

# Gender Bias Issues in Higher Education in India

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**Abstract – This paper explores a broad variety of literature on gender bias in higher education. In certain facets of the educational system, gender disparity is more pronounced than in others. The study divides access to higher education into three categories: 1) undergraduate experiences, 2) college experiences, and 3) post-college outcomes. Women do reasonably well in accessibility, but less well in terms of college experience, and are disproportionately disadvantaged in terms of educational outcomes. Gender disparity in higher education can be explained in terms of these various facets of education, as well as the ways in which women have achieved equity and those in which they continue to lag behind men. Here we review the gender bias in education and the importance of educating girls through the functionalist theory of education.**

**Key Words – Gender Bias, Higher Education, Gender Main Streaming**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Gender bias, since women are the victims of gender bias, is intended for women. While there is no cognitive distinction between male and female, no study has so far proved it. Instead, women do extremely well if equal opportunities are granted. However, until the contemporary era in which female academics and thinkers have questioned the dominant view on gender bias and issues of gender and science have taken center stage, the historical shadow has significantly affected the faith of women. The popular view was that the brain of men was created for spatial ability and that the brain of female was developed for verbal ability. The root cause of that view has been traced back to variations in sociology, culture and the environment. As female in many cases excelled men in science and engineering subjects, the amount of times such view has been refuted. Misguided career counseling, teacher indifference, lack of successful teaching and learning styles, and negative self-esteem of girls themselves have deterred girls from engaging in hard sciences and technical careers due to lack of opportunities (Jaireth, 2008). Female and girls have been subjected to various types of domestic abuse and violence, educational institutions and organization Bias towards female begins with her birth and continues throughout her whole life.

In a male-dominated society, sexism against female is a well-known fact. The direct and indirect effect of violence and gender bias against female and girls can often not be calculated, but the resulting economic burden on society is immense. Ginet

(1988) found out that gender is involved not only in ethnic relations, social stratification, legal codes and practice, and academia, but also in religion, family and job, aesthetic and moral values, social and cognitive growth, self-conception, etc. A prevalent occurrence is gender-based abuse, including sexual assault in the workplace and in educational institutions. Gender disparity in education is a worldwide problem. Factors such as the schooling of the head of the household and the standard of living in most African countries can have a huge effect on the enrollment of a child and the completion of even primary education (Lloyd and Blanc, 1996). It has been observed in India and the Philippines that children of wealthy, urban, white collar parents have a comparatively higher level of educational achievement than their counterparts with poor, rural, farming parents (Tan and Mingat, 1992). In the Indian sense, son preference is a social feature reflecting gender inequality, which blocks daughters' access to social assets such as education. As the financial return from it greatly exceeds those from educating a child, a patriarchal society offers better incentives for a boy's education. Houses with trained mothers, however, tend to deviate from this social standard. Extended girls' exposure to new ideas and social interactions outside the family could also contribute to higher enrollment at both primary and secondary levels (Kar and Kar, 2002). Although attempts have been made to empower women, they are still part of the poorer segment of society. The weight of cultural traditions, norms of male dominance, the burden of poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and economic marginalization, and other forms of human deprivation have affected the lives of

women. Females continue to bear the burden of poverty, illiteracy, economic marginalization, and exclusion from decision making process, lack of access to resources, social stereotyping, and abuse at household and societal levels. There is persistence and institutionalized bias against women and mechanisms to achieve gender equality, and women's empowerment remains incomplete and needs to be streamlined (Jharta, 2006). In nearly all society's social structures, gender bias occurs to different degrees.

## 2. EFFECT OF GENDER BIAS ON SOCIAL AND PERSONAL LIFE

Gender bias impacts social inclusion and personal life adversely. For years, females have faced oppression. There is gender bias in different ways today. As a result, the majority of females do not recognize their own equality and rights. Gender bias will minimize girls' enrollment in educational institutions. When one looks at the educational statistics, it is easy to see that girls' participation and retention rates are lower than boys'. The number of girls who have never been to school is greater than the number of boys. The explanation for girls' low participation in education at school level, and later, is because of well-known variables. These are: (i) the bias of the community/society against girls' education and the preference for boys' education, (ii) the absence of a desired market for girls' education, (iii) the need for parents to assist girls in sibling care, domestic chores or by being a family economic unit, (iv) adherence to conventional female roles, (v) insufficient numbers of female teachers, and (vi) negative and disincentive (Devendra, 1995). A great deal of research from around the world shows that the success of development strategies is compromised by gender inequality. It is shown that gender inequalities exist across the world, despite improvement. For example, no region has equal rights for females and men. Females still lack independent access to land, manage property, conduct business or even travel without the permission of their husbands in a number of countries. In politics and policymaking, females are vastly underrepresented. They have less than 10 percent of the seats in parliament in most regions and less than 8 percent in government ministerial positions (King and Mason, 2001). Gender bias retards economic growth. There is growing evidence to suggest that various forms of gender relations, gender-based division of labor, power and resource inequalities between men and women, and gender biases in rights and entitlements, are working to undermine economic development and to reduce the well-being of men, females and children. Furthermore, females have less control over productive resources such as education, property, data and financial resources, exercise minimal decision-making power and have little political influence compared to men (Meenai, 2003). In science, females are under-represented. Females

make up less than 25 per cent of all physical scientists and 10 per cent of all engineers, according to the National Science Foundation (2003). Gender bias has played an important role, but the causes of workplace segregation are complicated (Farmer, 1997). Historically, for instance, university rules prohibited females from entering graduate programs far into the 20th century in many research fields (Weisgram and Bigler, 2007). Astin (1984) argues that perceived workplace sexism contributes to people's understanding of their job prospects and leads to unequal perceptions and desires between men and women.

