

IDENTIFYING CHALLENGES AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF GENDER IN EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Education according to Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a basic human right. Education plays a crucial role in socialization of a person through transmission of norms and values. Gender by definition is not restricted to girls alone as boys are also recipients of gendered constructions. Gender inequalities also affect the structure and management of education system, the practices and attitudes of teachers, learning material and the content of the curriculum. Interventions in the education sector cannot solve the problems of gender inequality in society, yet education can have a major impact on the lives of girls and women. The governance and the issues related to the mechanism of justice and to create a balance has remained a subject of all studies pertaining to the gender education. On the basis of these studies, gaps are being filled, but still much needs to be done. As a matter of state policy and social justice a mandate to abolish the indifferences are already in place but participatory approach to yield desired results in these areas is vital in a male dominated society. Although the target on gender equality in education as per the Millennium Development Goals have not been achieved in full. But a lot is being done globally to address the disparities of gender in education. This paper provides an account of the gender in education at a global level with an emphasis on what has been achieved and what are the challenges that hampers the desired progress.

Keywords: Education, Gender, Inequalities, Girl Education.

Introduction

Education is essential for the ability to exercise rights and consequently for women's empowerment. Education enables boys and girls, men and women, to participate in social, economic, and political life and is a base for development of democratic society. The social and economic benefits of education are well known since long especially the advantages of education that girls and women can draw upon. Gender equality perspective in education implies a rights perspective as well as a development perspective. Education is basic human right according to Article 26 in the universal declaration of human rights: "Everyone has a right to education. Education should be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education should be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education should be accessible to all on the basis of merit". Education is not only about knowledge acquisition; education is crucial also in the socialization process and in the transmission of norms and values, such as the notion of gender equality. From a rights perspective education for all is a fundamental human right and essential for the ability to exercise other rights. The report on *Girls' right to education*, from the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to education, underscores the centrality of education as not only a personal right but also a right with benefits for the society such as lower mortality rates, fewer unwanted births, and efforts to combat poverty, HIV/AIDS and malnutrition. Aikman and Unterhalter draw on Amartya Sen's approach and consider development of freedoms of all individuals as necessary for the achievement of gender equality in education, i.e. "freedom to attend school, to learn and participate in safety and security, to develop identities that tolerate others, and to enjoy

economic, political and cultural opportunities". They conclude: "*Putting gender equality in place in the classroom is a key to connecting schooling and citizenship with human rights*"

For a long time gender parity in education has been dominating the discourse and the interventions. It is still commonly a widely held belief that gender inequalities in education will be resolved if equal access for boys and girls is provided and if gender disparities in enrolment figures and retention rates are eliminated. Access to schooling is a critical issue that still requires attention. It is gradually being recognized that promotion of gender equality in education goes beyond access. To consider achievement of gender parity as a goal to strive at is "*a rather narrow aspiration*". Gender inequalities also affect the structure and management of education system, the practices and attitudes of teachers, learning material and the content of the curriculum. Interventions in the education sector cannot solve the problems of gender inequality in society, yet education can have a major impact on the lives of girls and women, boys and men. Education can be crucial to changing attitudes into accepting gendered equality as fundamental social value (Swedish Agency for Development Evaluation 2011). Back home the constitution of India has underscored the need to create a gender-sensitive society, which is not possible without a gender-sensitive educational system. Throughout Indian system, gender has been an important principle of stratification, but the manner in which this layering of society manifest itself culturally varies both over time and among social classes. It is in the non-recognition of society as "gendered" that democracy fails most evidently. Gender by definition is not restricted to girls alone as boys are also recipients of gendered constructions. By and large patriarchy rests on specific notions of masculinity and femininity, which are socially constructed. However, power is vested more in men than women. Constitutionally Article 14, Article 15, and Article 15(3) empower the state to make special provisions for women and children (Ghai 2008).

