Social Exclusion of women in Educational Sector: Causes and Consequences

Nahida Rohi

Research Scholar, Department of Sociology, Aligarh Muslim University

Email: nahidaroohi@gmail.com

Abstract

In present scenario, discrimination against women is a global issue and they experience biasness on the basis of their gender. Women are discriminated in all spheres of life civil, political, economic, educational and social. As educating a women actually means educating a generation and it brings enlightenment but in spite of this they are not provided education. As status of women has changed a lot but women face a lot of discrimination in getting education. So through this paper aim is to determine the factors of low education among women and the consequences of their illiteracy. This paper is based on both primary source in the form of census and secondary source namely articles, journals etc.

Keywords: Discrimination, Enlightenment, Consequence, Exclusion.

Introduction

In India, women are excluded from accessing education particularly the young girls in rural areas and lower socio-economic backgrounds. India has achieved a great success in attaining universal school enrollment and in ratifying policies to address educational inequality based on gender from past several decades. But still the education gap exists (White et al, 2016). Women at presently secure high positions in institutions and are earning high salaries but this ratio is low as compared to men. This is due to presence of cultural roots of gender inequality that are still strong in India. The concept of social exclusion remains a principal concern for the nation after the idea of equality translated into India's constitution. The constitution makes it mandatory task to policy makers to address common drivers of social exclusion by declaring, "the state shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex and place of birth, the Directive principles of State Policy further call on the state to minimize the inequalities in income, status, facilities and opportunities, not only amongst individuals but also among groups of people" (Singh & Narula, 2016).

The Indian society has always maintained a tradition of woman's place at home despite various acts and directions. Most women believe that their only duty is to do household chores. The power of decision making is given to man and he decides all. With the introduction and advancement women have become independent and they are participating in public sector also but this education is more in favour of men than women (Cited by Singh & Narula, 2016).

Educational Reform in India

Various attempts were made to increase the educational achievement of girls in order to remove imbalance in level of education. India made great progress in improving its

educational infrastructure – an achievement by newly independent states illustrating post-war educational expansion and the importance of education among newly emerging nation states during last half of twentieth century (Meyer, Ramirez & Soysal, 1992). Expansion of education in India is also reflective of the United Nation's Economic, Social, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) program Education for All and the aim to achieve universal primary education by the year 2015 under the Millennium Development Goals program (Govinda, 2002). Also Indian Constitution made efforts to universalize education for those under the age of fourteen, National Policy on Education made in 1986 in order to increase educational investments for girls and lower caste people, and Supreme Court in 1993 hold that education is fundamental right of every citizen. Not only government but also NGO's made efforts in the form of policies to universalize enrollment, promote gender equality in education and improve learning. The aim of these specific policies involves provision of free educational resources in the form of uniforms and textbooks, increase in number of female teachers, and introduction of local schools, single sex schools and specific facilities in non-formal settings for girls and non-enrolled (Govinda, 2002, Kingdon, 2007).

Objectives:

i. To understand the concept of social exclusion.

ii. Factors responsible for low literacy rate among women in India.

ii. Consequences of low education among women in India.

iv. What are factors responsible for being included in mainstream society in order to live a dignified life?

Methodology:

As the present paper focus on literacy gap existing between men and women so this article is based on both primary data and secondary data. Primary data includes Census and secondary data includes books, articles and research papers.

Social Exclusion

Social exclusion as a nebulous concept is used to describe various forms of discriminatory practices whereby certain individuals, groups or communities are denied access to take part in economic, political and social functioning of the society leading to their exclusion with respect to those who enjoy freedom and opportunities to have access and participate in various fields of life. The former usually recognized as excluded are predominantly in minority whereas later recognized as included are in majority. The criteria for exclusion may be caste, gender, religion, region, class, ethnic origin or combination of all these (Rohi, 2018).Social exclusion is defined as "the inability of an individual to participate in the basic political, social, economic and social functioning of society" or "the denial of equal access to opportunities imposed by certain groups in society on others" (Cited by Thorat, Sabharwal & Yaqoob, 2010). This definition provides three defining features of exclusion that are: it affects culturally defined groups, is embedded in social relations between them, and results in deprivation or low income for these excluded (de Haan, 1997; Sen, 2000). In Indian society also being hierarchical exclude, discriminate and deprive some groups on the

basis of characteristics like caste, ethnicity or religious background. These groups include low caste untouchables, tribals, women, Adivasis, nomadic tribes etc. They are denied in all spheres of life (Thorat, 2004).

Literacy and Spread of Education

Development of any society depends on literacy and level of education. With modernization, urbanization, communication and commerce, education spread and is considered as an important trait of modern civilization. Literacy forms an important input in overall development of individuals enabling them to comprehend their social, cultural and political environment better and respond to it appropriately. Higher levels of education and literacy contribute in improvement of economic and social condition and leads to greater awareness. It acts as a catalyst for social upliftment. According to Census 2011, as many as 560,687, 797 persons are literate in the country. Out of these, 336,533,716 are males and 224,154,081 are females. While the overall literacy rate works out to be 64.8%, the male literacy rate is 75.3% and that for females is 53.7% showing a gap of 21.6% between the sexes (http://censusindia.gov.in/Census_And_You/literacy_and_level_of_education.aspx).