## 3. STYLE OF GENDER BIAS: IN PAST AND CONTEMPORARY SOCIETIES

In today's culture, disparities created by gender role stereotypes have become increasingly unacceptable (Spitz and Huber, 1980). Without reference to religion, race, or gender, the Israeli Declaration of Independence explicitly states the principle of equality for all people. Despite the mandate, social, economic and political disparity in Israeli society continues to exist (Shachar, 1996). In politics, the number of female members of the Knesset (the Israeli Parliament) decreased in the 1996 general election from 10 percent to 7.5 percent. Women make up only 2 percent of company directors in the corporate sector (Slater, 1996). On average, despite a 1964 law outlawing wage bias on the basis of gender, women earn 30 percent less than men (Ephroni, 1990). Children and adolescents, according to parents, teachers, counselors and peers, are constantly bombarded with profoundly ingrained assumptions of what constitutes acceptable gender-specific actions. Children are induced to articulate beliefs, expectations and goals in everyday routines that are consistent with the dominant gender categories, including sex-stereotyped educational preferences that will ultimately shape their college choice (Marini et al, 1996). William and Best (1990) observed that the historically masculine stereotype is associated with the characteristics of superiority, violence, sovereignty and accomplishment, and the feminine stereotype is associated with the characteristics of nurturance and succorance of association. Male was, therefore, more dominant in patriarchy, the rule maker, controller, organizer, so he obviously framed the basic structures and infrastructures of society to fit his own sweet will, in short, to grind his own axe. Owing to biological vulnerability, women yielded. This apathy, subjugation and abuse of women was summed up by Mahatma Gandhi as a result of the interesting teachings of men and their acceptance by women (Mohini, 1998). As a consequence, not only were they removed from political, social and economic influence, but from the power of education as well. Women were trained to protect men at the worst level and to have an anti-women stance. They are taught by socio-cultural and religious practices to follow,

serve, please, protect and sacrifice for the good of their people. Women have become profoundly conscious of sexual inequities in every field of life. We find that women are excluded from many significant social, political or economic practices everywhere, that their positions as women and mothers are associated with less powers and privileges than men's roles (Sharma, 2005).

In the cultural heritage of Indian culture, gender bias is ingrained. It's a culture that idiotizes children. In order to free their souls from the slavery of their bodies, sons are considered ritually and economically desirable, necessary not only to light their parents' funeral pyres, but also to ensure the continuity of the lineage and family name. They have become parents' economic help in their old age. A girl is regarded as something of a burden and a liability from the day of her birth and is likely to be given a meager share of the love and wealth of the family. This is because the investment made for her brings little return; instead, a large dowry must be offered to her when she gets married, draining the family resources. Girls are thus socialized to embrace their condition and the philosophy of male dominance from the very beginning, which leaves them vulnerable to a whole range of patriarchal practices. Although gender bias exists during early childhood years in the provision of treatment to the girl child in the field of health, nutrition, education and job distribution, this is further increased with the advent of puberty. As a young girl is seen to become more insecure, as far as her movements and behavior are concerned, various constraints are placed on her. In the socialization process, there is intensive training for her to take on the roles of a wife and a mother (Jha, 2002). In the developing world, girls still make up two thirds of school children without access to basic education, and girls are much less likely to enroll in mathematics and computer science courses than boys. In Central and Eastern Europe, where there are high levels of female adult literacy and primary and secondary school enrollment, women's basic education is less of an issue. The shortage of affordable higher education and preparation for IT employment is an important educational obstacle for women here. Nevertheless, basic education and literacy are out of reach for many girls and women in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. In Malaysia, in the first wave of industrialization, women made up 80 per cent of industrial workers. The number declined to 67 percent by 1986 and continues to decline (Dhull, 2005). Although some progress has been made since the 1930s in breaking down obstacles to the entry of women into non-traditional sectors, the statistics remain grim. A female doctorate in science or engineering still requires 2,000 high school girls to create one. Only 3.1% of all engineers were female in 1989, and 20% of all scientists and engineers were female. The key exceptions to the inability of colleges to cultivate the interest of female students in

the fields of math and science are women's colleges (Sebrechts, 1993).

#### **4. SOCIO-CULTURAL SET UP AND GENDER BIAS IN INDIA**

India is a male dominated society, and because of its inferior status, women in India face bias in terms of various political, social and economic opportunities. Patriarchy may be defined as the 'father's law', but it refers to the structure of male domination in social terms, i.e. where the name of children is traced through the father; where the possession, power, and inheritance of all properties are in the hands of men. Therefore, in different ways, patriarchy describes oppression against women. In every aspect of a gender-discriminated society, parents give preference to children because of patriarchal ideology and socio-cultural practice. Women or girls are regular targets of bias within their households in developing countries such as Bangladesh due to cultural practice; girls have to learn domestic skills and start taking on domestic duties. It is assumed in rural areas that a son should be educated because, unlike a daughter who serves another family after her marriage, a son would need to help his parents. Similarly, Malay women face bias based on their socio-cultural views or customary beliefs in Malaysia (Sultana and Zulkefli, 2012). In our country, gender disparity in education is serious. Girls have less access to school or educational achievement. In the economic, political and social arenas, education allows men and women to assert their rights and realize their potential. It is also the most effective means of bringing individuals out of poverty. As a framework for the advancement of girls into adult life, education plays a particularly important role. Any approach to counter gender-based violence against women and girls that remains prevalent in many communities should be an integral part of it (Sushma, 2010).

In Indian culture, gender bias is well known. On the basis of family groups, patriarchy is the concept of society, where the father assumes responsibility for the family's wellbeing. For centuries, women in India have been marginalized and represented differently in history, literature, religion, art, education, and culture (Hasan, 2010). In most of the Indian culture, the status of a woman is affected by the structure for the home. Girls are entrusted with the task of looking after younger siblings in a lower socio-economic community, cooking, cleaning the house, fetching water, and gathering firewood. While girls are allowed to play in the neighborhood, boys are allowed to play freely in the neighborhood. Women are smaller than men in terms of jobs and job participation. Of the total participation of women in jobs, 90 percent are women in the unorganized market. Of these, 80% are in the field of agriculture. The remaining 20 percent is in the manufacturing, factory and

household labor industries. A number of women in our community work long hours in the informal sector, at low wages and without any legal safeguards against exploitation. They work harder and contribute to the economy for long hours and (Singh, 2010).

