

Review Article

GENDER DIVIDE IN EDUCATION IN INDIA: A CRITICAL STUDY BASED ON FUNCTIONALIST THEORY OF EDUCATION

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Received: 26.11.2019

Revised: 28.12.2019

Accepted: 21.01.2020

Abstract

Education of girls is a key factor in the development of the society and country. According to Right to Education (2009), every child between the ages of 6 and 14 has a right to get free and compulsory. However, when it comes to accessing basic education for girls it is far to reach. The Government has made efforts to improve girls' education status by introducing different programs and schemes. The situation has nevertheless not improved. The education of girls faced many issues which need to be addressed at the ground level. There is a need to increase awareness of the importance of girl's education among the members of society. The paper attempts to analyse the gender divide in education and the importance of educating girls through the functionalist theory of education. This qualitative research has used secondary sources to collect and analyse the data. The findings of the study states that there is gender divide in education in India. Girls' education is affected due to many reasons. There is need to increase awareness of importance of girl's education among members of the society to achieve societal development. Durkheim has mentioned in his Functionalist Theory of Education, for the survival of society there should be homogeneity among the members of the society. This homogeneity is achieved with the help of education. Neglecting Girl's education affects this homogeneity.

Keywords: Girl, Education, Right to Education, Functionalist Theory, Gender Divide

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INTRODUCTION

The basic right to human development is education. Education improves job opportunities and raises wages (Gouda and Sekhar, 2014). An individual's growth and a nation's development depend on the quality of education he or she receives. Education is needed for everyone because through education only we can be differentiated from the animals as human beings. Education guides us on how we can live in society but unfortunately, it is hampered due to the lack of women's participation. Men and women are like a chariot's two wheels. They are equally important, and they should work together in life. Education of girls in India is also one of the important factors for the overall development of the country. This is the most powerful way to increase economic growth in particular families and countries as a whole (Ahmad and Narayan, 2015). Each child should have dignified and equal access to quality education without discrimination (UNICEF, 2007). Education for women in many

developing countries has been a major focus for policymakers and administration in recent years (UNICEF, 2009, p.6). A girl faces a lot of challenges when she gets to education. The esoteric custom and patriarchal bias make these challenges more onerous and difficult (Odomore, 2015).

Female Literacy and Gender gap In Literacy in India

The Indian Government has initiated many programs to improve the education of women in the country after the creation of the National Education Policy in 1986. The proportion of girls is 58.65% of the total population. There is a significant gap in literacy rates between male and female in India. It has been projected that India will only be able to achieve universal literacy by 2060, at the present rate of progress. Table 1 demonstrates this improvement on the literacy front. It is evident from the table that female literacy is increasing steadily from 1991 to 2011 but there is still a difference between the rates of male and female literacy (16%).

Table-1: Gender Gap in Literacy: 1951 to 2011

Year	Rural			Urban			Combined		
	Female	Male	Gap in Literacy	Female	Male	Gap in Literacy	Female	Male	Gap in Literacy
1951	4.87	19.02	14.15	22.33	45.6	23.27	8.86	27.15	18.32
1961	10.1	34.3	24.2	40.5	66	25.5	15.35	40.4	25.05
1971	15.5	48.6	33.1	48.8	69.8	21	21.97	45.96	23.99
1981	21.7	49.6	27.9	56.3	76.7	20.4	29.76	56.38	26.62
1991	30.17	56.96	26.79	64.05	81.09	17.04	39.29	64.13	24.84
2001	46.7	71.4	24.7	73.2	86.7	13.5	53.67	75.26	21.59

2011	58.75	78.57	19.82	79.92	89.67	9.75	65.46	82.14	16.6
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Source: Census of India, 2011

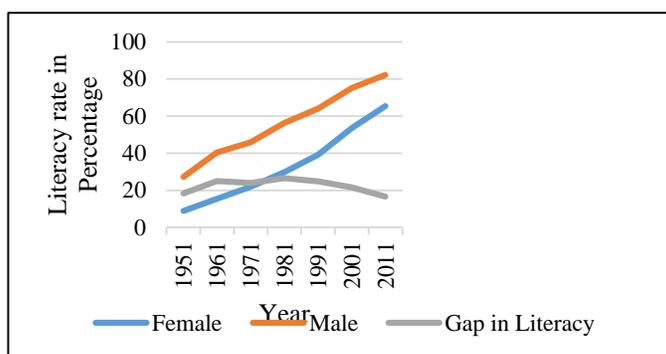


Figure 1: Showing Gender Gap in Literacy between Male and Female

According to the 2011 census, the literacy rate in India has been recorded as 74.04 percent, with a 14 percent increase to that in 2001 and the literacy rate in rural women (26%) was the highest in the past 10 years which could be credited to the Government

of India's literacy project. In India, the overall rate of female's literacy in the population is far lower than that of males. According to the 2011 census literacy rate, the level of literacy is 65.46% for female, compared to over 80% for men.

