
5. Causes and Consequences of Gender Disparity in Household Expenditure on Children's Education

Dr. Rajesh Kumar Rana

Abstract:

Gender equality is one of the important goals of sustainable development. Gender equality means, male and female are treated equally in all spheres. The term gender is a socially constructed difference between men and women, boys and girls. The role of Gender is determined on the basis of social norms, behaviours, activities, relationships, responsibility and their physical strength. Gender also determines the women's participation in decision making within and outside the household, political, economic, social and cultural participation in the society. Without gender equality human development, economic and social development is not possible. Most of developing nations, gender disparity is a most serious problem or females are not treated equally. It is a big challenge to the policy makers or government to bridge the gender inequality. There are various types of gender disparity found in society, like gender disparity in occupations, political participation, economic participation and disparity in decision making in households. To measure the gender disparity, there are various indexes used to identify the gender disparity, like GDI (Gender Development Index), GII (Gender Inequality Index), GEM (Gender Empower Measures) and Gender parity index etc. All these indexes measure the gender disparity at macro level or aggregate average methods. These methods do not examine the gender disparity within the household that how parents treat their children on the basis of gender. Exploring the gender disparity in households across the children is very important, especially in education. This article tries to collect various factors that lead to gender disparity in households across school going children from the various articles, books, reports and other sources (Internet) and also examine the future consequences of gender disparity in household education.

There are various factors responsible for gender disparity in household education, like parent's education, occupations and age, household income, gender, education and occupations of household head, socio-economic norms etc.

Keywords:

Gender Disparity, Household, Gender disparity in education, Human Capital, Developing Countries.

Introduction:

People usually feel that gender and sex are synonymous but the recent view is different. According to WHO the term gender is a socially constructed difference between men and women, boys and girls based on social norms, behaviors, activities, relationships, responsibilities, and their physical strength. Gender is used to denote a set of roles in household work, political participation, economic activities, decision making inside the home or outside the home, responsibilities, right, expectation and obligation that are socially or culturally associated with being male and female, or boys and girls. Gender also includes the power relations between and among women and men, and girls and boys (Anderso1998). It is based on shared beliefs and norms within a society or culture about male and female characteristics and capacities. The concept of gender and their roles are not the same for all societies or cultures in the world.

These roles are determined by the socio-cultural and economic organization of a society and by the prevailing religious, moral and legal norms. The concept of gender changes according to the geographical region, religion, rural and urban scenario, and with time.

Sex refers to how people are classified biologically i.e., male or female at birth. Infants are assigned a sex based on a group of characteristics such as internal reproductive organs, genitalia, chromosomes, and hormones (USAID 2012a). The concept of sex varies very little from culture to culture, with time, generation-to-generation, religion-to-religion and different socio-cultural aspects etc.

Concept of Gender Disparity:

Gender disparity shows the different lived experience of genders across many domains including education, health, interests, family life, career, participation in decision making and political affiliations. Gender inequality is experienced differently across different cultures and regions (Salimah H. 2008).

There are many types of gender disparity/ inequality like Basic facility inequality, Special opportunity inequality, Professional inequality, Ownership inequality etc. but one of the most important gender disparities is a educational disparity as it leads to life time disadvantages because in today's world education is a one of the major determinant of life time success and also contributes to human capital formation of country.

The best educated tend to have a brighter future. If children do not get proper quality education their future will be constrained because they will be unable to fully avail opportunities.

The full development of mental and emotional abilities needs a nurturing and stimulating environment, which is not possible without proper education. To earn well, one needs a good education but initially, children's education totally depends on household or parental decisions. In most cases in developing nations, parents discriminate against their children on the basis of the gender of children and girls are always discriminated against.

Causes of Gender Disparity in Education of Children:

The growth of any country requires contribution from all citizens in economic activities and in creating a good social environment, through becoming good citizens of a country. This is only possible by educating all citizens. Education is not a onetime investment but it is a continuous process. Education starts from childhood onwards. Usually, children's education is totally dependent on parental decisions or their attitude towards children but parents' decisions or attitudes depend on multiple socio-economic factors, geographical area, traditional norms, religious faith, government facility etc.