Factors Responsible for Exclusion of Women

The factors which prevent women from accessing equal opportunities as enjoyed by their counterparts are age old traditions, unemployment and political factors etc. Gender stereotyping, family/ work conflict, social role theory, lack of mentoring and the 'Old Boys network' are all factors which make up the hypothetical 'social exclusion' that make women unable to acquire to attain highest positions in their careers (Kelly & Paula, 2013). Discrimination against women arises from patriarchal notions of ownership over women's bodies, reproductive rights, mobility and level of autonomy, labour and sexuality (Cited by Sharma & Gupta, 2000). Other factors responsible for exclusion of women are:

(a) Poverty: In India 30 per cent of people live below poverty line, 70 per cent are women. Absence of economic opportunities and autonomy, lack of access to economic resources like land ownership, inheritance and credit leads to poverty of women. This absence of resources is the motivating factor of low education among women.

(b) Social customs, Beliefs and Practices: The traditional patriarchal family system in India confines women's role to domestic sphere and subordinates the women. This supportive role provided by women in homes and men as bread earners resulted in low education of women.

(c) Illiteracy: In a family where both father and mother are illiterate they do not take pains to educate their daughters because they do not know the value of education.

(d) Lack of awareness of women: In India most of women are ignorant of their basic rights and they face all types of discrimination persisting in families (ibid).

Measures for Inclusion of Women

The government, the women group itself and the society is taking various steps in order to overcome such barriers. These include acts passed by government to give quota to woman, formation of self-help groups and creating awareness among women

about the importance of education and a job. The following are measures that can help women to overcome exclusion are as under:

1. Education: Education has a vital role in making an individual independent and creating self-confidence. With education she can take part in decision making process. Many schemes have been launched by Government of India such as Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, National Literacy Mission Programme.

2. Ensuring equal economic rights to all: Legislation on free choice of occupation or employment, equal pay for equal work, freedom from sexual harassment in workplace and other critical rights are increasingly being supported. But weak implementation of these laws results in discrimination of women.

3. Mentoring and personal development programs: Women should be given mentoring and personal development programs that help them to address personal effectiveness in managing household and family demands.

4. Promote Mechanism that gives women a voice in politics and Governance: Women should be given equal representation in politics.

5. Count and Acknowledge Women's work: Stories of successful women should be discussed to inspire them to learn and choose their own paths.

6. Creation of Self-Help Groups: SHG's have become very successful in empowering women and help them emotionally and financially in times of need (Singh and Narula, 2016).

Consequences of Low Education

Low education has impact on growth of economy, as development of any nation depends on level of education. India can be called developed only when gender gap in education is decreased as both are wheels of same cart. Illiteracy among women does not affect them only but entire family has to bear the consequences of being illiterate. Illiteracy makes women always dependent on others as she can't earn. As India wants to stabilize population growth through family planning methods this will become successful only when women are literate (https://www.mapsofindia.com/my-india/society/low-female-literacy-rate-and-its-impact-on-our-society).

Conclusion

Social exclusion and discrimination is faced by women not only at present times but from times immemorial. This result more through patriarchal nature of family where women are assigned the role of care taker at home and men as bread earner. This exclusion is driven by factors like demographic, psychological, organizational and societal. If women are to be treated equally as men these factors must be eradicated and it requires lot of effort from every member of society.

References

White, G., Ruther, M., & Kahn, J. (2016). Educational Inequality in India: An Analysis of Gender Differences in Reading and Mathematics. In *IHDS Working Paper 2016-2*.

De Haan, A. (1997, May). Poverty and social exclusion: A comparison of debates on deprivation. In *PRUS/IDS Workshop* (pp. 28-29).

Sen, A. (2000). *Social exclusion: Concept, application, and scrutiny*. Asian Development Bank.

Sharma, B. R., & Gupta, M. (2004). Gender based violence in India: A never-ending phenomenon. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, *6*(1), 114-123.

Rohi, N. (2018). Social Exclusion and Marginalized Communities: An Analytic Review of Scheduled Castes. *Editorial Board*, *7*(2), 87.

Govinda, R. (2002). Providing Education for All in India: an overview. *India Education Report: A Profile of Basic Education, New Delhi: OUP*.

Meyer, J. W., Ramirez, F. O., & Soysal, Y. N. (1992). World expansion of mass education, 1870-1980. *Sociology of education*, 128-149.

Kingdon, G. G. (2007). The progress of school education in India. *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, *23*(2), 168-195.

McCarthy, K., & Burns, P. (2013). The double glass ceiling: An in-depth investigation and analysis into the challenges faced by Women when seeking promotion to the boardroom and beyond the executive suite. *A BPP Business School Working Paper–December. Accessed January*, *13*, 2017.

Singh, A., & Narula, N. (2016). Social Exclusion of Women in India: A Corporate Sector Perspective. *International Journal*, *4*(6).

Thorat, S. (2004). Marginalized Groups and the Common Minimum Programme. *Social Scientist*, 70-75.

Thorat, S., Sabharwal, N. S., & Yaqoob, G. (2010). *Caste and Social Exclusion: Issues Related to Concept, Indicators, and Measurement*. Indian Institute of Dalit Studies and UNICEF.

(http://censusindia.gov.in/Census_And_You/literacy_and_level_of_education.aspx).

 (https://www.mapsofindia.com/my-india/society/low-female-literacy-rate-and-its-impact-on-our-society).