

**GENDER INEQUALITY IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION: A
SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF KARGIL DISTRICT,
JAMMU AND KASHMIR**

**ABSTRACT OF
DISSERTATION**

**SUBMITTED TO
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The Background

Education has been the main instrument of human development and its importance emphasizes through fundamental rights. As we know, the progress and prosperity of a nation and of community is determined by the level of education. Education is one of the indices of development. In order to achieve the level of development, pursuit of knowledge is very important which stems from systematic learning. Particularly Elementary Education in the beginning is essential. Providing good elementary education is a strong foundation for pursuing higher education. The Government of India has made sincere efforts to provide compulsory elementary education to the children. Elementary education is a mandatory on the part of Government which is included in the Constitution of India as a Right to Education recently. But due to several constraints like economic, social and cultural barriers gender inequality in elementary education is evident which needs to be addressed.

In modern times, although the educational systems across the globe are theoretically open to all regardless of their social identity to ensuring equality of educational opportunities is one of the most explicitly stated goals of governments, yet in practice, either by custom or by extra legal action, certain individuals or members of socially subordinate groups in many societies get excluded from educational opportunities (Anderson and Foster 1964). In culturally diverse Indian society, there are sharp multiple inequalities and disparities in education and economic development in terms of caste, creed, tribe, religion and gender despite having history of prolonged struggle and affirmative actions by the state to reduce social inequalities in independent India. Not all social groups have equal access to available resources and opportunities particularly in educational field. Women, in general, constitute the most deprived and disadvantaged section of Indian society who have always faced multiple barriers in getting educational opportunities. In contemporary India, knowledge and skill play a crucial role which is broadly driven from formal education. Education has the unique ability to promote social change and personal wellbeing, simultaneously “contribute to building a just and democratic society” (Aikman & Unterhalter, 2007).

Understanding the indicators of gender inequality is a vital step in addressing gender related problems and issues; they explain where, why and how gender inequality arises. These measuring indicators are of great importance, because what is measured is more likely to be prioritized and evidence gathered against indicators can help to identify which gender issues should be taken more seriously. Indicators can be used for advocacy and can help make the case for action by highlighting key issues, backed up with statistics and other evidences. Many indicators are being used to measure gender inequality from time to time, and they condense complex data into clear messages about the extent of gender inequality that prevails worldwide.

When the education system was setup also known as Kothari Commission (1964-66), The Kothari Commission proposed for a common school system. Subsequently, a resolution on National Policy Education (NPE) was passed in 1968 with reaffirmation of common school system (Kumar2006:22). NPE (1986) restated the issues of quality of educational opportunity and free and compulsory education for all children up to 14 years which was mentioned in the Constitution of Indian. NPE (1986) emphasis on the improvement of equalization of opportunities for education through a common school system with prominence on the education of girls, Schedule Caste/Schedule Tribe (SC/ST) children along with physically and mentally challenged children. The changes in NPE (1986) were demanded and after six years the policy gets revised NPE of (1992) which was mentioned that equal access to educational opportunities was also the states agenda of education such as, universal access and enrolment, universal retention of children up-to 14 years of age and significant improvement in the quality of education to enable all children to achieve essential levels of learning (Kumar 2006:22, Jha et. al. 2008:54).

Education plays an important role in socio-economic development of a country; moreover, women education has immense importance in this regard. Educated women are not only raising their own socio-economic status but they are enhancing intellectual horizon of their children, uplifting socio-economic condition of their family and playing a significant role in raising their family status. On the other hand, education also makes the women strong, empowered, creates self- reliance and brings determination in life. To enhance the literacy rate among children, Government of India has launched several programmes such as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Right to Education, and National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) and Kasturba Gandhi, Balika Vidyalaya, National Commission for Women, National Policy. Pre -Matric Scholarship etc. and other initiatives. This special act came into the practice in 2010 which emphasis free and compulsory education to the children. This act is

more applicable to the children of 6-14 years whose parents are not affording to bare the expenses. It also stresses that compulsory education is an obligation of the appropriate Government to provide free elementary education and ensure compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education to every child in the age group of six to fourteen. In spite of good constitutional provisions, policies and programs in favor of women many evils social practices and customs still exist in the society which prevent women from availing opportunities available for them. As a result, they still constitute educationally and socially backward and deprived section of our society as is evident from poor literacy rate and educational achievement of women.