Education is a basic human right for all and ideally should be without any discrimination like gender, casts, religion, regions, race etc. In this chapter, only causes and consequences of gender disparity in education of children happened within the household are discussed. There are many factors that lead to gender disparity in education of children, some of the few reasons or factors are discussed below.

Household Reasons:

There are many household characteristics that lead to gender disparity in education of children like size of household, type of household, gender, education and occupation of the household head, education of parents, birth ordered of sibling, domestics chores,

- **Size of Household:**

The per capita income is dependent on the size of the household and number of working members. If the number of members is large and the earning member is only one then the share of per capita income is low. Therefore, parents try to invest in their children on the basis of private future returns. So, in a patriarchal society, boys are expected to give more private returns than girls, hence parents tend to invest more on boy's education (Khandhaker and Mizanur 2013).

If the size of the family is small then the per capita income will be high. In this case the probability that parents treat boys' and girls' education equally will be higher. Gender disparity is also found when numbers of siblings are large, and the reason may be considered to be low income. (Himanshu H. and Talukdar Bedanga 2017)

- **Type of Household:**

Gender discrimination in education of children is also dependant on the type of household, if a family is living in a joint family, they get less discrimination but households spend less amount of money on children's education. But this type of discrimination also depends on the number of working members and their pay scale. If the numbers of working members are more than one and have a good salary then they spend more on their children but in turn they spend less on girl's education.

However, nuclear families do not discriminate, especially in primary education. Some nuclear households also discriminate if they live in rural areas and they do not have sufficient income (Rana R.K. 2019).

- **Characteristics Of Household Head:**

Decision about household and children's education and health also depends on the household head's gender, occupation and their age. Most of the researchers found that female headed households do not discriminate in education of children as compared to male headed households.

But in some cases, a female headed household faces the income constraint then they also discriminate because she also wants a male good bread earner in future.

Therefore, she spends more on boy's education than girls. In most cases females would become head of the household due to the husband being physically handicapped or dead or drunk or suffering from serious disease (Rana R. K. & Madhumita DasGupta 2019).

If the household head earns a high fixed salary, then discrimination is found less but if the household head is a marginal, or small farmer, or they are casual labour then girls are discriminated against the boys. Age of the household also determines the girl's education because as older household head discriminate more than younger.

- **Father And Mother's Education:**

There is negative correlation between gender disparity in education of children and mother and father's educations. Among father and mother's education, mother's education is a very important factor because mother will care for their children better than anyone else.

Some studies found that illiterate mothers and highly educated mothers discriminate less than literate mothers whose education is more than primary and less than matriculation. Illiterate mother thought that I am illiterate but my children should not be illiterate because they felt or experienced the importance of education.

Father's education is also important for children, if the father is highly educated or has more than higher secondary education; girls face less discrimination than those of an illiterate father.

- **Birth Order of Sibling:**

Birth order is an important factor determining children's education. When a pair of siblings are of mixed-sex, parents spend equally but if the first two children are girls and then boys, parents spend less on a girl's education than boys.

Most parents want a mixed-sex pair of children then parents treat children's education equally. If two first children are boys then they have a girl in the household parents do not discriminate against boys (Liu 2007).

- **Enrollment Decisions:**

Gender Discrimination in children's education is also seen at the time of taking decisions on children's enrollment in school. Generally, Parents send their boys to private school and send girls to government school. Even when parents enroll their children (both male and female) in private school, boys are sent to excellent private schools or situated in urban areas but girls are sent to local private schools. If children (boys and girls) are going to government school, parents don't discriminate.

- **Domestic Chores:**

There are many domestic factors that cause the gender disparity in education of children, such that most girls help their mother in domestic work, like fetch the water and fire wood (mainly in the rural areas), caring for young children, sweeping and cooking. These are social problems associated with the family (Ravinder Rena 2005).

Domestic chores are mainly associated with a girl child therefore girls do not go to school frequently or sometimes she drops school. In general, boys help or contribute to their father's work and girls help to their mother's work. These trends are generational.

Economic Reasons:

One of the most important reasons to discrimination across children's education is the economic condition of the household or parents because ultimately without income parents cannot facilitate good education for the children. At present education is a costly service and without good income parents cannot afford better education. Some economic reasons are as follow.

