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A Review Study Showing Gender Inequality in West Bengal

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ABSTRACT

Despite significant advancements in education, healthcare, employment, and social development, gender inequality continues to be a societal problem in West Bengal. Education, employment, healthcare, political engagement, property rights, social freedom, and earnings are just a few areas where men and women are not on equal ground. By sifting through reports from various government agencies, census data, academic papers, and other sources, this review study intends to investigate gender inequality in West Bengal and its effects. Several cultural and socioeconomic variables are highlighted in the study as causes of gender inequality in the state. Traditional gender roles, patriarchal societal structures, poverty, ignorance, early marriage, housework, and resource limitations all contribute to women's low status. There is a higher rate of discrimination against women in rural areas and economically disadvantaged populations when it comes to decision-making, healthcare, employment, and education. Society's gender gap widens due to gender-based violence, pay inequality, and social constraints. This analysis also sheds light on the plight of women in the workforce and educational institutions, where they continue to be under-represented compared to men. Despite efforts to level the playing field for women through initiatives like Kanyashree and Beti Bachao Beti Padhao as well as women empowerment programs, self-help organisations, and educational scholarships, many disparities remain, particularly in disadvantaged communities. The research shows that gender inequality in West Bengal is complex and calls for changes in education, economics, and society as a whole. The state cannot achieve gender equality and long-term social development without effective policy implementation, women's empowerment, awareness-raising, equal educational and occupational opportunities, and a shift in conventional social attitudes.

Keywords: *Empowerment, Awareness-Raising, Educational, Disparities, Implementation.*

INTRODUCTION

Among the most pressing societal problems impeding progress as a whole is gender disparity. It describes how people are treated differently, given different chances, and given different statuses based on their gender. In India, women still encounter prejudice in many areas, including social, economic, educational, cultural, and political, even though there are constitutional protections for equality and several developmental initiatives. Even in West Bengal, one of India's most populous and historically significant states, women face a variety of gender inequalities that hinder their opportunities in both urban and rural settings. West Bengal has made great strides in several areas, including healthcare, literacy, the involvement of women in education, and social welfare programs.



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But there are still several fields where men and women face significant gender gaps. There is a gender gap in many areas, including healthcare, education, employment, property rights, decision-making, and political engagement. Gender stereotypes and traditional patriarchal ideals persist in today's society, stifling women's agency and advancement prospects. It is still expected that women should focus on home duties rather than pursuing education or career opportunities in many households.

Gender inequality is a bigger issue in economically disadvantaged areas, rural areas, and communities who are already marginalised. Women in West Bengal face tremendous inequality due to a combination of factors, including but not limited to: poverty, illiteracy, child marriage, unemployment, ignorance, social insecurity, and cultural constraints. Violence against women, wage discrimination, human trafficking, and a lack of women in leadership roles are all symptoms of the pervasive inequality that exists in our society. The state government has launched a number of programs and welfare schemes aimed at empowering women and reducing gender gaps, including Kanyashree, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, women self-help organisations, educational scholarships, and skill development programs. Increases in female literacy, school enrolment, and civic engagement have resulted from these policies. However, there are still a lot of obstacles to empowering women and attaining full gender equality. By reviewing relevant literature, official reports, census data, and prior research, this study intends to investigate gender inequality in West Bengal from multiple angles and identify its root causes. In order to promote gender equality and inclusive development in West Bengal, this study aims to identify the cultural and socioeconomic variables that contribute to gender differences. It also emphasises the significance of implementing policies, raising public awareness, and involving the community.

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.



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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.

TYPES OF GENDER INEQUALITY

- 1. Inequalities In Position:** In any modern organization, there are underlying power and resource imbalances that contribute to positional inequality. There are power and resource disparities between people because of the positions they have in the organization. The gender gap in the workplace manifests itself in a variety of ways, including unequal pay, unequal access to managerial positions, unequal participation in the labour force, and unequal division of labour within households.
- 2. Inequality In Status:** When persons from different backgrounds hold different views about the relative merits of different social groupings, it leads to status discrepancies. Status differences between men and women and positional inequalities between men and women both contribute to the pattern of gender inequality.

Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen in his article “Many Faces of Gender Inequality” has presented a comprehensive picture of gender inequality. He asserts that men and women performing varying degrees of labour define the entire universe. Generally speaking, gender inequality is present everywhere in one form or another. However, there are many different ways that gender inequality manifests itself, and there isn't a single, accepted definition. He has categorized discrimination against women into seven different categories.

TYPES OF GENDER INEQUALITY BY AMARTYA SEN

1. Inequality of Mortality

Inequalities pertaining to life and death that exist between men and women are the subject of this kind of inequality. This disparity reflects the high rate of female mortality and the substantial male predominance in the overall population. North Africa, Asia (including China), and South Asia all exhibit this kind of disparity.

2. Inequality of Natality

This disparity relates to the prejudice that exists between males and girls in the majority of societies, when parents favor boys over girls for their newborn children. In the past, this idea was connected to daydreaming about having a boy, but the advancement of sex-selective abortion and new methods for determining a person's sex has sustained this inequity in other ways. Consequently, sexism has become widespread in China, South Korea, and many other East and South Asian nations.



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3. Inequality in Basic – Facility

The main source of the gap between men and women in this type of inequality is the difference in opportunities and resources, which disproportionately impacts women. Women are less likely than men to have access to resources that could enable them to advance their careers and realize their full potential.

4. Inequality in Special – Opportunity

This type of inequality deals with the inequality persisting in the matters of special opportunities available to females like facilitating them the opportunity to receive higher education and professional training.

5. Inequality in Profession

This kind of inequality pertains to the disparity that exists between men and women in the workplace, when women experience greater difficulties in terms of employment, advancement, and occupation.

