

A Study on the Status of Gender Equality in School

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Findings, Recommendations, Conclusion

5. Findings:

5.1 Findings of Literature Review:

- Many programs adopted by government are being less successful and less effective i.e. alternative schooling programmes to all girls and other children who cannot attend full-time formal primary schools, increment in incentives (scholarships, free textbooks, uniforms and nutrition) for girls and disadvantaged children, establishing schools at short walking distances for children and at least one teacher in one primary school.
- There is no adequate and proper linkage between policy, planning, implementation and research.

- Traditional attitude, religion and value of the society and family also have resulted early in marriage, high priority for son than daughter and less interest in family planning. This situation has helped to keep girls away from schools.
- For gender inequalities in schools, some barriers continuously exist. These barriers are social & cultural, economic, psychological and institutional, barriers created by poor teaching/learning conditions and caused by family circumstances.
- The role of female teacher is vital for minimizing the gender equality.
- The scholarship given to girls and disadvantaged children are poorly managed and poorly co-coordinated.
- The representation of women in decision making and leadership positions in school level is nominal.
- The national reports, in between 2003 and 2005, show that more girls have got are access in lower secondary and secondary education, but in primary level comparatively this situation is worse. However, in secondary level also the gender disparities still prevails.
- The economic condition is one of the main factors in keeping girls away from schools. Many of those who can afford for children's education give priority to boys.
- To provide better education means helping to acquire economic independence. But only economic independence is not enough.
- The principal necessity is gender awareness in society as well as in schools. No gender equality can be achieved without fully gender-aware family groups and society. Since if man is the decision-maker at home, he will not allow a woman to join such programs unless he is aware himself.
- Female teachers are one of the means of attracting girls towards school. Girl's enrollment and dropout rates can be improved in the school by increasing the number of female teachers.
- There, no sufficient information and materials are given in the curriculum and text books.
- There are not any specific lessons and text about the gender equality and its impact in national development. It is the matter of assessment that existing provisions are enough for reducing the gender inequality in school education or not.

5.1.2 Findings of Primary Sources:

- As per the local people, in Hill locations, hunger is the critical issue, education is secondary issue in comparison to hunger,
- Less awareness about the importance and use of girls education,

- The curriculum and text books are not gender equity friendly.
- The numbers of female teachers are comparatively very low.
- The major causes of inequitable gender status in school level are male dominated society and less awareness for girl education in indigenous community.
- The general perception about education has been changed, many of concerned say that the education is a best tool for employment creation, income generation, knowledge and better life.
- Educated parents advocate that more education for girls is needed rather than boys.
- Financial and material assistance is highly demanded under scholarship programs.
- The parents who have entered in new profession or who are diverted from traditional profession to new profession, they are found more conscious about girls education.
- The main causes of fewer enrollments and dropping out are financial crisis, less friendly environment, less awareness in parents and students themselves, early marriage, earning compulsion for family members, heavy work in home and so on.
- In community based schools the ratio of girls' is comparatively better.
- Only fifty percent schools have code of conduct for teachers and students.
- In comparison to boys, very small size of girls has chosen math and science as optional subjects (ratio is 69:31). The main causes for this are being weak in class, less confidence of being successful and time to be given for domestic work.
- The provision and status of physical infrastructures, facilities and services is not favorable for girls and women (such as toilets, flush and drinking water, separate rooms and compound wall).
- No incidence was found relating to gender violence.
- Head Teachers play major role in decision making.
- Only one lady head teacher is found in the schools surveyed.
- The representation of female member in school management committee is very poor, only legal provision has been maintained.

Finally, during the time of survey, the questions were asked to the concerned and focused groups, about the drop out of the girls and its background. But they had no any idea and information about the students who have already left the schools. There was no any monitoring mechanism to know about the students who have stopped attend in schools.