- **Poverty:**

When people do not have sufficient income to provide basic needs to the family, they are unable to spend sufficient amounts of money on their children's education. Due to income constraints, parental decisions will be tilted toward boy's education and they will give less importance to girl's education. Therefore, with low-income parents give more preference to the boy's education than girl's education (Quayes S. and Ramsey R. D. 2015). In developing countries, lowering per capita income leads to low household savings and low levels of savings hamper the present education of children as well as future education of children.

- **Expected Rate of Returns:**

Households invest in the education of children on the basis of expected rate of return in future. Most of developing nations, girls leave their parents' house and start living with her husband after getting married. Therefore, parents prefer to invest more on a boy's education than a girl's education.

- **Occupation of Household Head and Parents:**

Gender disparity also happens due to the occupation of household heads and parents. If parents have low income and household heads have good salaries then discrimination will not be found. It means either parent (mother and father) or household head have good sources of income then boys and girls get equal chance to study. If parents are doing a job in industry, government job, business or any fixed income earner, they discriminate less than those whose parents are doing job in casual (unorganized sectors where salary is too less and job insecurity is very high), daily wagers or even small and medium farmers.

- **Level Of Household Income:**

Level of household income is one of the main determinants of gender disparity in household expenditure on children's education because whichever household has low income, they spend approximately equal on both educations because parents send their children to government school but as household income increases the gender discrimination also increases. After a certain level of income, they are again treated equally.

Household income is not only dependent on the job status of parents or household head but also depends on area of agricultural land, financial (Share, debenture, insurance policies, etc) and physical wealth (rental house, machine etc) or ancestor's wealth.

Social, Cultural and Traditional Norms:

Various socio norms and perceptions are also responsible for gender disparity in education of children like early marriage, fear of affaire, social status (Virgin bride and becoming good and educated wife), patriarchal society, dowry system, polygamy, economic and social security for family, traditional role and responsibility of male and female in the society etc (Emily Hannuma,, Peggy Kong, and Yuping Zhang 2009).

- **Early Marriage:**

In developing countries, girls get married early due to illiteracy or some social norms. Due to the early marriage of girl's parents do not want to study further but boys continue his studies. They thought that investing in girl's education would be wastage. There is another reason that grooms want to marry virgin girls.

Therefore, they prefer to get married with such a girl whose age is under 18 years old, and some families also want a less educated bride because they want to suppress and control the bride or wife, or sister-in-law etc.

They also become unpaid workers. If parents want to educate their daughter but they fear about their daughter's marriage because they may face more difficulty in finding a suitably educated groom.

- **Fear to Affairs:**

In most backward nations or some developing countries, there is a serious concern or fear of the family about a girl's emotional attachment to the peer groups or outsiders.

They consider that such attachment of girls will lessen the social prestige of the family. Therefore, parents don't want to send their daughter to school, especially secondary school (after 8th or upper primary).

In some African countries, parents don't want to send their daughter to school because there are problems like drinking, smoking, drugs, involvement in illegal activities, HIV infection etc (Wanyoike 2003). These activities are also spreading more rapidly in Asian countries, like India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Thailand etc.

- **Cultural Norms or Patriarchal Society:**

The girls are discriminated in education against boys because of some cultural norms. There is a tradition that girls leave the parent house after she gets married and she leaves with husband and boys are future bread earners. In such cases investing in education of girls is considered as wastage of resources. Whereas, investing in boys will be fruitful in the old age of parents. There is a boy's responsibility to provide family's economic and social security, as they are also the heirs of the ancestral property in most cases (Sivakumar M. 2008).

- **Dowry System:**

In this system, grooms demand a heavy amount of money from the bride's parents to get married. Therefore, the bride's parents start saving money from the girls' childhood of the. Due to this the parents save some part of their income. Therefore, they spend less on the education of the girls.

If they spend on the girl's education, but still, they have to pay dowry at the time of marriage. Therefore, parents give less importance to a girl's education than boys.