Table 2: State-wise gender gap in literacy

State/Union Territory	Gender Gap			% decline in gap	
	1991	2001	2011	1991-2001	2001-2011
A & N Islands	13.5	11.1	7.8	18.0	29.3
Andhra Pradesh	22.4	19.9	15.7	11.2	20.9
Arunachal Pradesh	21.8	20.3	14.9	6.7	26.8
Assam	18.8	16.7	11.6	11.5	30.5
Bihar	29.4	26.6	19.7	9.6	25.8
Chandigarh	9.7	9.7	8.8	0.3	9.0
Chhattisgarh	30.6	25.5	20.0	16.4	21.5
D & N Haveli	26.6	30.3	20.9	-14.1	31.2
Daman & Diu	23.3	18.0	12.0	22.5	33.5
Delhi	15.0	12.6	10.2	16.0	19.3
Goa	16.6	13.1	8.0	21.1	38.8
Gujarat	24.5	21.9	16.1	10.6	26.6
Haryana	28.6	32.8	18.1	-14.4	44.7
Himachal Pradesh	23.2	17.9	13.6	22.8	24.1
Jammu & Kashmir	-	23.6	20.3	-	13.9
Jharkhand	-	28.4	21.4	-	24.7
Karnataka	22.9	19.2	14.4	16.1	25.2
Kerala	7.5	6.3	4.0	15.3	36.3
Lakshadweep	17.3	12.1	7.6	30.2	36.9
Madhya Pradesh	29.2	25.8	19.5	11.7	24.4
Maharashtra	24.2	18.9	12.5	21.9	34.0
Manipur	24.0	19.8	13.7	17.6	30.9
Meghalaya	8.3	5.8	3.1	29.6	47.3
Mizoram	7.0	4.0	4.1	43.4	-2.8
Nagaland	12.9	9.7	6.6	24.6	31.6
Odisha	28.4	24.8	17.6	12.6	29.2
Puducherry	18.1	14.7	10.6	18.4	28.1
Punjab	15.3	11.9	9.7	22.2	18.2
Rajasthan	34.6	31.9	27.1	7.8	15.0
Sikkim	19.1	15.6	10.9	17.9	30.0
Tamil Nadu	22.4	18.0	13.3	19.8	25.9
Tripura	20.9	16.1	8.8	23.0	45.4
Uttar Pradesh	30.5	26.6	20.1	12.6	24.4
Uttarakhand	31.2	23.7	17.4	24.1	26.4
West Bengal	21.3	17.4	11.2	18.1	36.0
India	24.8	21.6	16.3	13.1	24.7