Prior research reveals educational inequalities by various demographic and school related factors such as gender, social background, and access to educational resources. To build on this foundation, further research is needed to further examine factors and moderating influences that are associated with gender gaps, and to assess how the effects of the state increasing educational attainment, public policies targeted to girls, and changing educational landscape are having an impact. Several important questions emerge from the literature regarding gender inequality in education. For example, although socioeconomic and other family background factors have been shown to influence educational attainment, it is less clear how these factors may differentially affect boys and girls. Time devoted to learning and other educational resources are also important to investigate, and it may be the case that parents are prioritizing sons' education over daughters' education through the allocation of these resources. Finally, the role of attitudes toward the education of girls is underexplored. In order to answer these questions, this research of the study will explore the relative contributions that social background factors, learning resources, time devoted to learning, and cultural attitudes make to academic learning and academic relevance as there is not much work available on the above issues of gender inequality in education. The gender inequality in education which covers majority of population has not studied much at the micro level study in the far-flung area of district Kargil, so that the existing problems can be clearly understood. So, this study would help understand the better actual scenario of gender inequality in elementary education of district Kargil in the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

The study also has policy level relevance as it would attempt to understand the on-ground situation and suggest appropriate approach, policy and programmes to uplift the condition of disparate population of society vis-à-vis of gender Inequality in elementary education. Thus, the study would have relevance pertaining to knowledge on the subject, welfare policy in particular and society in general.

Research Objectives

Keeping in view the issues, thrust and scope of the studies in the review of literature, the present study sets the following Objectives –

- To examine the social, economic and educational profile of Kargil District in Jammu and Kashmir.
- To analyse inequality in access to education with respect to Gender of Kargil District in Jammu and Kashmir.
- To understand and explore the women's participation in education with respect to their enrolment and rate of dropouts in Elementary Education of Kargil District in Jammu and Kashmir.
- To explore the reasons behind gender inequality in Elementary Education of Kargil District in Jammu and Kashmir.

Hypotheses

Related to the foregoing objectives, the hypotheses of the study are as below –

- The socio – economic and educational profile of Kargil District in Jammu and Kashmir is not good.
- Access to education with respect to gender is unequal of Kargil District in Jammu and Kashmir.
- Women's enrolment rate and rate of dropouts both are high of Kargil District in Jammu and Kashmir.
- Socio – cultural, economic and political reasons are responsible for gender inequality in Elementary Education of Kargil District in Jammu and Kashmir

Universe and Sample Size

The universe of the study consists of four blocks as Kargil block, Drass block, Sankoo block and Chiktan block, and four middle schools as Govt.Girls Middle School Baroo Kargil, Govt.Girls Middle School Drass, Govt, Middle School Thang Sankoo, and Govt. Girls Middle School Chiktan of Kargil district of Jammu and Kashmir. The universe of the study consists of students, parents and teachers of the selected schools. A total of 136 respondents were selected for the present study from Kargil district of Jammu and Kashmir. Convenience sampling method was adopted to select the blocks and schools. After selecting area and universe of the

study, which was conducted in Kargil district of Jammu and Kashmir, 15 students, 15 parents and 4 teachers from each school was collected based on simple random sampling technique, The Sample size of the present study is total 136. There was no discrimination made among the respondents based on community, caste, religion, culture, ethnicity and languages.

Tools and Technique of Data Collection

In the present study, the survey method and a Questionnaire have been used to collect the primary data. For the collection of secondary data will be collected from, various Books, journals, research literature books, Data were also collected by survey of office records from CEO's and ZEO's Census of India 2001-2011, and supplemented with State Digest of Statistics Government of Jammu & Kashmir, and other published work wherever necessary, Government organizations and websites and other relevant data sources etc.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

After the completion of data collection, the data were entered into SPSS 15.0 version for the Accuracy of the data. Using the descriptive statistics mode of SPSS frequencies, present data was handled by substituting column means. In the present study, to analyze the quantitative data, frequency analysis has been used and presented in the form of proportions or percentages and also draw crosstabs.

Chapters

To make the research more elaborate and descriptive, the present work has been derived into five chapters. The chapters plan is comprehended in such a comprehensive way that the issue can be dealt in details from theoretical level to field derived data.

The first chapter entitled **Introduction**. Chapter deals with the brief explanation of gender inequality and elementary education, and also provides the methodology and research design of the present study including conceptual and analytical perspective. This chapter describes the objectives of study, the hypothesis, universe and sample of study, tools techniques of data collection, methodology and how data are processing and analysis.

The Second chapter entitled **Review of Literature and Theoretical Framework**. Literature review in this chapter paves the way to formulation of the research objectives, hypotheses and theoretical framework also deals with previous studies done in previous times.

The Third chapter entitled **Gender Inequality in Elementary Education: An Empirical Analysis of Kargil District of Jammu and Kashmir**. This chapter explores insight the socio-economic conditions of students and parents in Kargil district, and this chapter will also interpret the understanding challenges, problems and behaviors of teachers and Parents about understanding of gender inequalities and educational.

And the lastly, chapter Fourth entitled “**Summary**”, **Conclusion and Suggestions**” research explains result of the research findings, conclusion and gives some useful suggestions related to gender inequality in elementary education in India.