In the guise of foeticide, female infanticide, son preference, girl child marriage, dowry, domestic violence, sexual harassment, and host of custom-specific devaluing women and girls, gender bias remains pervasive throughout the life cycle. In the developing world today, more than 1 billion people (the majority of whom are women) live in unacceptable conditions of poverty. Gender inequalities in the sharing of economic resources are also a major contributing factor to women's poverty (Alam, 2011). Education for girls is now one of Indian society's top priorities. Much progress has been made in this respect in recent decades. The number of girls attending school is rising, but a significant number of girls still receive little to no education in some parts of India. There are many girls who do not even have access to primary education, even today. For girls' illiteracy, there are many cultural and economic factors, such as verbal and physical violence, lack of sanitation, long distances between home and school, dangerous encounters that prevent parents from sending their daughters to school. Moreover, women's education is a multidimensional phenomenon in India. No single factor or trigger can be held accountable for India's very low literacy rate among women. The combination of several factors, including social, cultural, economic, educational, demographic, political and administrative, is subsequently associated with (Bharadwaj and Rani, 2011). Akhilesh and Singh (2010) note that: (a) religious factors are the key barriers to girls' education: some religions do not treat women similarly to men. They always rely on men, either their father, their husband, or their son. Therefore, women's education has been given very little priority, (b) geographical factors: women being a weaker gender, girls are not sent to long distance schools. Boys are allowed to go to schools, but for the sake of protection, girls are not allowed, and (c) biological factors: girls are physically poor compared to boys by default. This differentiation is biochemical. The schools in India are not girl friendly, so at teenage age, parents tend to remove their daughter from school. Sexual assault complaints are not adequately tackled. Approximately one quarter of the population of India consists of girls up to 19 years of age. Under the sense of the decreasing sex ratio for women, it is noteworthy that about 15 million girls are born in India each year, and almost one quarter of this number does not see their 15th birthday despite being physically stronger than boys. Issues of female foeticide and female infanticide are of interest to government and other development activists in this regard (Jha, 2002).

## 5. GENDER MAIN STREAMING – A PRIORITY AREA FOR DISCUSSION AND PLANNING

Gender mainstreaming refers to methods and procedures in the directions, policies, budgets, and programs for integrating gender-responsive goals. It is about ensuring that women and men have equal access to the resources of society or organizations, including socially valued items, opportunities and incentives (Reyes, 2011). A standing committee was formed by the University Grants Commission to implement women's studies within universities. In 1986, Parliament adopted a National Education Policy (May 1986), which included a section on 'Education for Women's Equality,' which gave the country's education system a new mandate and acknowledged women's studies as a tool for women's empowerment. The UGC guidelines for the advancement of women's studies in universities have acknowledged the three prolonged impulses of teaching, study and extension for women's studies centres (Sharma, 2002). There is no recent phenomenon of international concern regarding the abolition of sexism against women, but despite the presence of multiple resolutions and conventions, such bias is prevalent. In the human rights movement, abuses of women's rights have not received the necessary publicity. Human Rights law has continued to exclude many of the views of women. International principles of human rights are considered to be gender neutral, but in reality this neutrality often amounted to a denial of women's rights. Both national and international legislation have underlined the concept of non-bias on the basis of sex and the guarantee of equal rights. The Charter of the United Nations provides the norm of equal rights. The Charter's preamble states that the people of the United Nation are prepared to reaffirm their belief in the equal rights of men and women. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) also underline the concept of non-bias and equal protection. Feminists have also argued that while the Convention on the Abolition of Bias against Women (CEDAW) is an attempt to identify and protect the rights of women, it has perpetuated the propensity to regard the interests of women as distinct from the issues of general human rights. It is also charged that the problems of women within the UN framework have been 'ghettoized'. The CEDAW committee's biggest challenge is not to build a 'parallel world' for women, but to put gender problems into the forefront of the human rights agenda (Saksena, 2007). For any agenda of inclusion, the political and institutional support for gender mainstreaming is unparalleled. At the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, the Forum for Action, widely known as the international agreement initiating gender

mainstreaming, was created. Since then, it has been adopted by the European Commission and by all European Union member states (Verloo, 2001).

It is impossible to achieve the objective of gender equity and empowerment of women without integrating gender problems into an institution's current plans, policies and practices. For higher education institutions, the gendered academic climate provides women and men with the ability to achieve decent jobs and to engage completely in political, economic and social decision-making (Yehualashet, 2010). Sweden's low representation of women in historically male dominated fields is shocking within its social context. The Swedish government initiated a series of reforms starting in 1968 aimed at improving equity in access to education by class and gender, encouraging atypical gender education and occupational choices, and more closely connecting education and occupational outcomes (Erikson and Jonsson, 1996).

In particular, nation-states seek to increase access to public institutions in order to maximize the lives of all people. Therefore, where such obstacles are found, they should eliminate discriminatory barriers to individual choice and institute compensatory reforms (Bradley, 2000). In contrast with the EFA (Education for All) campaign, the global women's movement acted in a very different way to answer the demands for gender equality. Since the mid-1960s, a huge global mobilization of women inside and outside government has been taking place to campaign for women's rights and gender equality in policy and practice, drawing particular strength from global ties between organizations and regional alliances (Ashworth, 2000; Antrobus, 2004). The UNESCO-coordinated Gender in Education Network in Asia (GENIA) brought together education officials in Asia who had a special brief on gender, known as gender focal points, to exchange experiences. This group held training sessions, developed gender and planning guides, briefing papers, conducted analysis, and worked inside ministries as a mobilizing group (Jensen and Rajagopalan, 2004).