6. Inequality in Ownership

This inequality deals with discrimination found between men and women in terms of unequal ownership of property like land and home etc. Generally, men have more access to property and its ownership but females are generally deprived. Does lack of ownership of property and claim of property open repress the voices of women and their life by eliminating the chances of entering and flourishing in commercial economic and social activity.

7. Inequality in Household

The discriminatory attitude present in gender relations within the family or in the arrangement of the home is the main focus of this kind of inequality. Even in cases when there is no indication of anti-female bias, survival, or son preference, household inequality persists. While men are only allocated work outside the home, women are frequently left to handle household chores and child care on their own, and occasionally they must do so in addition to their occupations. Inequalities in employment and society are derived from this unequal division of labor, which also sustains inequality within the household.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Mukherjee Shankhabela & Banerjee Prof. 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



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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 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.

Pahari, Arindam. (2021). A significant contributor to the growth of both the society and the nation is the number of girls who receive an education. According to the Right to Education Act of 2009, every child has the right to receive an education that is both free and mandatory between the ages of six and fourteen. The effects of globalization have contributed to a quickening of the rate of social change in West Bengal over the course of the past few years. On the other hand, the issue of discrimination based on gender in West Bengal has evolved into a new part of the problem. In spite of the fact that it possesses land for a variety of political, social, economic, and cultural movements, the state has been unable to successfully lead the movement for the development and advancement of women as a whole class. The Functionalist Theory of Education that Durkheim developed states that in order for a society to continue existing, its members must be united in order for the society to continue existing. Education about uniformity is the means by which this objective is accomplished. The education of the girl child needs to be neglected, and this one is affected by it.

Maity Arun, Sanuar Sk (2020). As a result of the fact that women have fewer possibilities and access to higher education than men, there is a problem facing the education of women all over the world. Considering that higher education is at the pinnacle of the educational hierarchy and offers



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access to meaningful job, this immediately brings up the question of having access to higher education. The purpose of the inquiry that is now being conducted is to ascertain the degree to which women have access to higher education in comparison to males. The fact that the majority of women in developing countries are affected by the social, cultural, political, and environmental repercussions of development is a significant factor that contributes to the prevalence of gender inequality. Education is the key factor that contributes to these inequities in the first place. As it moves into the twenty-first century, India has set its sights on being one of the world's economic superpowers. Every nation's educational system serves as the bedrock upon which its progress is built. The provision of education to all people is one of the criteria that can be used to evaluate the progress that a country has made toward its developmental goals. There has been an increase in the propagation of open and distant learning as an essential solution for women, who have traditionally been a marginalized minority. The pursuit of higher education by women has become possible as a result of this.

Sao Sumit (2020). One of the most common beliefs held by indigenous people is that the land is our mother and that we are her children. The fact that women's education in India has been largely ignored, on the other hand, is disappointing to report. In the year 1951, the literacy rate among women was only 9%, which was considered to be a relatively low percentage. The most recent census report (Census, 2011) indicates that the percentage of women who are literate has increased to 65.46 percent. The lack of resources and opportunity, on the other hand, is causing them to continue to fall behind in a variety of domains. The vast majority of people are not currently aware of these possibilities that are supplied by the government. To demonstrate the current state of women's enrollment in higher education in the state and to emphasize specific initiatives taken by the state government are the key objectives of this article. Books, papers, AISHE reports, UGC annual reports, census reports, and other types of reports are all included in the main and secondary sources that are used for the data analysis. One may say that it possesses both quantitative and qualitative qualities.

Kapur Radhika (2019). Inequality between the sexes is something that has occurred in educational institutions. Compared to boys, girls have been subjected to a number of different forms of discrimination and unfair treatment. The problem of participation is the most important item that has come to light when considering the inequality between the sexes. In schools, there is an expectation that children will be active in a variety of different ways. By providing females with less opportunities to participate in comparison to boys, a pervasive gender inequality was created. Compared to metropolitan regions, rural communities have been more affected by this problem. Within the educational system as a whole, the gender gap is one of the most significant issues that needs to be addressed. Equal rights and opportunities must be granted to girls in every aspect of life, including the performance of various occupational activities and the completion of educational pursuits. Therefore, in order to accomplish this objective, it is necessary to design policies and programs. Parents and teachers should work together to ensure that girls have equal opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities (sometimes known as "extracurricular activities"). We have



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taken into consideration a variety of concerns, including those that are responsible for the gender gap in education, those that have an impact on the educational accomplishments of women, and measures that are designed to close this gap.

Mishra and Ahad (2017). The multifaceted problem of gender inequality in Indian society was investigated in the research titled "Gender Discrimination and Feminist Perspectives for Women Empowerment." The research highlighted the fact that discrimination exists across a variety of socioeconomic levels and localities. A complex and multifaceted gender imbalance that impedes the development of the Indian economy and the well-being of its population should be proposed as a means of mitigating the effects of this inequality. It is vital that females be given access to higher education and that they be guaranteed active participation in political and social endeavors in order to reduce the gaps that exist between the sexes.

Sharma (2015). According to the findings of a study titled "Education and Gender Equality: An Inquiry into the Status of Scheduled Caste Women of Aligarh," the researchers attempted to investigate the influence that education has on enhancing the status of women who belong to the Scheduled Caste and reducing the level of gender inequality. The efforts that the community has made to educate women are also investigated in this article. From the two tehsils of Koil and Khair, which are located in the Aligarh district, a total of 250 people were chosen to take part. However, there are positive advances in the social position of women who belong to Scheduled Castes, as indicated by the findings of the study, which indicate that inequities connected to education and gender are lessening.

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