Conclusions: An Overview

The present study is concerned with the gender inequality in elementary educational status in Kargil district of Jammu and Kashmir. In order to understand and analyse nature of problems and constraints to gender inequality in education at different levels so that a comprehensive strategy can be evolved to remove such constraints for their educational advancement. Empirical evidence collected through the present study reveals that inequalities in elementary education is clearly linked to socio-economic and cultural factors which are very complex and multi-dimensional. The preceding analysis reveals that the participation of both males and females in educational pursuit has increased significantly over generations, yet it continues the females are to be low at Higher Secondary school, graduation and above.

Gender inequality in elementary education as indicated by comparatively higher educational status of males than females was clearly observed in all generations. The reasons for the high rate of illiteracy and low educational attainment of females, as indicated by field work, can be attributed to lack of interest and motivation for formal education, rural background and low economic status. Most of the families under study showed a marked improvement in terms of literacy and educational attainment for both males and females. However, Literacy and level of educational attainment differ, for males and females, not only in terms of older and younger generations but also in terms of educational status of parents, caste, income groups and occupation of the head of the household. As regards the disparity in the older generation is considered, majority of the females of this generation were illiterate and only a few had educations up to primary and high school. Whereas the number of illiterate males was comparatively less than females and most of them had education up to high school or higher secondary school and some of them were graduates and Post graduates.

Parent's education was found to influence children's education, as the higher the educational level of the parents, the greater was the participation of their daughters in educational pursuit. Educated parents are likely to guide, motivate and inspire their daughters for getting educated after realizing the importance of education for their daughters and to maintain the tradition of literacy and education in their families. Daughters of highly educated mothers were also found in a relatively better position and are more likely to go for formal education as compared to uneducated mothers. The uneducated parents or low educational level of parents, High rate of illiteracy and low educational attainment among women which is most clearly visible in this generation was mainly due to the lack of importance attached to women's education that were expected to learn their domestic roles within their homes. They were born and brought up in rural areas characterised by lack of schools specially girls schools and more importantly lack of any interest and even reluctance among their parents towards their education. Thus, under the influence of rural socio-cultural environment, low parental motivation towards daughter's education for whom religious education and learning household chores was more important for their daughters than formal education appear to be important reason for not sending their daughters to schools.

Economic status of the parents seems to be another factor which influences their children's accessibility to educational opportunities in the most significant way as it was found that parents with higher levels of income were in a better economic position to bear expenses involved in the formal education of their children irrespective of the gender of their children. They were found less likely to discriminate between sons and daughters in matters of formal education on economic grounds. Parents who were economically well off were also in better position to place their children including daughters in a better formal educational institution to provide them with good quality education as compared to poor parents. Poor economic conditions of parents badly affect the educational status of their children particularly their daughters who are withdrawn from their formal educational pursuit due to economic constraints. In some cases, however, sons are allowed to continue their educational pursuit upto a certain level and available limited resources are utilised for potential bread winner for the family.

The average age at which these respondents entered school was six to seven years. The main cause for their late entry to school was lack of easily accessible schools and mountainous and difficult topography of the district. It is to be noted that the average distance

between educational institutions and home was two to three km. and they used to cover part of the distance on walking and partly by public conveyance, the study found that majority of the respondents considered lack of infrastructural facilities as one of the major hurdles in meeting their educational needs. For instance, the problem of easy access to school was found as one of the biggest problems. Lack of infrastructural facilities in the schools such as school building with a proper boundary wall, basic amenities like drinking water, separate toilets for girls, libraries and hostel accommodation were also found to be the major problems in the way of women's education and lead to high drop-out rate. Lack of separate toilets facilities for girls in schools at this stage becomes a very strong reason for their drop-out. Most of the schools are far away from their homes without facilities for accommodation. Even if accommodation is available parents cannot afford it due to economic constraints. Transport facilities in most of the areas of the district are totally absent or insufficient. Due to the poor transportation facilities they could not reach school at right time or face difficulties. Parents' unwillingness to allow their daughters travel long distances and use poor transport facilities to reach school. Such hurdles never allowed some of the respondents to even get admitted in a school and, hence, they remained illiterate. The need for providing better and greater access to educational opportunities at all levels to this geographically disadvantaged section is to be addressed through state intervention on priority basis.

During the course of study, it was commonly observed that, in matters of girl's formal education, parents do not treat their daughters and sons equally. Majority of them accord more importance to education of their sons. For, notwithstanding their own educational level, they want to provide their sons with all the facilities for formal education. With regards to their daughter's education, such eagerness and concern do not exist among them. They seem to realize that women's education is not necessarily linked to employment. Even in the case of their employment no financial benefits accrue to their parental family. Moreover, not sending a girl to educational institutions benefits the parental family in many ways. For instance, at home they perform not only the task of household chores, but besides looking after younger siblings and cattle, they also perform many tasks in agricultural fields.

An analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data collected through present study show that the issue of gender inequality in elementary education and development is linked to a complex of factors which may facilitate or hinder their educational advancement. Gradual and positive changes in the attitudes of people towards female's education are evident

in increasing interest and concern among young girls and their parents for their education. Much needs to be done to improve their educational status by identifying factors which work against their educational advancement. The prospects of gender inequality in educational advancement largely depend on sincere and concrete efforts at local, familial and national level which can play an instrumental role in minimizing the negative effects and maximizing the positive role of socio-economic, cultural and institutional factors affecting gender inequality in elementary education in multiple ways. The study has identified and analysed the role of various socio-economic, demographic and cultural factors which retard the educational progress of gender inequality in the study area. Keeping in view multidimensional effects of these factors on gender and slow progress of gender inequality in education, there an urgent need of adopting measures of varied nature.

The study clearly reveals that majority of the respondents, who never attended schools or dropped-out from the schools, stated poverty to be the major cause of their educational backwardness in spite of the financial assistance and fee concessions provided by the government. Their educational backwardness may be because either they are unaware of these facilities or these financial assistance or concessions are not adequate enough. Though loud able, financial help provided by the government is not adequate enough to mitigate financial burden on their families. For, it also involves extra expenditure on buying books, stationary and other items required by educational institutions from time to time. These factors put together compel parents to withdraw daughters from their educational pursuit. Some time they are not allowed to go to school at all. Therefore, in the face of poverty and other financial considerations women's education is not considered as a priority area. However, in those cases where economic conditions allow parents to send a limited number of children to schools, sons' education is given preference over daughters' education and daughters are held back. Therefore, our study finds that gender inequality is also one of the key factors that impede girl's education significantly. This dismal picture requires state and community intervention in the form of financial assistance to children from poor families. What is more important is that special schemes for financial assistance and attractive incentives may be introduced by the state for those parents who take active and sincere interest in the promotion of their daughter's education and intensive campaigns for generating awareness regarding such assistance and programmes for promotion of women's education at large scale may be initiated by community leaders and NGO's.

The study observed that socio-cultural practices, patriarchal values and prejudice against women restricted their access to institutions of learning. Many of the respondents disclosed that it was more because of their grandparents' opposition, who had a significant say in decision making, than that of their parents' that they were deprived of the chance of being educated. Majority of these grandparents were illiterates. Their illiteracy and ignorance especially those of grandfathers who had final say in decision making negatively affected their granddaughters' education. Thus, efforts at community level need to be oriented towards both male and female education as educated male will significantly improve the educational status of future generation of their families. The demand for educated girls would rise in future. As brought out by the present study and other empirical studies that educated males are more likely to marry educated girls, than uneducated ones. Moreover, educated young males will be in a better position to get parents and grandparents convinced about the importance of female education because, after all, whether they are young or old, males have a significant say in decision making.

Finally, the efforts made by the central as well as state government and various NGO's through various means have not completely succeeded in satisfying the special expectations and aspirations of women in the state due to many constraints discussed earlier. To promote the education of women at all levels and reduce the gender disparity in providing knowledge and education, a strong need based and committed state and community intervention is required to raise the educational status of women. There is urgent need to change the mindset of the people in general and community leaders in particular. To generate awareness and attitudinal changes among the masses regarding women's education, NGOs and media can play a vital role as agent of social change by highlighting and discussing issues concerning gender inequality in elementary education at different platforms through which they can highlight their problems. Little has been achieved by both government as well as civil society in the area to empowerment gender inequality in elementary education through educational advancement. So, much more needs to be done on this count. More and more policy initiatives and proper implementation of programmes by the government combined with community leader's interest and sincere efforts for their educational advancement is the need of the hour. Existing programmes need to be reviewed as per current requirements. This requires serious attention from policy makers, administrators and community leaders.

Suggestions for Further Research

1. The present study has depicted some of the educational problems of gender inequality in elementary education in Kargil district of Jammu and Kashmir.
2. The status of gender inequality in elementary education in the state of Jammu and Kashmir needs to be examined further.
3. Planned and systematic sociological studies of comprehensive nature at large scale are needed to assess the educational status of gender inequality in the state of Jammu and Kashmir.
4. A comparative study of gender inequality in elementary education is also recommended as it will bring into open some useful insights related to gender inequality in education in general.
5. An investigation into inequality between the education of men and women in Jammu and Kashmir needs to be undertaken to have a better and in depth understanding of the issue.
6. Comparative studies concerning gender inequality in elementary education and several other forms of inequality in the area need to be carried out.
7. Studies aimed at exploring problems and prospects of elementary education as well as higher education of women in general and gender inequality in particular may also be undertaken in different regions of country.