## **6. ACHIEVEMENT OF SOCIAL HARMONY AND SOCIAL WELL BEING BY GENDER BALANCE MAINTENANCE-AN OVERVIEW OF GENDER PARITY**

Gender equality enhances the capacity of countries to expand, to reduce poverty and to effectively rule. Therefore, fostering gender equality is an important part of a development agenda aimed at helping all individuals - women and men alike - to eradicate poverty and raise their living standards (World Bank, 2001). In order to achieve equality, growth and peace, women's empowerment and their complete participation on the basis of equality in all facets of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental;

women's rights are human rights (United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, 1995). The marginalization and vulnerability of women may increase if discriminatory norms, structures and practices are not challenged (Morrison and Jutting, 2004; and Jones et al., 2010). In order to boost facilities and ensure more and better-trained teachers, the abolition of school fees and strong investment in education have had a direct effect on rising enrolment rates in the world's developing countries. The gender disparity in primary education has decreased overall, and primary enrollment is now 48% for girls and 52% for boys (UNESCO, 2005). However, amid this development, gender representation in the developed world as a whole has still not been achieved. For example, for every 100 children out of school, there are 270 girls in Yemen; 316 girls in Iraq; 416 girls in India; and 257 girls in Benin (UNESCO, 2007). The North American educational programs have sought to equalize opportunities for female students for the past 20 years because of actual or perceived inequities in the prospects for education and the labor market (Sadker and Sadker, 1994). Konrad et al. (2000) claimed that in the same way as men do, modern women value job characteristics such as independence, challenge, leadership, reputation and strength. The career ambitions of female university students are more like those of male students (Astin et al., 1997). The demand for gender equality and the pressure for fair inclusion of women in all fields of social life - political, cultural, economic and educational - has not been untouched by any country, whether developed or developing. While the number of women involved in public life has increased, their presence is often restricted to areas that are considered acceptable for women and to lower levels of the ladder of jobs. These gender differences are exacerbated by unequal socio-cultural beliefs, expectations, behaviors and resources for education (Indiresan, 2002).

## **7. CONSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT FOR REMOVING GENDER BIAS**

The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties, and Directive Values. Not only does the Constitution guarantee equality to women, but it also empowers the state to enact constructive bias initiatives in favour of women. The chapter of "Fundamental Rights" in the Indian Constitution grants different rights. The rights of particular significance to women are Article 14 of the Right to Equality and Article 15 of the Prohibition against Bias. Article 15(1) forbids bias 'on grounds of religion, ethnicity, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them' against any resident of the state (Sharma, 2005). The Preamble to the Constitution speaks of ensuring equality of status and opportunity, as well as social, economic and political justice for all people of India. One of the

State Policy Directive Principles prescribes that the state should guide its policy to ensure fair pay for both men and women. While the principles of the Directive are central to the country's governance and are to be applied in the enactment of legislation, they are not judicially enforceable. One of the clauses of the Constitution has particular significance in this sense. After having laid down that the state shall not discriminate against any person on grounds of sex, among other items, it provides that nothing in this article shall prohibit the state from making any special provision for women and children, so, there is a Constitutional provision in India permitting the state to discriminate in favour of women, if such bias is considered appropriate (Jha and Pujari, 1996). With respect to equality, Article 14 confers equal rights and opportunities for men and women in the political, economic and social spheres. Article 15 forbids bias on the basis of religion, ethnicity, caste, sex etc. against any person. Section 15(3) makes it possible for the State to make affirmative bias in favor of women a special law. Similarly, Article 16 provides for equal rights for all people in terms of public appointments. Article 39(a) provides that the State shall direct its policy towards ensuring equal rights of livelihood for all people, men and women, while Article 39(c) ensures equal pay for equal work. Above all, the Constitution imposes a constitutional obligation on every person through Article 51 A (e) to renounce the practices derogatory to the dignity of women. However, the question is: have women been able to enjoy the advantages that the Constitution of India offers for them? Unfortunately, the answer isn't positive. To attain the aims enshrined in the Constitution, there is a long way to go. The State has enacted several women-specific and women-related legislation in line with various provisions of the Constitution to protect women from social injustice, abuse and atrocities and also to prevent social evils such as child marriage, dowry, incest, sati practice, etc (Hasan, 2010).

The government tried to translate the Constitution's commitment to compulsory schooling for all children in the field of education before they hit the age of 14. In 1990, a World Declaration on Education for All was adopted at the World Education Conference in Jomtien, Thailand. This has become an international

Commitment to providing all residents with access to high quality education, as well as meeting the complex learning needs of children, young people and adults. Both by formal and non-formal education programs, this idea of basic education for everyone could be achieved. The World Education Forum reaffirmed this vision in Dakar in 2000 and introduced a Framework for Action that stressed the need for quality and access to basic education (Leach, 2003). The Forward Thinking Strategies for Women's Empowerment (FLS) was declared as the most critical document emerging from the 1990 Third International Conference on Women in Nairobi. It was intended to provide a springboard for action at national and international levels to improve women's

status (Joshi and Pushpanadham, 2001). Gender equality in education is increasingly seen as a measure of economic and political maturity and progress (World Bank, 2005). In policy preferences, foreign events have encoded gender equality.

## 8. GENDER MAINSTREAMING PLANS, POLICIES AND MEASURES - THE MYTHS AND REALITIES

Gender mainstreaming is a technical process which requires the application of tools and methodologies for gender planning. It requires gender analysis to identify the differential effects of male and female policies and services and the compilation of gender-disaggregated data (gender statistics) to explain, identify and assess the degree of differential impacts on males and females (Reyes, 2011). The prohibition against sex bias was first expressed at the international level in the 1945 Charter of the United Nations and later reinforced in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Since then, protection against bias has been improved and expanded by nearly all human rights instruments. The 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights guarantees equal protection of the law for both sexes (Hasan, 2010). 'Most governments in the world are dedicated, on paper, to women's equality' (Seager, 1997). Women have continued to create international networks and coalitions to advocate for their gender interests since the first UN women's conference in Mexico (1975). This has resulted in several conventions being formulated and accepted, the most well-known of which is the Convention on the Abolition of All Types of Bias against Women.