The governance and the issues related to the mechanism of justice and to create a balance has remained a subject of all studies pertaining to the gender education. On the basis of these studies, gaps are being filled, but still much needs to be done. As a matter of state policy and social justice a mandate to abolish the indifferences are already in place but participatory approach to yield desired results in these areas is vital in a male dominated society. Because it has become a vital burning social issue and reports of bias, violence, indifference, injustice has become a common global phenomenon. The global labour market has disappointing figures so as the gender gaps are concerned. As noted by ILO (2016) despite some modest gains in some regions in the world, millions of women are losing ground in their quest for equality in the world of work. The report, *Women at work: Trends 2016* examined data for up to 178 countries and concluded that inequality between women and men persists across a wide spectrum of the global labour market. At global level, the employment gender gap has closed by only 0.6 percentage points since 1995, with an employment-to-population ratio of 46% for women and almost 72% for men in 2015. Also 586 million women were working as own-account and contributing family workers across the world. As globally the share of those who work in a family enterprise (contributing family workers) has decreased significantly among women (by 17.0 percentage points over the last 20 years) and to lesser extent among men (by 8.1 percentage points), the global gender gap in contributing family work is reduced to 11 percentage points. Although 52.1% of women and 51.2% of men in the labor market are wage and salaried workers, this in itself constitutes no guarantee of higher job quality. Globally 38% of women and 36% of men in wage employment do not contribute to social protection. The proportion for women reached 63.2% in sub-Saharan Africa and 72.2 in southern Asia where informal employment is the dominant form of employment (ILO 2016).

EDUCATION AND GENDER: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

There are ample concerns, which have caught the attention of individuals, organizations and countries viz-a-viz education and gender. Some of the important concerns are described below:

1. Stuck in an education bog

Various education indicators repeatedly point to a group of about 80 countries that have not made sufficient progress to meet universal primary education, including about 50 that have not met the MDG target on gender equality in education. On average, low-income countries, especially the least-developed countries (a U.N. classification) and the highly indebted poor countries have not reached the enrollment target for primary education. Among these countries are South Sudan, Liberia, Niger, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, and Nigeria, a group of 21 countries, which have the lowest adjusted net enrollment rates at the primary level. Several of these countries have the widest gender gaps as measured by the female male ratio—for example; South Sudan, Central African Republic, and Chad have gender gaps in excess of 20%. The net enrollment rates at the secondary level in about two-thirds of these countries are only about one-half of the global mean and their gender gaps are substantial. In Afghanistan, Chad, Togo, and the Central African Republic, girls' net enrollment rates are about 0.5 or less of boys' rates. These countries' gender gaps in enrollment rates at the primary and secondary levels eventually translate into sizable disparities in the completed years of schooling of the adult population. However, the 30-year long view also reveals that the progress has been generally modest and has not been a continuously/upward trend (in Mauritania, for example), and there has not been an acceleration after 1990 when the "Education for All" goals were established or after the MDG targets were declared in 2000. As a group these countries appear stuck with respect to gender equality. Indeed, there is much to understand about why this is so (King and Winthrop 2015).

2. Caught in an education quality trap

Notable increases in enrollment rates for girls since 1990 have led to celebratory remarks about progress in gender equality. On the basis of the rudimentary indicators used to measure that goal and for the countries that have time-series data on the indicator, there has been progress. The education systems in this large group of countries, perhaps reinforced by economic forces, have succeeded in getting children—boys and girls alike—to school, keeping them in school until the end of the primary cycle, and raising transition levels to secondary education. Trends show that once girls are enrolled, they are more likely to remain in school and complete more years of schooling. The current average net enrollment rates in primary education and at the secondary level in most regions of the world exceed 90% and 70%, respectively. More reports are noting that gender disparities show not only female disadvantage but also male disadvantage with respect to enrollment and completion rates, especially in Central and South America and in parts of East Asia as specified by Grant and Behrman (2010) and World Bank (2011) (as cited in UNESCO 2015). However, robust successes in entry and completion rates in primary education and in transition rates to secondary education and even to tertiary education have created perhaps a more difficult set of education challenges (King and Winthrop 2015).

3. Quality education

The concept of quality education includes the learning content, teaching methods, student activities, peer relations, management, etc. Quality education that seeks to promote gender equality is aware of gender inequalities and addresses them in teacher training, teaching and learning practices, curriculum and

textbook content, school management, student-student and teacher-student relations, stakeholder involvement, etc. and, not least, in national policies and strategies. Thus, gender equality in education is a much wider concept than gender parity. It is often argued that quality education is crucial for gender equality. Aikman and Unterhalter argue that quality education requires gender sensitive use of resources and budget allocations. Quality education embraces education as a process aimed at transforming society, promoting social change and building democratic society. Maintaining gender discrimination makes quality education impossible. “*Quality education cannot be achieved without gender equality and equity* (Swedish Agency for Development Evaluation 2011).

