

**ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT GOALS: GENDER EQUALITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION.**

Prof. Kadambande Nikita Ashok
Email Id: nikitakadambande@gmail.com

Abstract:

Education is not just a tool for personal progress, but a key component of national development. This is a firm and unanimous consensus at the global level. It is safe to say that when both men and women are educated, it leads to an increase in their income, and being educated opens the main doors to future opportunities. Gender equality and inclusive education are the fundamental principles of the modern education system. Gender equality means that men, women, and transgender individuals must have equal opportunities, rights, responsibilities, and respect. From a broader perspective, eliminating gender discrimination in the field of education and providing equal rights and opportunities to all students is crucial for the creation of a sustainable and just society. Inclusive education means providing education to all types of students together, without any discrimination based on caste, religion, gender, disability, economic status, or social background. Because of this, a sense of unity and ideal social values are developed among the students. For the effective implementation of gender equality and inclusive education, a sensitive curriculum, trained teachers, and a safe educational environment are essential. Along with these, appropriate government policies are also necessary. Through such efforts, equality, quality, and all-round inclusive development in the education system can be achieved.

Introduction:

In today's modern era, gender equality and inclusive education are two extremely important factors for social transformation. Since gender equality and inclusive education are deeply interconnected, they are considered vital pillars of society.

1. Gender Equality.

Due to historical traditions and social attitudes, there has been discrimination rather than equality between women and men. Gender equality has created a gap in this gap. Therefore, gender equality is essential to bridge this gap. Therefore, gender equality does not only mean giving equal rights to transgender people along with men and women, but also providing equal opportunities for progress to all without any discrimination on the basis of gender while living in society.

2. Inclusive Education.

From today's perspective, inclusive education is a great concept in which all students are given the opportunity to study together in one place, regardless of their caste, religion, gender, language, physical and mental abilities, and economic conditions. The main objective of this education system is that no one should be left behind in education.

Key word :

The most important and influential keywords in gender equality and inclusive education are as follows:

- Gender equality.
- Equal opportunities.
- Social justice.
- Special needs education.
- Elimination of discrimination .
- Educational mainstreaming.
- Empowerment .
- Equitable justice.

1. Gender Equality.

Gender equality means that men, women and transgender people have the same rights, responsibilities and opportunities in society. This does not mean that people of all genders are the same, but it means that their rights and opportunities should not depend on their gender. Important aspects of gender equality are

- Equal rights
- Equal opportunities
- Freedom
- Equal pay

2. Equal opportunities.

Equal opportunities should be equal for men and women and the third caste, but at the same time, regardless of caste, religion, economic status, physical ability, they should have equal opportunities for education and employment.

Important aspects of equal opportunities in education

- a) Admission Every boy and girl has the right to admission to the school or college of their choice.
- b) There should be no difference between boys and girls while sitting in the classroom, playing and working in the school. Similarly, there should be no difference in caste, religion, economic status so that there is no discrimination
- c) Give leadership opportunities to girls like boys in school elections, sports competitions, cultural programs, and other educational facilities. Also, use of resources such as libraries, computer labs, and other educational facilities should be made equal for all.
- d) Make special provisions for reservation and policy in scholarship schemes.
- e) Teachers should ask boys and girls the same questions and give equal encouragement while teaching in the classroom.

3. Social Justice.

The real meaning of this is that every human being has the right to live with dignity and to achieve their own progress, that is, social justice.

Importance of social justice:

- a) Bringing boys, girls, third castes and disabled people who have been deprived of education for years into the stream of education is part of social justice.
- b) Education is the most important fundamental right. When we provide inclusive education to all, we are actually protecting their human rights.

4. Special Needs Education.

Special needs education is an educational system designed for students who have physical, mental, physical or emotional difficulties that make it difficult to learn in a regular education system. The main objective is to make each child self-reliant and competent according to their abilities.

5. Elimination of discrimination.

Discrimination means providing equal access to educational facilities and resources for education to all, regardless of caste, creed, religion or gender.