It aims to form national policies in all countries towards guaranteeing women's equal rights with men in areas such as education, jobs and marriage (Wach, and Reeves, 2000). Women advocates regard the Convention as a powerful instrument to continue their fight against sexism, including where reservations are made or where states have declined to ratify it. Pressure groups for women will force governments to meet these globally accepted minimum standards (Seager, 1997).

Gender mainstreaming is a technique that makes the perspective of women and men an important part of policy and program design, execution, tracking and evaluation (Tiessen, 2007). The concerted efforts of women's organisations and NGOs in India culminated in a landmark judgment in August 1997 by the Supreme Court of India, which ordered all institutions (including universities, technical education and management institutions, vocational training centers and departments of distance learning) to set up an independent sexual harassment complaints committee. The court made it impossible for them to legally evade their obligation by pinning the responsibility of maintaining a non-hostile work environment on

employers. The judgment provides for the full autonomy of the complaints committee and guarantees that the committee covers all segments of the campus - teachers, students and administrative and maintenance staff. Higher education institutions have formed committees since the landmark judgment. There is no research-based evidence, however, of the effect of the decision on the safety of women (Vimala 2010). The need for universal primary education has largely been felt by the international community as an integral feature of basic human development (UN, 1994; UNICEF, 1990; USAID, 1995). The Programme of Action chalked out at the International Conference on Population and Growth (ICPD) held in Cairo in 1994 has underlined two major aspects of children's schooling. For both boys and girls, the first is universal primary education, while the second is education above primary level for girls. Principle 10 of the Program states, 'Everyone has the right to education, which is aimed at the full development of human capital and human dignity and ability, with special attention to women and girls.' The Program mentions: 'Beyond the achievement of gender disparity in schooling, emphasizing the reduction of gender bias and higher educational achievement for girls. The overview of the objectives of the ICPD presented in the States of the World Population Study 1995 indicates that the primary focus with respect to education beyond the primary level is to promote girls' education (UNFPA, 1995).

## **9. GENDER BIAS IN EDUCATIONAL DYNAMICS**

In 2005, it was estimated by the United Nations Educational Science and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) that 100 million children were out of school, 55% of whom were girls. As a result of never accessing or completing education, about 771 million adults worldwide have become illiterate. In the poorest nations and for the poorest parts of the population, schooling is always withheld (Unterhalter, 2007). In Israel, the prevalent gender roles in society reinforce the fact that female students mainly choose humanities and domestic sciences, while male students choose science and technology, Shamai (1994) said. Martin et al. (2002) found that women are more open than men to and better appreciate gender bias; women, for example, also identify and recognize sexual abuse that occurs in most organisations before men do. Ahmanson and Ohlun (2000) claimed that sexism against women is, notwithstanding equality legislation, to be found in government educational politics in some cases.

A world-wide phenomenon is gender disparity in education. The extent of heterogeneity across countries is presented in the Human Development Study of the UNDP (United Nations Development Program) (1995). It is shown that combined primary and secondary enrolment for girls increased from 38 percent of the total in 1970 to 68 percent in 1992 in

the developing regions as a whole. Cross-country disparities are yet to be removed (Kar and Kar, 2002). Gender bias more likely to be faced by women in male dominated professions than in typically female employment (Mansfield et al., 1991). The negative psychological and job results that are correlated with gender bias against women are close to sexual assault outcomes. Experiences, for instance,

Gender bias has been linked to reduced work satisfaction for women administrators, decreased professional self-confidence and career satisfaction, and an increased sense of alienation in clinical medicine for women (Murrell et al., 1995). Both sexual harassment and gender bias can serve as everyday problems or microstressors, even in their mildest forms; these are small, relatively subtle interactions that can accumulate to have a major effect on the target over time (Harrell, 2000). In addition, sexual assault is considered to be an act of abuse against women (Koss et al., 1994; O'Leary-Kelly, Paetzold, and Griffin, 2000). Golombok and Fivush (1994) argued that boys are more rewarded for their intelligence than girls and are more often reprimanded for disobedience, whereas girls are more reinforced for obedience and more often reprimanded for lack of knowledge. Teachers and their male pupils tend to deal regularly with behavioral issues. Girls very rarely choose physics as an important topic in school, and female students are underrepresented in computer science, physical science and engineering at university level (OECD, 2006). This unbalanced gender ratio is linked to the negative self-concept of ability for girls in mathematics and science, as the subject-specific self-concept of ability has repeatedly been found to predict course selection in school (Dickhauser, Reuter and, Hilling, 2005; Eccles and Wigfield, 2002; Marsh and Yeung, 1997).

## **10. GENDER BIAS - A SIGNIFICANT AND COMMONLY FOUND ISSUE IN THE FIELD OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

Currie and Thiele (2001) observed that universities are patriarchal structures that often use sexual harassment to hold women out of senior roles. University cultures around the world tend to value and replicate ideas based on male life trajectories of employment, academic achievement and institutional and intellectual work (Itzin and Newman, 1995) and the paths to success tend to be founded on dominant male characteristics and traits (Israeli and Alder, 1994). Castleman et al. (1994) argued that management's own masculine styles and behaviors are the main factor responsible for the shortage of women in senior roles. They discounted factors such as domestic and family duties, merit or women's disinclination to advance their careers. The under representation of

women in senior positions is consistent across Australian Universities (DEET, 1993). Men made up 85% of workers above senior lecturer level in 1989, 74% at senior lecturer level, and 58% at lecturer level (DETYA, 1998). In all higher education systems, women are under-represented in positions of distinction and influence (Lie and Malik, 1994; Brooks, 1997). The UNESCO (2012) study states that in earning bachelor's degrees, women have achieved parity with men. They have an advantage over men in Master's grades, accounting for 56 percent. However, a different tale is found at the highest levels of education (PhD), where they only account for 44 percent. Accounting for data presented at a recent British Council meeting, Absent Talent: Women in East Asia's Academic and Research Leadership, just 7% of Turkey's Vice Chancellors are women. The situation is worse in Japan, where women are the heads of just two of its 86 public universities (2.3 percent). In Australia, where 18 percent of higher education institutions are headed by women, this difference is less extensive (Grove, 2013). Brown and Ralp (1996) suggested that women had made no progress in achieving equality with men in educational administration and policy making leadership roles. Universities remain extremely hierarchical gendered organizations. This applies within universities as well as within universities. The higher the university's prestige, the more male scholars are likely to work there. Among full-time academic staff, the primary academic labor market is still highly gendered (Hearn, 1999).