The global convergence in average years of schooling between 1950 and 2010, especially between men and women, marks a notable shift toward greater gender equality in education, an observation made also with respect to changes in Millennium Development Goal 3. Nonetheless, a closer and more disaggregated look at several education indicators shows some big challenges. Persistent gender gaps in education in a number of countries and in parts of several countries lead to several questions: What are the sources of these gaps? Can they be reduced by economic growth, government policy, social mobilization, or international pressure? If so, what are the best ways to do so? Who should be involved in making this progress? This section examines a broad set of education indicators that reveal the fuller contours of gender inequality in education, and identifies where these are large and remarkably persistent. In later sections, we present a framework for understanding the roots of gender inequality, together with a brief survey of a rich body of evidence about this framework. We review a variety of policy and programme interventions that have proved to be effective in addressing gender gaps, and then put forward a strategy for pushing progress toward greater equality (King and Winthrop 2015).

At the beginning of the new millennium, world leaders gathered at the United Nations to shape a broad vision to fight poverty and its many dimensions. That vision, which was translated into eight Millennium development goals (MGDs), has remained the over reaching development framework for the world for the past 15 years (UN 2015). The education of women and girls has a positive multiplier effect on progress across all development areas. Driven by national and international efforts and the MDG campaign, many more girls are now in schools compared with 15 years ago. Gender disparity has narrowed substantially at all levels of education since 2000. The developing regions as a whole have achieved the target to eliminate gender disparity at all levels of education, with a gender parity index of 0.98 in primary and secondary education and 1.01 in tertiary education in 2015 (the accepted measure of gender parity is between 0.97 and 1.03). However, significant differences remain across regions and countries, as disparities favouring either sex can cancel each other out when aggregated. The greatest improvements have been made in primary education. Today, five of the nine developing regions have achieved parity: the Caucasus and Central Asia, Eastern Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, South-Eastern Asia and Southern Asia. The most substantial progress has been made in Southern Asia, where the gender parity index has increased from 0.74—the lowest starting point of all regions in 1990—to 1.03 in 2015. The gap between girls and boys has also narrowed considerably in North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa and Western Asia. Overall, 64% of countries in the developing regions reporting data by sex had achieved gender parity in primary education in 2012. More than half of the countries with gender disparity in primary education in 2012 (56%) were in sub-Saharan Africa. In secondary education, gender parity has been achieved in 2015 in the Caucasus and Central Asia, Eastern Asia, Northern Africa, South-Eastern Asia and Southern Asia. In Oceania, sub-Saharan Africa and Western Asia, girls remain at a disadvantage, while in Latin America and the

Caribbean, boys are at a disadvantage. Gender parity in secondary education had been achieved in 36% of countries with available data in the developing regions in 2012. The largest gender disparities in enrolment ratios are found in tertiary education, with only one developing region, Western Asia, achieving the target. The most extreme disparities are those at the expense of women in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia and at the expense of men in Eastern Asia, Northern Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean. Only 4% of countries with available data in the developing regions had achieved the target for tertiary education in 2012 (Nations, United 2015).

Education is chosen as the main target to attain the third Millennium Development Goals which is “To promote gender equality and empower women” through “the elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005 and at all levels of education by 2015”. As we have already reached the end of the MDG period, here is a brief overview of MDG 3 as reported by the UN (2015):

- Many more girls are now in school compared to 15 years ago. The developing regions as a whole have achieved the target to eliminate gender disparity in Primary, secondary and tertiary education.
- In Southern Asia, only 74 girls were enrolled in primary school for every 100 boys in 1990. Today, 103 girls are enrolled for every 100 boys.
- Women now make up 41% of paid workers outside the agricultural sector, an increase from 35% in 1990.
- Between 1991 and 2015, the proportion of women in vulnerable employment as a Share of total female employment has declined 13 percentage points. In contrast, vulnerable employment among men fell by 9 percentage points.
- Women have gained ground in parliamentary representation in nearly 90% of the 174 countries with data over the past 20 years. The average proportions of women in parliament have nearly doubled during the same period. Yet still only one in five members are women.

CHALLENGES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

In order to have a clear outlook of what has been drawn from the gender practices throughout the globe so far as basic primary and secondary education are concerned, let us have an overlook of what has been analysed by the “Education For All - Global Monitoring Report 2015” issued by UNESCO in 2015.