- **Role And Responsibility of Male and Female in the Society:**

Gender refers to the role and responsibility distributed among the human (male and female) in the society. Especially in rural or even some times in urban areas too, a female is considered as home maker or taker if she works inside the household but boy's responsibility is that of the bread earner, and he has to go outside the home to earn money.

Thus, female is known as a house maker and male is known as a bread earner. Therefore, parents invest less in girl's education than boys.

Supply Side of Education:

Supply side of education refers to the quality of education and facilities which are provided by the government or school management in the school. Parents are more concerned about girls; however, parents also examine the status of school like, social environment around school, toilet facilities for girls, water facilities and other security like behavior of male teachers or lack of female teachers in the school.

After that distance of school that creates hurdles in girl's education. Parents don't want to send his daughter to such a school which is situated far from home (Ravinder Rena 2005).

- **Consequences of Gender Disparity in Children's Education:**

Education is a primary right of every individual. It is the most important foundation stone, on which the future road-map of a person likely depends. Education can truly change individual belief, ideologies, values and skill sets.

Education gives the ability to think rationally, pursue dreams and aspirations in life and teaches and gives the ability to achieve them while leading a dignified life and teaches to give respect to others in the society. Education can increase equality in society through education because educated people understand their political, economic and social rights.

Education provides to the people a means to live their lives with principle, and gives us the freedom of expression.

Thus, education is essential for overall development of the human being and his personality. The literacy rate of a country determines its prosperity and economic health.

As education helps to create the human capital of a country (Romer 1990), it means, education is the key factor affecting the economic growth. There is a direct relationship between economic growth and expenditure on education, and it also increases the HDI (Darvishan Ali and Hakimzadesh's 2015) of a country. Empirical studies have also proved that there is a direct relationship between education and growth of real per capita GDP. The study of Kianda Foundation (2011) found that education is very important for the well-being of the entire society, especially for girls and women. Educating a girl child is a commitment towards empowering her in different social situations and investment in our economic development at the grassroots level.

Education helps in the capital formation of countries because educated society facilities have better development than an uneducated society. Education improves productivity and prosperity, and improves people's life experiences. Education increases the efficiency and capability of labour and government, and increases the national income along with other capabilities.

Education helps to increase the accumulation of human capital, and significantly contributes in increasing the national income of a country, especially when access to education is equal for all without any discrimination of gender, religion, region and level of income. However, most developing countries have gender discrimination due to poverty, religious beliefs and social norms (son preference).

In such cases, girls are discriminated against boys in access to education at household level. This discrimination will prevent about half of the population from participating in economic activities properly.

Gender discrimination does not affect only the present generation but also negatively affects the future generation because a girl is a potential mother. Educated mothers are likely to understand better the importance of education, health care of children, hygiene, family planning, empowerment and dignity of women. The gender discrimination faced by women or girls reduces the value of the HDI.

Therefore, if children acquire good education, they automatically become aware of their abilities and they are able to get or create the best opportunities and earn high income in the labour market, or from business and equally contribute to the prosperity of economy and society.

Conclusion:

In any country the female population is approximately half of the total population of the country. If girls are discriminated against compared to boys, it means half of the population is excluded from the mainstream of economic activities.

However, the growth of the country will also be half, as well as human development also decline. Girl's education is not enough for economic development but it has a big role to make a good social environment, and betterment of future generations because its girl will become a future mother. It also helps to control the population by adopting family planning, reduces child mortality rate, for breaking dogmas of society etc.

References:

1. WHO Report 2010",[https://www.who.int/genomics/gender/en/#:~:text=\(1\)%20Gender%20describes,%2C%20health%20policy%2C%20and%20legislation.\(5/03/2015\)](https://www.who.int/genomics/gender/en/#:~:text=(1)%20Gender%20describes,%2C%20health%20policy%2C%20and%20legislation.(5/03/2015))
2. Anderson (1998), The people make the paradigm, Journal of organizational behavior [https://doi.org/10.1002/\(SICI\)1099-1379\(199807\)19:4<323::AID-JOB912>3.0.CO;2-P](https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1099-1379(199807)19:4<323::AID-JOB912>3.0.CO;2-P).(01/07/2015)
3. USAID (2012a),<https://sbccimplementationkits.org/gender/key-gender-concepts/> (16/02/2017)
4. Salimah H. Meghani (2008), "Disparity vs Inequity: Toward Reconceptualization of Pain Treatment Disparities", Volume 9, Issue 5 Pages 613-623, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1526-4637.2007.00344>. (18/05/2019)
5. Khandaker, Mu. Mizanur Rahman (2013) "Gender discrimination in healthcare spending in the household and women's access to