In universities, women are also vastly under-represented. While unprecedented numbers of women have pursued university education, they continue to be underrepresented in programs in mathematics, engineering and computer science. Probert et al. (1998) stressed that women scholars usually begin and/or complete their doctoral qualifications later, are more likely to work part-time for a period or during their careers, and appear to have more career interruptions than male scholars, related to the obligations of women for dependent children. The lower classification rate of women academics and their lower remuneration is attributed to two particular factors relative to their male colleagues; fewer total years of university work and less likely to have a PhD. A smaller percentage of women (36 percent) held PhDs than men (56 percent) and women had 8.9 years of university employment compared to 13.8 years for men. Indirect sexual bias is thus reflected in the promotional requirements in higher education, in that the downside to the status of women academics compared to their male counterparts occurs early in their career, mostly because they bear and care for children, but compounds and accumulates over time and throughout their careers. Women academics are less likely to have the value of an eminent senior scholar's mentoring and are less likely to have effective international networks that can boost academic careers. In all aspects of their graduate careers, female students face conventional access

problems, such as perceived stereotypes and a lack of positive role models. This included application processes, evaluation and lack of flexible entry and exit points to higher education that may require family obligations (Rees, 1990). Gender related abuse like sexual assault in educational institutions is widespread phenomenon. Increased publicity around sexual abuse impacts women in several ways. It can hinder women's participation in higher education institutions and in the workplace in some nations. A significant problem at the level of tertiary education is the quality and availability of residential facilities. In South Asia, for example, caste and religious issues are becoming relevant - particularly if it is difficult for girls from socially disadvantaged communities to integrate. Women students from Dalit and tribal groups can face bias, which in turn has a strong effect on retention and completion (Vimala, 2010).

## 11. DIFFERENT KINDS OF GENDER BIAS FOUND IN HIGHER EDUCATION

In male-dominated topics, such as science, sexual assault is more likely to happen (Grauerholz, 1996; Hesson-McLunis and Fitzgerald, 1997; Hulin et al., 1996; Mansfield et al., 1991; Murrell, Olson and Frieze, 1995). Since science is a male-dominated field, and sexual harassment rates in academia are historically high in this field, female science faculty members may be at particular risk of sexual harassment. Furthermore, academia has a hierarchical system in which men appear to be the most dominant, whereas most women are untenured and therefore comparatively less powerful (Grauerholz, 1996). University and college administrators should develop processes that periodically review the satisfaction of women faculty with their department leaders and their experience as members of the faculty (Settles, Cortina, Malley and Stewart, 2006). The Research on Census.

As given by the Azad Education Foundation (2001), India's literacy rate at the beginning of the new millennium stands at 65.38 percent with a 75.85 percent level of male literacy and a 54.16 percent level of female literacy. From the last census in 1991 there was only a small rise in literacy level (literacy level was 52.2 percent). As decennial censuses have shown, the speed of growth in literacy rates is very slow in India. The literacy rate rose by a mere 23.9 percentage points between 1961 and 1991, over a period of thirty years, from 28.3 percent in 1961 to 52.2 percent in 1991. There was a 13.36 per cent rise from 1991 to 2001. The literacy scenario in India, however, is characterized by large disparities among various segments of the population. In contrast to the male population, the female literacy rate is still poor. Even after so many years of democracy, half the country's female population is still illiterate (Sushma, 2010). "The senior consultant, as Mariamma Verghese points out, "statistics clearly

point to the need to develop "aggressive affirmative action policies" to improve women-teachers and administrators at all levels. UGC's annual reports have often referred to women's participation in higher education as being abysmally poor relative to men. Their distribution of enrolment in the different faculties indicates that a little over 51.10 percent are enrolled in the Faculty of Arts, 19 percent in the Faculty of Sciences, and 16.70 percent in the Faculty of Commerce. They are surprisingly lower among technical subjects: 3.90 percent medicine, 3.60 percent engineering, 2.40 percent education and 1.80 percent law. As for women in education and administration, the top positions of Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and very few University Registrars and Finance Officers are 15 percent lower. The number of readers/lecturers is marginally higher and 30 percent of college principals, but most of them are in women's schools (Byrappa, 2011).

## **12. DIFFERENT SPHERES OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND GENDER BIAS**

Institutions of higher education are seen as supporting the common good, not just for those attending, but also for society at large. The UGC's policy for the advancement of women's studies provides assistance to universities to set up women's studies centers and cells. Centres/cells are expected to perform research, establish curricula and coordinate training and extension work in the areas of gender equality, women's and girls' economic self-reliance, demographic problems, human rights issues and social exploitation. It is expected that these initiatives will not only lead to social awareness and change, but also to academic growth. The Women's Study Centers, however, are not supposed to be like other traditional university departments; they are not allowed to run courses leading to an undergraduate or postgraduate degree. The Women's Study Centers under Teaching Research and Extension have announced the following operations:

- (i) Teaching: curriculum development and update materials for women's training manuals; women's issues leaflets,
- (ii) Studies: research initiatives in the field of women's issues and
- (iii) Extension: the Newsletter, the Counselling and Help Center, the Family Counselling Center, the Literacy Mission, the Community Development Surveys and the Audio-Visual Assistance Unit for the preparation of videos on women's issues (Agrawal, Yasin and Sherwani, 2001).