1) Globally progress towards gender parity in primary and secondary education has been one of the biggest education success stories since 2000

- Between 2000 and 2015, the number of girls for every 100 boys has risen from 92 to 97 in primary education and from 91 to 97 in secondary education.
- There are 84 million fewer out of school children and adolescents since 2000; 52 million of these are girls.
- The number of countries that have achieved gender parity in both primary and secondary education from 2000 to 2015 has increased from 36 to 62.

2) Nevertheless, major challenges in achieving parity remain

- **Fewer than half of countries will have achieved the Education for All goal on gender parity in primary and secondary education by 2015:** No country in sub-Saharan Africa is projected to achieve parity at both levels by the deadline.
 - **Gender disparities widen the higher up the education system you go:** In pre-primary education, 70% of countries have achieved gender parity, compared to around 66% in primary, 50% in lower secondary, 29% in upper secondary, and only 4% in tertiary.
 - **Girls, and particularly the poorest, continue to face the greatest challenges in accessing primary School:** 9% of children around the world are out of schools. Among these, almost half of the girls will never set foot in a classroom, equivalent to 15 million girls, compared with just over a third of the boys. However, while girls are less likely to enroll in primary school in the first place, boys are more likely to leave school early.
 - **Gender disparities in secondary education are closing, but still remain and are most extreme for girls:** In 2012, there were at least 19 countries with fewer than 90 girls for every 100 boys, of which the majority were in the Arab States and sub-Saharan Africa.
 - **Boys are more likely than girls to drop out of upper secondary education.** Only 95 boys for every 100 girls complete this level, with barely any change since 2000. In OECDⁱ countries, 73% of girls compared with 63% of boys complete upper secondary education on time.
 - **More women than men are enrolled in tertiary education** except in South and West Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, extreme disparities are increasing rather than decreasing at this level.
 - **Gender gaps in youth literacy are narrowing:** However, fewer than seven out of every ten young women in sub-Saharan Africa are expected to have basic literacy skills by 2015.
 - **The lack of progress in literacy among adult women is particularly stark:** two-thirds of adults lacking basic literacy skills are women, a proportion unchanged since 2000. Half of adult women in South and West Asia and sub-Saharan Africa cannot read or write.
- 3) **A shift in focus is needed from parity to gender equality to enable all, and especially girls and young women, to reap the full benefits from education.**
- **Structural barriers and entrenched discriminatory social norms contribute to gender inequality,** including early marriage and early motherhood, gender-based violence, traditional seclusion practices, the favoring of boys in families' education investment, and the gendered division of household labour.
 - **Child marriage is a persistent barrier to girls' education:** In 2012, almost one in five women married were between 15 and 19 years of age.
 - **Long distances to travel and the lack of good water and sanitation in schools disproportionately impact girls' chances of staying and completing their education:** A one hour reduction in the time spent walking to a water source increases girls' enrolment by 18-19% in Pakistan and 8-9% in Yemen.

- **Direct or hidden costs for education can disadvantage girls in particular where families' resources are limited:** Yet, in a review of 50 countries, one-quarter of households spent more on education than governments.
- **Increasing the number of female teachers and gender-sensitive teacher training help** schools to effectively challenge gender stereotypes and entrenched discriminatory social norms.
- **Boys can be affected by social and gender norms too,** resulting in disengagement from their education and increased drop-outs. This can be exacerbated by poverty and the need to pursue employment.

CHALLENGES IN ACHIEVING EQUALITY IN EDUCATION (POST-2015)

Multiple and often intersecting barriers still prevent millions of children, young people and adults from accessing and attaining good quality, gender-equitable education. Social institutions – formal and informal laws, and social and cultural norms and practices – can help explain why gender parity and equality in education have not been achieved in some countries. Analysis based on the OECD's 2012 Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI)ⁱⁱ found that countries with higher levels of discrimination against women generally performed worse on development indicators, including education. Structural barriers and entrenched discriminatory social norms reduce demand for girls' education, restrict access and undermine the benefits of girls' and young women's improved access to education. These norms are reflected in practices such as early marriage, gender-based violence, traditional seclusion practices that restrict travel to schools, the favouring of boys in families' education investment and the gendered division of household labour. Social and gender norms also affect boys' education. Within certain communities and groups, continued education for boys and young men is undervalued, leading to their disengagement and dropout from school. Poverty and the need or desire to work also underpin constraints on boys' completion of schooling.

