during the years 1995–1996 and 2017–2018. Estimating the dynamics of factor-induced average education expenditure is accomplished through the utilization of the log linear regression model. When attempting to quantify gender discrimination, the Oaxaca–Blinder Decomposition technique is

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utilized. On the other hand, the Lorenz curve and Gini coefficient are utilized in order to assess the inequality that exists among females who are subjected to bias. The findings of the study indicate that during the time period during which the research was conducted in India, there was a gender bias in the distribution of funding for education, which favored males over females. In addition, studies have demonstrated a decrease in the incidence of discrimination based on gender against female students.

Furthermore, gender discrepancies can be ascribed to a variety of factors, including age, religion, castes, MPCE (income quantile), kind of institution, current enrolment, and different types of schooling. When it comes to originality and value, this study makes use of a dataset that spans twenty years at the household level in order to investigate the influence that discriminatory behaviour and credit limits have on investment in girls' education in countries that are economically disadvantaged. As a result, the government ought to supply financial support for the education of girls by means of the distribution of scholarships and by providing education that is either completely free or greatly discounted.

Bhowmik Debesh (2023). There is a growing disparity between the living and working situations of men and women in this country, as well as societal upheavals, which needs research into the causes and effects of gender inequality in the country. An in-depth investigation into the factors that contribute to gender disparity on a broad scale is the purpose of this article. The academic environment of a few countries in the Americas, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Africa is the primary aspect of the study that is being conducted. The primary hypothesis of this research is that there is a connection between gender inequality in educational institutions and indicators of a country's socioeconomic development, such as its human development index (HDI) and educational attainment. Trend and structural analysis procedures are examples of research methodologies that were utilized in this study. A foundation for this study is comprised of data that was gathered by the United Nations, the World Economic Forum, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development between the years 1950 and 2021. Although countries in Eastern and Western Europe are more developed than those in South and Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa, the Gender Equality Index's four dimensions—health, socioeconomic resources, gender disparity in households, and gender disparity in politics—show that a significant gender gap exists in some countries around the world from 1950 to 2000. This is also the case in some countries in the Middle East and North Africa. Human development level and gender disparity have been demonstrated to have an association, according to empirical estimates; the educational inequality of a country reduces as the level of human development in that country increases. The foundation of the study on gender imbalance in scientific research was a survey of fifty international journals, the book collections of the Bengal Economic Association and the Indian Economic Association, and other professors from major universities in India and elsewhere. The survey was conducted and the book collections were compiled. According to the findings of the survey, women publish at a lower rate than men do. Only 22.07% of articles published in national and international journals, 23.64% of volumes included in book collections, and 27-90% of chapters in books were written by women according to the poll. The underrepresentation of women in scientific research can be attributed to a number of factors,

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including but not limited to the following: limited access to research facilities, field surveys, and laboratories; limited opportunities for basic and advanced training through seminars and classes; insufficient time to conduct research; bias and discrimination based on gender and personal interests; social, psychological, and physical barriers; heavy parental responsibilities; and so on.

Mukherjee Shankhabela & Banerjee Debasri (2022). In this study, the objective was to examine the gender role identities of male and female teacher-educators, as well as their perspectives on women and sexism. Basu (2010) and Glick and Fiske (1996) developed a battery of tests that were designed to examine ambivalent sexism, attitudes toward women, and the identity of the Indian gender role. In the state of West Bengal, there were 64 teacher-educators out of whom 25 were male and 39 were female. Each and every one of them was provided with the Inventory (Spence & Hellreich, 1978). Means, standard deviations, and Kruskal-Wallis and Mann-Whitney U tests were utilized in order to examine the data. A comparison of the groups was also performed. The gender role identification of teachers, which might be sex-typed, cross-sex-typed, androgenous, or undifferentiated, was a significant factor in the significant differences in opinion that they held regarding women. It was shown that male and female teacher-educators exhibit considerably differing levels of sexism, regardless of the fact that they are of the same biological biological gender. An example of sexism that was less violent was demonstrated by both male and female educators and teachers. This type of sexism was more benign. It is not possible for biological sex to account for the prevalence of sexism or the prevalence of negative opinions toward women among those who work in the field of education.

Unterhalter, E., Longlands, H., & Peppin Vaughan, R. (2022). In order to acquire a better comprehension of a complex matter such as the unequal distribution of educational opportunities between men and women, this essay investigates the significance of measurement and indicators. When we make assertions regarding the gender gap in education and the ways in which it might be remedied, it raises the question of what we ought to evaluate in relation to individuals, institutions, discourses, and countries. This article presents a fresh viewpoint on the relationship between gender and education, drawing attention to the limits of the measurements that are currently in use. A plan for the work that will be done in the future is formed, and the AGEE Framework, which stands for Accountability for Gender Equality and Education, is described. The capability's method is expanded upon by this, which identifies domains that are capable of utilizing indicators. When it comes to addressing the complexity of the processes that are taking place, the discussion revolves around the numerous ways in which different sources of information might be merged in a manner that is both structured and flexible. This can result in the formulation of practice guidelines for long-term, transformative change, which can strengthen efforts to promote gender equality and women's rights in the educational system.

CONCLUSION

In West Bengal, cultural challenges have inhibited women's development. Barriers of historical and cultural nature mean that women lack development opportunities. Educated women enable more inclusive and democratic societies. The challenges and cultural barriers, mean that educated women

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enable inclusive societies. The challenge and cultural barriers. The challenge and cultural barriers of women's development mean that educated women enable more inclusive and democratic societies. Barriers mean that women lack development opportunities. West Bengal is challenged by cultural barriers. It is challenged by barriers that are West Bengal. West Bengal has cultural barriers of challenges. West Bengal has barriers that are challenges. Barriers of historical and cultural nature mean that women lack development opportunities. The educated women contribute to more inclusive and democratic societies; barriers of cultural challenges mean that women lack development opportunities.

While some challenges regarding safety or traditional mindsets may exist in certain contexts, the prevailing, forward-thinking viewpoint is that educating a girl empowers her to thrive and live with dignity.

Higher education in West Bengal improves lives by enabling financial independence, enhancing decision-making skills, and fostering confidence among women, acting as a catalyst for social change. It reduces gender disparity through increased enrolment rates (even surpassing boys in some areas), targeted policies, and promoting women's participation in STEM and leadership roles.

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