Gender bias has been a significant barrier to providing women with equal opportunities in higher

education. It has been described as a critical category and needs focus in the education equity paradigm. Today, women's education has become a subject of discussion in which the emphasis must now be changed from women's academic advancement to women's autonomy in decision-making, freedom of speech and control of resources. Empowerment is the culmination of a transformation of power that questions the ideology of colonialism, transforming structures that enhance or maintain bias against gender. In 1948-49 the University Education Commission commented that colleges should be formed that would serve both men and women concurrently for higher education but, nevertheless, gender differences in access to higher education have persisted over decades. The aim of higher education is to provide access to vocational, technical and professional education and emerging technologies for women (Banerjee, 2010). High levels of inequality between social groups and classes go hand in hand with new types of bias against women, precisely at a time when more and more younger women access higher education (John, 2012). Women's participation rates in science are lower than those of men globally (Dhull, 2005). Across all job sectors, sexual harassment remains a problem. The hostile research climate is a set of problems faced by many women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields (MIT, 1999; NAS, 2007).

## **13. NEED FOR STUDYING THE GENDER BIAS IN EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

In all social relations, gender is a constitutive factor. The word 'sex' refers to the 'male' and 'female' social division of men and women (Oakley, 1972) and their expected actions based on their social roles assigned to them (Basin, 2000). Traditional traditions, structures, customs and values are historically and culturally defined and conditioned by the various roles assigned to men and women. Most societies in Himachal Pradesh India are patriarchal societies in which men own and control most wealth and are considered superior to women (Buongpui, 2013). Rustogi (2004) shows that in the states of the Himachal Pradesh region, the dropout rates are very high compared to many other states in the rest of India.

In terms of access to education, jobs and political participation, gender disparity exists between men and women. Women are disempowered and their status in this area is lower than that of men. The prevalence of gender bias in higher education institutions in Himachal Pradesh India is a rising concern for researchers in the field of education. Therefore, a research project on gender bias in

higher education practices in Himachal Pradesh India is required.

Social equity is fairness in the provision of public services; it is egalitarianism in motion, the idea that every individual requires and has the right to equal treatment by the political system, regardless of economic wealth or personal characteristics (Shafritz and Russell, 2003). It was noted that the university is responsible for "providing a safe and inclusive environment in order to enable all to achieve their potential" (FAWE, 1998). The beginning of this millennium has seen the struggle of many countries around the world to achieve justice and equality in education and other related areas. By highlighting the achievement of universal elementary education and the promotion of gender equity and empowerment in education, the Millennium Development Goals have already set the agenda in motion, and this must be prioritized by all signatory countries around the world. With regard to gender bias in education, policy framers and educators have constantly recognized that while women represent half of humanity and 2/3rds of the world's work hours, they receive just 1/3 of the total income and own less than 1/10th of the world's capital. Further, they are removed from socioeconomic political and information control. Therefore, developing countries worldwide have adopted a gender-sensitive mainstream approach to resolve the powers of exclusion and bridge gender disparities in all development programs to make the mechanism of economic growth inclusive of gender (Srivastava, 2010). Sushma (2010) claimed that educational gender bias is severe. Girls are less likely to have access to education, to continue in school, or to become educated. The right to education, which has been recognised since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948, is for all. In all major international human rights conventions, the right to free and compulsory primary education, without prejudice and of good quality, has been reaffirmed. According to the 1981 (Government of Pakistan) census, more than 48 percent of the total population is female, and girls' educational and vocational needs must be addressed. It is evident from the data cited by the Government of Pakistan's Planning and Development Division (1996-97) that female enrollment is much lower than male enrollment, while female enrollment rates have risen since 1983-88. The new Govt. Some steps to fix this disparity have been taken. Much greater funding for girls' education has been allocated, but this increase is not nearly adequate (Lari, 2000). For different sexes, gender is constructed across various roles. There is a demarcation between positions, clothing, toys, games, attitudes, habits, language and skills that are intended for women and men in any culture that practices gender segregation or bias. In designing policy and curriculum structures in India, gender has been recognized as a category for three decades. For as long as it is obvious from the policy viewpoint, "equality" and "empowerment" of girls have also been used as key terms in educational documents

(NCERT, 2006). The home appears to place more significance and the value on the male child than the female child. This activity is reinforced by the school. Therefore, teaching appears to satisfy the gender beliefs and exceptions of the learner's culture.

In the UNDP Human Development Survey, 2006, the 'Gender-related Development Index' (GDI) places India in the 97th place of the selected 177 countries in the world. Remarkably, India's status is better than that of neighboring nations such as Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal alone, along with a host of African nations. The GDI, which is based on life expectancy, school attendance, literacy and income measurements, captures differences in population achievement between women and men. The lower the value of GDI than the Human Development Index (HDI), the greater the disparity between males and females (Hassan, Daspatanayak and Rath, 2008).

Gender equality is a basic condition of women's and men's enjoyment of human rights. The main themes of justice, equality, diversity and peace are encapsulated in the goals of global citizenship education, and these are now being adopted by a number of countries. The goals are to ensure that kids are educated about the world's most critical social and economic problems. In global citizenship education curricula, there are attempts to discuss gender equality and to demonstrate how female citizenship problems affect global, national and local communities (Marshal and Arnot, 2005). A more fully gender-responsive society will be marked by gender equality in access, remedying systemic barriers impacting access and involvement by both sexes and women in decision-making in higher education management and administration (Commonwealth Secretariate, 1999).