1. Early marriage and adolescent pregnancy limit girls' education

Mensch et al., (2005) and Omoeva et al.,(2014) have found that early entry into marriage and pregnancy limits adolescent girls' access to and continuation in education. School attendance is often incompatible with the responsibilities and expectations of marriage and motherhood as specified by (UNESCO, 2015). As the 2013/14 GMRⁱⁱⁱ notes, a strong body of evidence indicates girls' participation in formal education is itself an important factor in delaying marriage and child-bearing. Decisions about education, age of marriage and pregnancy can be a result of combined underlying factors, including poverty, gender norms, household composition, and the accessibility and quality of education provision. Conflict and humanitarian crises also exacerbate girls' vulnerability to early marriage.

2. Legislation has been strengthened but is not sufficient to eliminate child marriage

International human rights law forbids child marriage. In the Programme of Action adopted at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, signatories agreed to enforce laws against child marriage, and regional treaties, including the African Charter on Human and People's Rights and the African Protocol on the Rights of Women (2004), commit governments to prevent child marriage. Of 55 developing countries with data, the legal age of marriage increased between 1990 and 2000 for women in 23 countries, and for men in 20. As of 2010, 158 countries had laws that set 18 as the legal age of marriage for girls without parental consent. Progress towards eliminating child marriage globally has been slow. In

2012, an average of 17% of women worldwide married between 15 and 19 years of age as reported by the OECD. Household survey data for 2000–2011 indicated that in 41 countries, 30% or more of women aged 20–24 were married or in union by the age of 18. Incidences of child marriage have been reduced substantially in some countries including Bolivia, Ethiopia and Nepal. In Ethiopia, where education attainment levels also improved, it is estimated that the prevalence of early marriage fell by over 20% between 2005 and 2011.

3. Adolescent mothers face challenges in continuing their education

Adolescent pregnancy and early child-bearing are concerns for both developed and developing countries, but rates are higher in middle and low income countries. In 2010, 36.4 million women in developing countries aged 20–24 reported having given birth before age 18, and 2 million before age 15. An estimated 90% of adolescent pregnancies in the developing world are to girls who are married. Married girls face higher exposure to sex and lower probability of using contraception than their unmarried peers, along with pressure to conceive quickly after marriage. Reducing adolescent pregnancy can thus be addressed through effective policies and programmes to delay marriage. Since the late 1990s, several sub-Saharan African countries have introduced policies supporting the readmission of girls following the birth of a child. But even where policies exist, uptake is often limited, with education providers and communities unaware of re-entry policies or unsupportive of girls' return. In schools, stigma and discrimination against pregnant girls and adolescent mothers are common. In South Africa, legislation forbids schools from excluding pregnant girls, but only about one in three return after childbirth.

4. Children's work affects their schooling

In many countries, girls spend more time on domestic work than boys, while boys are more likely than girls to be engaged in the paid labour force. Girls are also more likely to combine schooling and household chores. In countries with high levels of child labour, like India, girls are more likely than boys to combine employment with household chores, leaving them doubly disadvantaged and at greater risk of repeating grades or dropping out of school. Also in many countries, girls who combine household chores and employment seem at particular risk of early marriage. Domestic labour interferes with schooling, and girls typically spend more time performing chores than boys. Analysis of household survey data from 13 countries in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and sub-Saharan Africa shows that girls were more likely than their male peers to be assigned household chores across all countries. In countries severely affected by HIV/AIDS, women and girls are likely to be the main caregivers for chronically ill relatives, impeding their participation in school or education programmes. But in general, child domestic work is socially tolerated, nearly invisible and unlikely to be reached by child labour laws, and receives little attention from policy-makers. The need for or desire of many boys to engage in paid work leads to their early exit from education. In southern African countries, including Botswana, Lesotho and Namibia, boys are taken out of school to herd cattle. In Mongolia, boys in herder families have historically experienced high rates of dropout and continue to be the most educationally disadvantaged rural group. Poorer families may also respond to economic shocks by withdrawing boys from school to work. In Brazil, the likelihood of boys from poor households dropping out of school following a sudden fall in family income was 46% higher than for boys from non-poor households.

