

Gender Issues in Education: A Social-Realistic Perspective

Manpreet Kaur and Nishtha Kaushiki

Centre for South and Central Asian Studies, Central University of Punjab,
Bathinda, Punjab

INTRODUCTION

Education, is a well-known and universally acknowledged fact that ensures the promotion and development of a human being, as well as a nation. It is a tool, to bring change in the mental and psychological level of humankind and qualitative change in the nation. It is an instrument that can bring change in situation of women in every sphere of life. Education of girls is crucial pre-requisite for equity, justice, freedom and economic progress of an individual and for a nation as well. Moreover the right to equality is totally meaningless if female cannot achieve equal opportunities to get education, the right to marriage is totally invalid if they cannot choose their life partner. The rights to own land and property are weakened if they cannot read and understand agreements. Education for female is not only goal but it is a means to empower them to exercise their rights and responsibilities. A number of research work claims that women education is more crucial than that of men. Education is also a main target to achieve the third millennium Development Goals (MDG3): 'To promote gender equality and empower women.' The target is, 'The elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005 and at all levels of education by 2015.'¹ But still females are lagging behind, till now they are not getting the equal opportunity to access education. The increasing drop-outs rate, less number of female entrance in higher education, less spending by parents on girls education, are the results of gender discrimination in education system. The imperatives for the women's education are:

- The 86th Constitutional Amendment Act of 2002 makes elementary education as a fundamental right of every child. Although, Indian Constitution permits that every child can enjoy the equal opportunities to get education, yet in practical, situation is opposite for girls. In rural areas of every Indian State girls are lagging behind. Girls have no right to demand equal education opportunity.
- Education is beneficial for not only girls, but for the whole society as well. Educated women can easily work in the wage economy, earn higher wages and lead a better life.

¹ UN (2000). The UN Millennium Developments Goals: Goal 3, target 3.