Jackson (1997) argued that an educational philosophy that fails to take feminist critiques and gender analysis into account is doing a disservice to both men and women by not recognizing the forms in which it is possible to enrich current pedagogies. If deliberate attempts are not made, gender bias and gender stereotyping that occur in textbooks and education produce gender differences in their transactions. The gender is Gender stereotyping in the positions, professions and career preferences of girls and boys would probably be eliminated by sensitivity in teaching and learning styles across cultures. Women made up less than a quarter of the overall enrollment at the time of independence. i. e. 28% in the primary phase, 18% in the middle phase, 13% in high school and 10.4% in universities. Girls currently make up 47 percent of the overall enrolment in primary, 45 percent in the middle, 41 percent in high and higher secondary and 40 percent in higher education (Jaireth, 2008). In the rural North Indian states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, Drez and Kingdon (2001) found clear evidence of sharp gender bias in

school participation. It has already been identified in the literature that, with parental education, the likelihood of school participation increases. Pal (2004) has discovered that the literacy of mothers significantly increases the likelihood of girls' school enrollment, but it is negligible for boys, similarly, father education significantly promotes boys' schooling and has no noticeable effect on girls. Glick and Shan (2000) suggest that the gender gap in education is partly due to the reaction of parents to the very different chances of success for men and women in the labor market, or because they do not understand the highly non-market advantages of female education in the form of improved child health, nutrition and better life equality in the following generations. So, parents value the education of boys more than the education of girls..

Sushma (2010) claimed that education plays an especially important role as a basis for the advancement of girls. Any strategy to resolve the gender-based bias against women and girls which remains prevalent in many societies should be an integral part of it. In a study, Kay (2007) found a major gender gap in their understanding of the obstacles to women's mobility in the hierarchy of higher education institutions. Sex, as it exists through all groups, castes and cultures, is the most prevalent type of inequality. Yet, while gender equality has been a core target of education policy in India for more than three decades, implementation has lacked a vital edge (NCERT, 2006). The UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education (1998) examined the status quo with regard to the major issues facing women and stressed the promotion of the rights of women as citizens to full participation in all areas of social progress, especially through the use of binding legal instruments, to ensure that highly skilled women are fully engaged in the decision-making processes of society. In order to encourage sustainable development and peace, UNESCO seeks to cultivate a gender-inclusive community through education. The NPE (1986) focused on gender equality as one of the main social values. The POA stresses the need to update textbooks to eradicate gender bias and sensitize all educational workers to gender so that gender equality can be internalized through a gender-sensitive, gender-inclusive curriculum and its transactional curriculum (NCTE, 2003). The 1964-66 Commission for Education, led by D.S. Kothari also advocated equal educational opportunities for both girls and boys in all areas of education (Nayar and Usha, 1995).

Gender equity and equality is dissatisfied with girls' instrumentalist conceptions of education and an unanalytical approach to educational and curricular processes in particular. The NPE Review Committee found out that while the NPE (1986) gave prominent room to gender equality education, in the entire chapter on the 'material and method of school education' there was no reference to gender, except for a mention that 'gender equality' is one of ten core

curriculum areas (NCERT, 2006). It should be noted that while India has the second largest higher education system, next to the U.S., the total number of students hardly accounts for 6% of the specific age group, i.e. 18-23, which is far lower than the 47% average of developed countries. Thus, the four guiding principles should be access, equality, transparency and efficiency, when preparing for the growth of higher education in India in the 21st century. It is true that it is still necessary to enhance social access to higher education in the country. The major challenge facing the Indian higher education system, however, is to add equity to the standard of education across the country's length and breadth. This should be closer to the hearts of rural, semi-urban and urban students, so they want to be able to take part in the new economic transition as well. A variety of social, economic and political reasons continue to serve as obstacles to access and equality in India's higher education system. Also at primary, middle and secondary school levels, poverty leads to high dropout rates. The other explanation seems to be the lower status of women, lack of easy access, lack of implementation of existing services, insufficient resource use, lack of political will and inadequacy of concerted action on all equity fronts within institutions. Financial restrictions are also an important factor in equity development (UGC, 2003). This gender disparity is seen in reality in our educational system. And the degree to which our education system/educational institution is effective in ensuring gender equality is a serious question that needs to be asked a few days now. The National Policy on Education (1986) defined education as a unique investment in the present and the future, stressing the role of education in bringing gender equality into the higher education system in particular and throughout the education system in general. It praised the acculturating function of education, "It refines sensitivity and perceptions that contribute to the scientific temperament and independence of mind and spirit of national cohesion, thus promoting the role of socialism, secularism and democracy enshrined in the Constitution," NPE (1986) stressed the elimination of inequalities and the equalization of educational opportunities by addressing the continuum. In order to ensure their equalization with the general population at all stages and levels of education in all four dimensions, rural male, rural female, urban male and urban female, special emphasis must be put on the education of women, Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes, Minorities and the Physically Disabled Persons (NCERT, 2007).

#### 14. CONCLUSION

Gender bias are very common problems, both at the international level and at the level of our country. There is no recent phenomenon of international concern for the abolition of bias against women, but the presence of multiple

declarations and conventions is endemic to such bias. In the human rights movement, the denial of women's rights has not received the necessary publicity. Human Rights law has continued to exclude many of the views of women. There has been much to celebrate over the past century about the positive progress of women in India: increased public visibility of women, narrowing the gender gap in primary and secondary school enrolment, the participation of women across foreign borders in the labor force, and lower fertility rates. Furthermore, women's groups have been able to raise concerns such as sexual and reproductive health and rights, abuse against women, and imbalance of power in gender relations, making them the main issues of national and global discussion. In the context of higher education, gender bias is widely noticeable. India's population continues to be characterized by major differences in male and female achievement in different fields. Indeed, in terms of parity between the two sexes, the nation ranks very low in the world.

Gender mainstreaming is a varied and intensive process in higher education, which is a large and complex sector. Gender mainstreaming of higher education necessitates a strong commitment from supporters and champions at all levels of universities and institutions. Gender mainstreaming in other fields, such as elementary education and primary health care, has shown the importance of recognizing that it is a long process. Gender mainstreaming necessitates both intellectual and emotional preparation on the part of all key stakeholders to address challenges at every level. A core community of policymakers, supporters, and champions must work together to achieve their goals. If properly planned and regional governments can put together such a core community, they can change the face of higher education in the Asia-Pacific region.

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