5. School-related gender-based violence must be tackled

The Dakar Framework for Action^{iv} called on governments to make comprehensive efforts to eliminate gender bias and discrimination. It required stakeholders to ensure students' personal security, and noted that girls are especially vulnerable to abuse and harassment, both at school and on the journey there and back. School-related gender-based violence is defined as acts or threats of sexual, physical or psychological violence occurring in and around schools and educational settings as a result of gender norms and stereotypes and unequal power dynamics. School-related gender-based violence is one of the worst manifestations of gender discrimination and seriously undermines attempts to achieve gender equality in education. It includes explicit threats or acts of physical violence, bullying, verbal or sexual harassment, non-consensual touching, sexual coercion and assault, and rape. School-related gender-based violence for boys and girls has both short and long-term health and social consequences. In addition to physical and psychological trauma, unsafe and violent school experiences can have a negative impact on boys' and girls' achievement and attainment in education. Qualitative studies have shown that gender-based violence contributes to girls' poor performance and dropout. Rape or forced or coerced sex can lead to early and unintended pregnancies and, as a consequence, an increased risk of girls' education being curtailed. Since the inception of 21st Century there has been a growing body of research focusing on gender-based violence in school settings, much of it based in sub-Saharan Africa. Evidence indicates that sexual violence is entrenched in authoritarian and highly gendered school environments. Older male students take advantage of their position to abuse female students. In Cameroon, 30% of sexual violence experienced by girls going to school was committed by male students. Teachers also commit sexual abuse and exploitation, often with impunity. In Malawi, 20% of teachers surveyed reported being aware of colleagues forcing or coercing female students into sexual acts. In Sierra Leone, male teachers had perpetrated almost one third of reported cases of girls being forced or coerced into sex in exchange for money, goods or grades.

Social taboos make researching school-related gender-based violence difficult in Asian countries and incidences of abuse often go unreported. Yet small-scale studies in South and West Asia report sexualized behaviour by teachers towards girls. Findings from a recent study of five countries in Asia highlight incidences of sexual violence against both boys and girls. In Viet Nam, 21% of girls and 17% of boys aged 12–17 reported experiencing sexual violence at school. Poverty, gender inequalities and disability interact to place girls at particular risk. One survey of 3,706 primary school children aged 11–14 in Uganda showed that 24% of disabled girls reported experiencing sexual violence at school compared with 12% of nondisabled girls. School-related gender-based violence is not confined to poorer countries. An early survey of over 2,000 secondary students across the United States showed over 80% had experienced sexual harassment at school.

ACHIEVING GENDER PARITY AND EQUALITY IN EDUCATION: KEY STRATEGIES AND POLICIES

At Dakar in 2000, the need to develop a multifaceted and integrated approach to achieve the goals of Education for All (EFA) was emphasized, and key strategies were laid out in the Dakar Framework. Since 2000, there has been increased global, regional and national engagement with gender issues in education, including legislative and policy reform, gender mainstreaming, and increased civil society and community mobilization and support. Many countries' policies have paid particular attention to girls' education. In UNESCO's recent overview of measures supporting the right to education, 40 of the 59 reporting member states refer explicitly to guaranteeing girls' and women's right to education or to forbidding gender-based discrimination in national constitutions, legislation or specific policies. Progress towards greater gender

equality in education has been supported by policy commitments that aim to tackle the barriers that prevent girls and boys accessing and attaining good quality education. This section looks at efforts to achieve gender equality in education made since Dakar by various stakeholders at the international, national and local levels.

1. International coordination and campaigns have pushed for gender equality

At the global level, the Dakar Framework called for coordinating bodies, initiatives and campaigns to sustain political commitment to EFA; promote the exchange of ideas, evidence and expertise; influence and strengthen national policy and practice; mobilize financial resources; and provide independent monitoring and reporting of progress. The United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), a multi-stakeholder partnership established at Dakar in 2000, has been the most visible global initiative associated with gender equality and EFA. Its activities have included advocacy to raise awareness of the importance of girls' education and to influence policies and education sector plans; identification and dissemination of good practices; and institutional development of the partnership approach at the global, regional and country levels. A 2011 evaluation of UNGEI acknowledged its significant contribution to policy, dialogue and advocacy at the global level and its engagement with national partnerships at the country level. UNGEI has developed strong links with the Global Partnership for Education (GPE, previously the Fast Track Initiative) in order to translate globally agreed priorities into country level initiatives. Other notable international initiatives promoting gender equality in education include the 'Because I am a Girl Campaign' launched by Plan International in 2006, the Girls' Education Challenge funded and launched in 2012 by the UK Department for International Development, and the Global Clinton Initiative CHARGE – the Collaborative for Harnessing Ambition and Resources for Girls' Education – launched in September 2014 to improve learning and leadership opportunities for young women and girls.