Source: Census 2011

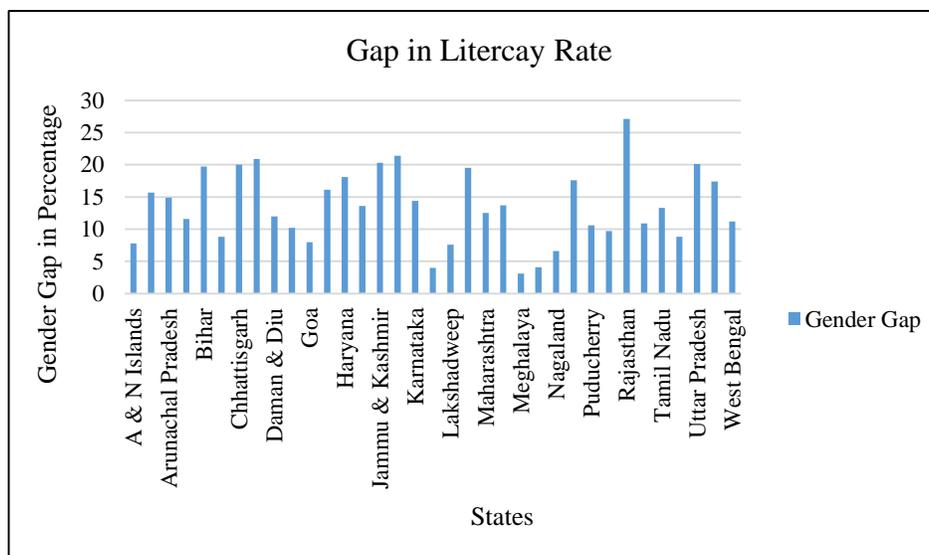


Figure 2: Showing Gap in Literacy Rate

In Table 2 state-wise gender gap in literacy level is shown. From the table it is clear that, gender gap is low in state of Meghalaya and high in Rajasthan. Gender gap is less in southern India and north-east India. Gender gap has declined more steeply in case of north east. The states in north and west India are lagging behind than the other states in the matter of female literacy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Girl's education is a key factor in India's social and economic growth (Sahoo, 2016). Giving quality education to girls can eradicate poverty in developing countries. Education of girls not only benefits women herself but her families, society and the whole world as well. Denying girls their right to education is a detriment for many societies. Education can improve an individual's abilities and bring about social change (Andres & Chavez, 2015). Better family planning, low mortality rates of infants and children, lower maternal mortality are some of the advantages of educating a girl (Sangeeta and Kumar, 2013). Women are, however, denied of education in developing nations (Ahamad and Narayana, 2015). This condition is even worse in rural areas. In rural areas, the birth of girls is seen as a liability. It can be measured through the unequal gender ratio and higher dropout rates of girls that are prominent in rural areas. Parents treated education for a girl as insignificant. Investments in girls' education are seen as unnecessary as it is considered that a boy can only help his family financially while parents have to pay dowry marriage costs for girls (Hardre and Reeve 2003). Parents would choose to involve their daughters in household work under such conditions rather than sending them to school (Kumar et al., 2017). At the upper primary level, there is an increase in dropout rates, which is higher among girls than males (Upendranath, 1995). In all states, gender differences are predominant for school enrollment and participation (Rao et al., 2004). Further access to higher education and attainment to girl's education is low among girl's students. Girls' education suffers from many factors, gender discrimination is the most prominent of them (Singh & Rabindranath, 2019). Some of the key obstacles to girls' education are cultural traditions, boy preference, high education prices, parental education and the financial condition and unsatisfactory school facilities (Teachman et al, 1996).

Objectives of the Study

1. To analyses the gender divide in education and the importance of educating girls through the functionalist theory of education.
2. To formulate framework how girls education can lead to development of society.

Methodology

A research methodology is a theoretical, systematic assessment of the techniques applied to the field of research (Igwenagu, 2016). A methodology is not intended to provide solutions. Hence it is not the same as a method. Rather it provides theoretical basis for understanding which method, set of methods or best practices to be implemented. Further, selecting a suitable research design is essential for any investigation in order to enable to arrive at valid results, comparisons and conclusions. The study has a qualitative research design. Qualitative research is a type of social science research that collects and analyses non-numerical data to bring out meaning from these data in order to understand the social situation. It involves humanistic or idealistic approach. This method is used to understand people's beliefs, attitude, behaviour, experiences and perceptions about issues that are socially important. The paper attempts to understand the gender divide in education and why educating girls is important taking the functionalist theory of education. Therefore the subject are studied through data collected from secondary sources such as articles, research papers, journals, the internet, etc. Secondary sources involves the use of existing data. To increase the overall efficiency of the research existing data are collected and analyzed.

Findings of the Study

This section presents the findings of the study in two parts: (a) Importance of Educating Girls in the context of Durkheim's Functionalist Theory of Education and (b) Proposed framework for development of society by creating awareness on girl's education.

Importance of Educating Girls in the context of Durkheim's Functionalist Theory of Education

"Society can survive only if there exists among its members a sufficient degree of homogeneity: education perpetuates and reinforces this homogeneity by fixing in the child from the

beginning the essential similarities which collective life demands" (Durkheim, stated in Haralambos, 2013).