- resources: perspective of Bangladesh”, The University of Tokyo. www.semantic scholar.org (5/03/2017).
6. Himanshu Himanshu and Bedanga Talukdar (2017), “Family Size Composition and Intra-household Education Expenditure Exploring Gender Disparity in Education in India”. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331791858>. (20/03/2019).
 7. Rana R. K. (2019) “Determination of household expenditure on education of school going children in Chatra District of Jharkhand”, Jamshedpur Review-Gov-Regd, Refereed, Peer Reviewed, Multi-Disciplinary Research Journal, Volume-5 Issue-42 Sept- Oct 2020, ISSN- 2320-2750) (25/05/23).
 8. Rana R. K. & Madhumita DasGupta (2019), “The gender disparity in household expenditure on education of school going children in Jharkhand: Evidence from Chatra District. (Journal of Social Development, Volume-XI Number-1&2, 2019, ISSN-0974-651X).
 9. Liu, H. (2007), “The quality–quantity trade-off: evidence from the relaxation of China’s one-child policy”, *Journal of Population Economics*, vol. 27, issue 2, PP-565-602 Department of Economics, National University of Singapore, https://econpapers.repec.org/article/sprjopoc/v_3a27_3ay_3a2014_3ai_3a2_3ap_3a565-602.htm. (22/02/18).
 10. Rena, Ravinder (2005) “Gender Disparity in Education – An Eritrean Perspective”, USA: The Global Child Journal, Vol.2. No.1, pp. 43-49. (A Biannual Journal of the To Love Children), https://mpira.ub.uni-muenchen.de/10315/1/MPRA_paper_10315.pdf (10/01/2018)
 11. **Quayes, S.**, Ramsey, R.D. (2015), "Gender Disparity in Education Enrollment in Pakistan", *Asian Economic and Financial Review* 5:3 pp. 407-417, www.conscientiabeam.com (10/01/2016).
 12. Emily Hannuma, Peggy Kong, and Yuping Zhang (2009), “Emily Hannuma, Peggy Kong, and Yuping Zhang (2009) investigate the gender gap in education in rural northwest china”, NIH Public Access Author Manuscript, *Int J Educ* Vol 1; 29(5): PP 474–486. doi: 10.1016/j.ijedudev.2009.04.007. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2753976/pdf/nihms-112027.pdf>. (20/03/2019).
 13. Wanyoike, W. (2003). *Understanding Youth and Family from a Christian Perspective*. Nyeri,

- <http://52.172.159.94/index.php/ijird/article/viewFile/51718/41803>,
(19/09/19).
14. Himanshu Himanshu and Bedanga Talukdar (2017), “Family Size Composition and Intra-household Education Expenditure Exploring Gender Disparity in Education in India”.
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331791858>. (20/03/2019).
 15. Rena, Ravinder (2005) “Gender Disparity in Education – An Eritrean Perspective”, USA: The Global Child Journal, Vol.2. No.1, pp. 43-49. (A Biannual Journal of the To Love Children),
https://mpira.ub.uni-muenchen.de/10315/1/MPRA_paper_10315.pdf
(10/01/2018)
 16. Sivakumar M. (2008), “GENDER DISCRIMINATION AND WOMEN’S DEVELOPMENT”,
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED502567.pdf>.((22/02/18).
 17. Romer (1990), “Capital, Labor, and Productivity, Brookings Papers on Economic Activity”, Microeconomics Vol. 1990 (1990), pp. 337-367,
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2534785> (17/04/2016)
 18. Kianda Foundation (2011), “Partners and Clients of Female Sex Workers in an Informal Urban Settlement in Nairobi, Kenya”
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/51660426_Partners_and_Clients_of_Female_Sex_Workers_in_an_Informal_Urban_Settlement_in_Nairobi_Kenya. (19/06/2019)