2. Gender mainstreaming is a key strategy

Gender mainstreaming aims to make gender equality a central ideal embodied in the structures and practices of institutions and society as a whole. This must involve systematically integrating a gender equality perspective in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all education policies and programmes. Tackling gender parity and equality in education requires governments and other stakeholders to integrate gender issues into all aspects of policy and planning. One key policy framework is that of gender mainstreaming. The Dakar Framework called for government commitment to mainstream gender throughout education systems, in recognition of the fact that attempts to achieve gender equality in education will not succeed if social institutions, norms and practices are discriminatory.

3. Need for civil society and community mobilization

In order to promote education as a human right and to increase demand for schooling, particularly for girls, awareness of education's economic and sociocultural values must be improved within individuals, families, communities and societies. National advocacy and community mobilization campaigns have been used as part of wider policy frameworks to change community and parental attitudes and build a groundswell of support for girls' education. Efforts are also needed to garner support for adult literacy and early childhood education. At the global level, the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) was founded in October 1999 by ActionAid, Oxfam International, Education International and the Global March against Child Labour in the lead-up to the Dakar conference. The GCE has since been at the forefront of the civil society movement for

EFA, now working in 150 countries, and actively campaigns for gender equality in education. Community mobilization strategies have also been integrated into many non-government programmes and small-scale projects supporting girls' education. In India, for example various schemes have been initiated like National Programme for Education of Girls for Elementary Level (NPEGEL) and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) to increase girls' enrolment by mobilizing active community participation and support.

4. Reducing costs of schooling is effective

Throughout the EFA era, global attention has been directed towards redressing gender disparities in enrolment and attainment by lowering direct and indirect costs of education to families, predominantly at the primary and secondary school levels. Reducing costs can be particularly advantageous for girls because, where family resources are limited; they tend to be allocated to boys first. Measures to reduce costs include fee abolition, scholarships and stipends. Fee abolition has been the main strategy of governments for increasing enrolment of both girls and boys at primary and secondary levels. In principle, most countries now have primary schooling free of tuition fees. At the lower secondary level, as for primary, the abolition of school fees has led to increased enrolment. Analysis of documents in the UNESCO Right to Education Database indicates that 94 of 107 low and middle income countries have legislated free lower secondary education. Despite widespread fee abolition at primary and lower secondary levels, schooling is rarely free. There are many other indirect costs to families such as school uniforms, transport to and from school, and school lunches. GMR analysis shows that among 50 low, middle and high income countries in all regions with data for 2005–2012, household education spending accounted for, on average, 31% of the total national spending on education. In almost one quarter of the countries, households spent more on education than governments; in general, the poorer the country, the larger the burden on households.

5. There is some success with scholarships and stipends

The Dakar Framework stated, 'Wider social policies, interventions and incentives should be used to mitigate indirect opportunity costs of attending school'. Strategies to increase parental demand for schooling through incentives, particularly for girls' education, have included targeted fee waivers and scholarships to offset direct school costs to families in countries where these still exist and cash stipends to reduce additional costs. Well-targeted scholarships and stipends have been effective at improving girls' education. While attempting to redress disparities in school access, other forms of inequity may arise from scholarships, stipends or school-fee reduction. In Pakistan, evidence shows that in families where girls are eligible for stipends restricted to government schools, boys are more likely to be enrolled in private schools, which often provide a better quality of education (Independent Evaluation Group, 2011). In India, analysis of household expenditures found families spend less on girls: girls (ILO 2016) are more likely to be enrolled in fee-free government schools and boys in private schools. Inequality as a result of fee reduction can also occur. In Bangladesh, an acclaimed secondary school stipend programme for rural girls, introduced in 1991, increased girls' enrolment but appeared to disproportionately benefit girls from wealthier, landowning households. Boys may also be disadvantaged: a primary education stipend programme which ran from 2000–2006 in Bangladesh had a negative impact on grade progression for boys from poor households. As boys were ineligible to receive an additional stipend available to girls at the secondary level, families had an incentive to keep boys in primary school for longer (UNESCO 2015).

Thus interventions as a matter of policy for governments remain half filled but as a better choice and options, policy makers provide a road map to lead and leave interventions result oriented. Thus gender as a

matter of discussion in India receives a new positive dimension in the form of new schemes shaping the career of girls and women. One such initiative is named as *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao* (save daughters educate daughters).