According to sociologist Emile Durkheim, education served to major functions in the advanced industrial societies. Firstly, it distributes from one generation to the next generation the common values of society. Education promotes social cohesion among individuals, which means instilling a sense of involvement in a broader society, a sense of commitment to work for society's interests, and a sense that society is more important than individuals. Schools are the only organization which is able to prepare children for wider society participation. It does so through the application of a set of rules for all children and children learn to communicate with other children based on these common rules. It thus functions as a miniature society. Education facilitates social interaction, where girls do not feel alone and they are also supported by their family, teachers and friends (Somani, 2017). The second major function of education is that it helps to acquire specialized skills through a specialized division of labour that is necessary to run an economy. In traditional pre-industrialized societies, skills can be passed through the family or through direct training, which does not require formal education. However, factory-based production in modern industrial society demands the application of advanced scientific knowledge, which requires years of formal schooling to be mastered, making schools much more important. Education gives girls valuable knowledge and skills to better understand challenges in life and ways to deal with them (Somani, 2017).

Indian society is dominated by male and gender discrimination where male plays the primary role and female plays the secondary role (Odomore, 2015). Society has never valued women and give them the respect which they deserve. They suffered and locked in the four walls of the house. They were not allowed to see the outside world. Further, they are rely on men for each and everything. Their education was limited to only domestic experience. But now we are in the 21st century where both men and women have equal rights.

Women have the same respect as males in this century. In every sphere, they assist each other. Therefore, both men and women should be provided with education. But still, some men do not support women's education, they think women's job is to do only household work, they don't need to be educated. These narrow-minded people think that women ultimate duty is to take care of their family and children and do household chores. They are expected to take care of everyone except themselves. These people believed that women are born only to get married, have kids and being bombarded with unimportant details of domesticity. Such kind of people does not understand that educating women is equally necessary as for men not only for their own-selves but for the entire family because women nurture future generation. If women are uneducated then the future generation will also be uneducated. Male members of the family are trapped in traditional norms which restrict empowerment and education of girls. The boys' education is more necessary than girls' (Vati 2016). Lack of girl's education restricts homogeneity, acquisition of skills and participation

Proposed framework for the development of society by creating awareness on importance of girl's education

The review of the previous research studies indicates that there is a lack of understanding of the value of educating girls among people especially in remote and socioeconomically backward communities. This highlights the fact that lack of education and socio-economic development contribute to an inability to recognize the importance of education, in particular education of girls. The inequality in girls' education needs to be reduced. Awareness of the importance of educating girls should be increased among parents, teachers, leaders of the community and the general public. More girls can access to education if society is aware. Moreover, if there is increase in girl's access to education, gender divide in education will automatically reduce. More educated girls mean increased participation in society that brings homogeneity and lead to the development of society and country as a whole (Figure 3).

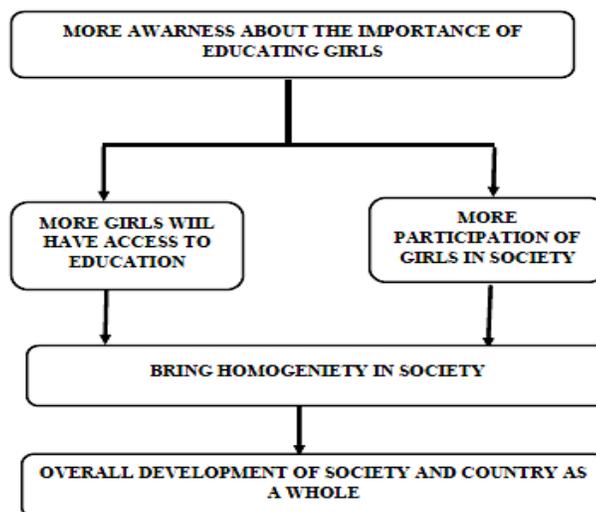


Figure 3 Proposed Framework for Development of Society

CONCLUSION

Education is a fundamental human right. Since girls constitute about half of the world's population, they are a significant part of the global resource. Therefore, it is impossible to ignore their

rights to education. Education is a key element that can allow girls to grow and develop. Therefore, specific importance must be imposed on girls' education. It is high time that male-dominated society should consider girls as a human being which

should get all rights as men are getting. Women nurture society, they are an inseparable part of it. The functionalist perspectives of education clearly state that for the survival of society, there must be homogeneity. This homogeneity can be achieved only through education. Achievement of homogeneity in society will eradicate gender discrimination and bring gender equality. Awareness about the importance of girls' education among the members of society is thus important.

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