Aspects of elimination of discrimination

- a) There must be laws of legal protection. There should be strict laws against discrimination on the basis of caste, religion, gender or disability.
- b) There should be equal rights in employment, education and social status.

6. Empowerment.

In simple words, empowerment means making oneself self-reliant or strengthening. Empowerment means that through education, an individual or group gains control over their own lives and makes their own decisions. Let's see where empowerment is mainly seen.

- a) When a man, woman or a third-caste person stands on their own feet, they become financially self-reliant.
- b) While living or moving in society, the ability to firmly believe in one's own opinion without any pressure or to participate in social affairs with one's right is seen in social empowerment.

7. Fair Justice.

What is fair and justice? Fair means clean, impartial and justice means giving everyone their rights

- a) Where no one is wronged and everyone gets equal opportunities
- b) Decisions are made only on the basis of skill and intelligence, without considering caste, religion, gender
- c) Where no one fears injustice and everyone has freedom of expression

Literature review :

- Conceptual development
- Policy framework in India
- He findings in literature

Gap identify :

1 Many schools and colleges still do not have facilities like ramps, wide doors, lifts or toilets for disabled students. Similarly, books in Braille script for blind children or hearing aids for deaf children, sign language materials are not available in all schools and colleges.

2 Errors in education and training

3 In the digital age, children from poor or disadvantaged groups in modern rural areas are deprived of equal educational opportunities because they do not have access to the internet or smartphone.

Role of higher education in SDGs

The role of higher education is very important in the Sustainable Development Goals, including gender equality (SDG 5) and inclusive education (SDG 4). The following is a summary of how higher education institutions and colleges work in this regard.

- 1) Equal opportunities, skill development, lifelong learning, i.e., research and learning new technologies even after graduation, have been made available.
- 2) Women empowerment, safe environment, gender neutral studies and inclusion of third castes, leading to effective gender equality in bridging the gap between them.
- 3) To achieve the SDGs, it is necessary to conduct policy and social research to find new solutions rather than just providing education.

Challenges :

1. Gender equality There is still discrimination between boys and girls in rural areas. Just as a boy is the light of the clan, a girl is not the heirloom of the clan but is considered the property of others, so marriage is given more priority than a girl's education.

Similarly, third-party students face obstacles in getting admission in schools or colleges or functioning in society.

2 Many schools for students with disabilities face a shortage of ramp lifts or Braille materials.

3 When the financial situation is dire, it is observed that both boys and girls face obstacles in getting an education.

Recommendation

1.The most important thing should be teacher training, which should include the use of special education models and gender sensitivity.

2.Social awareness should be created to convey the importance of education opportunities for girls, third caste and disabled children.

3.Children are unable to pursue education due to financial constraints, so financial assistance or policies should be implemented such as scholarships should be provided to every student.

RECOMMENDATIONS :

- Ensure that gender concerns are identified and addressed at the highest level of politics and public policy.

- Analyze how specific educational programs and policies impact girls and boys differently, taking into account different roles, responsibilities, needs, and interests and address them during the project design process.
- Identify and report on indicators such as girls' and boys' net and gross enrollment, gender parity in enrollment, equality in educational outcomes, and girls' and boys' completion rate.

Conclusion :

Education is a fundamental right. In education, men, women and the third caste, regardless of their caste or religion, are given equal opportunities. Only when everyone gets equal opportunities in education, does a nation truly develop. This eliminates discrimination, instills confidence in children, and changes the way society views them. At the same time, education is not just about acquiring literacy, it is also necessary to make the individual economically and socially self-reliant. Therefore, the role of higher education institutions in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals is inspiring in this journey. The implementation of this program involves all stakeholders in the school, from the head to the students. From the research process in the introduction to the evaluation, the findings of this research state that the empowerment of school principals resulted in them developing inclusive education programs based on gender justice, disability, and social inclusion in the eight national standards.

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