As reported by Urvashi Sahni (2014) India is also home of one-third of the 10 million child brides in the world when girls are forced to marry at 14 years and younger, they are physically, economically and sexually bonded to strangers they have never seen. They have no voice or say in the matter, no negotiating power, and no rights of refusal and choice in their sexual relations with their new husband. Is this also the definition of rape? According to United Nations Population Fund, more than two thirds of married women between 15 to 49 years have been beaten and forced to provide sex. The law protecting children from sex abuse was only recently enacted in 2012 with criminal domestic violence laws only enacted in 2005. Not only are women and girls unsafe at home, but their vulnerability extends to learning environments. India has 3.8 million girls still out of school, and unsafe and ill-equipped schools environments are a further deterrent for parents to send their girls to school. According to India's 2011 census 53% of house-holds and 11% of schools had no toilets. This is a significant safety hazard for girls and women and gives them no other choice but to expose and relieve themselves in unsafe and public places

Nevertheless the current administration has made some positive moves by announcing a "*Beti Bachao Beti Padhao*" campaign. Coupling girls safety and their education is both insightful and intelligent, provided there is a deeper realization of what this entails. The interim budget has allocated 100 crore rupees (1 billion rupees) specifically for this campaign, and another 50 crore rupees will go towards women's safety in public transport and 150 crore rupees towards women's safety in large cities. While girls education has received some attention as a result of global advocacy, a wider view of education is needed and should undoubtedly include the physical, social and political circumstances in which girls are living. Several steps need to be taken in order to give concrete shape to *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* campaign and educators in India have an important role to play. First education should include gender studies in the core curriculum of schools so that students examine gendered social norms critically and learn to develop egalitarian constructions of masculinity and femininity. Boys and young men must be educated in schools to value and respect women and girls, take responsibility for the increasing violence against girls and respect girls rights, to their own bodies. Girls must be empowered by their education to speak up when they are abused, protest unwanted advances and protect themselves and demand their rights to bodily integrity and respect in and outside their homes. Educators must address communities and teach them to value their daughters for more than their sexual, domestic and reproductive labor they provide.

Next immediate action must be taken to provide the infrastructure required to ensure the safety of girls and women on the streets, in schools and other institutions. This means adequate and separate toilets in schools and elsewhere. To his credit the Indian Prime minister Narendra Modi addressed the issue of women's safety especially in his address to the Nation on 15th August, India's Independence Day. He urged parents to focus on the upbringing of their sons, promised separate toilets for girls in all schools, and urged big corporations to direct their social responsibility funds to this end. Within a week's time two large corporations, Tata consultancy service and Bharti Enterprises, responded with contributions of 1 billion rupees each (Sahni 2014).

CONCLUSION

Education as one of the important tools of social change has influenced generations irrespective of its specific mandates for subjects of mankind. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR) in 1948, Education was accepted as basic human right for all. Subsequently in 1995 Platform for action drawn up at the world conference for women in Beijing in China, made explicit the problems of gender equality within the education system. Thus education has emphasized the factors that influenced social transformation within which gender inclusion has played an important role. Also the global practices on gender and their mainstreaming in education have yielded positive results. Moreover, the global and state interventions on gender education and a mechanism of accountability, delivery and feedback shall do away with the bad practices on gender discrimination. Thus sensing the gravity of the gender issues participatory approach is needed to create a balance and restoration of all measures which will call for their appropriate justice. There is a need to support and cooperate with policy makers, administrators, government as well as non-government bodies for their initiatives they carry forward for restoration of gender justice. Thus sensing the gravity of the gender issues participatory approach is needed to create a balance and restoration of all measures which will call for their appropriate justice. There is a need to support and cooperate with the policy makers, administrators, government as well as non-government bodies for the initiatives they carry forward for restoration of gender justice.

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Endnotes:

ⁱ The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) works to promote the policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world. It provides a forum in which governments can work together to share experiences and seek solutions to common problems.

ⁱⁱ SIGI is a cross-country measure of discrimination against women in social institutions across 160 countries developed by OECD.

ⁱⁱⁱ Developed by an independent team and published by UNESCO, the Global Monitoring Report (GMR) is a reference that aims to sustain commitment towards education for all.

^{iv} The World Education Forum (26-28 April 2000, Dakar) adopted the Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All: Meeting our collective commitments.