5.2 Recommendations:

To improve girls enrollment and gender equality status, basically, there are three dimension of gender education are to be focused. **Number one is pulling programs (to attracting the girls in schools).** It is related to curriculum, texts, other teaching materials, extra activities, teachers, SMC, gender environment in schools, and infrastructures. For these, role players are government and its local level agencies, teachers, SMC, NGOs and so on. **The number second is pushing programs (to send the girls in schools by the parents and family).** These are related to occupation, employment, financial status, level of education and awareness about the girls' education of parents, families and communities. Another vital issue is the level of education of mothers. **The third one is related to infrastructure and environment.** These are related to the distance of schools, conditions of road, bridge and foot path, means of transportation available, neighbors family and community, socio-economic-religious and cultural pattern of the concerned society and community. So, while formulating and implementing the policy and programs, we should consider above said three dimensions.

To make recommendations more practical and action oriented, these have been divided in according to time duration that will be possible for implementation in short term (immediate), medium term and long term. Accordingly, the following recommendations are suggestions for measures:

A. Pulling Programs (Attracting the girls in schools):

Recommendations for Immediate Action:

- Increase numbers and amounts of scholarship programs for girls, extend the food for education program up to secondary level, extend the two liter oil programs in rest districts. For this Government, communities and NGOs should work together.
- Provide financial and material support by employment activities to poor families to motivate them to send girls to school.
- Remove quota system of scholarships for girls.

- Launch, continuously, the awareness creation programs for parents, communities and students in mass level.
- Assess girls' school achievement on a regular basis with a focus on identifying the factors behind their low achievement.
- Implement remedial measures to help boost girls' academic achievement.
- Keep close contact with parents; promote the participation of parents in school activities and child learning.
- Continue the program of providing budget to appoint female teachers for community schools.
- Continue the program of providing teacher training scholarship to women who are from dalit and under privileged community.
- Equally address the program to encourage them for enrollment and to attract to get back return in schools that have already left the schools as the program of stopping the dropping out.
- Ensure that each school has a separate toilet and a changing room for female teachers.
- Create environment to have same toilets for teachers and students.
- Prepare a code of conduct for teachers as well as students and educate them that prohibit teachers from discriminating against students by gender and harass the girls by boys.
- To promote the confidence of girls, encourage girls to choose mathematics and science as optional subjects. Provide extra teaching classes to educate about the subjects and to communicate the importance of math and science for career development and promote confidence of the girls.
- Regularly, make aware to students about the importance of cleanliness in school and home.
- Increase school and class observation and inspection programs and make it updated and continue.
- Provide the rewards for teachers and parents who have shown exemplary action for gender equalities in schools.
- The schools and other concerned should start to investigate about the students those who have already left schools. It should be known why those students are not attending in the schools? The causes should be found out. For example some may have transferred to other schools and some may have actually dropped. Programmes should be launched for such activities that will help to bring back return them in schools and motivate them to continue the schools.

Recommendations for Medium Term:

- For higher compliance in girls' education, apply new schemes regarding the girl scholarship that will encourage, both parents and girls themselves.
- Introduce local language as a core subject of the school curriculum, basically in primary level.
- Provide free school dress to girls students,
- Promote girls favored extra activities.
- Provide the girls and female teachers separate rest rooms and dress comfort rooms.
- Organize gender sensitive awareness programmes for female and male teachers.
- Improve and modernize the teaching methods and practices to make it student-centered and girl-friendly.
- For high hills and mountain regions, provide special package of food for education, since in those location, education is secondary issue in comparison to hunger.
- Create the environment where female teachers may have the opportunity of active participation in decision making and activities in schools.
- Increase the numbers of female members in school management committee.
- Continue the scholarship for girls up to class 10 in Karnali Zone.
- Establish proper linkage and relationship between planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating educational programmes to promote girls' education and adopt a more participatory approach in these activities.

Recommendations for Long Term Action:

- Formulate a gender policy that will provide a clear vision and direction for the education system as a whole.
- Formulate a policy that requires the elimination of gender bias from the curriculum, text books, training materials, educational practices, schools and classrooms.
- Ensure that text books enhance gender equality and mutual understanding between men and women.
- Show women in more positive and strategic roles in all learning materials.
- To avoid gender biasness, revise and redesign the curriculum and teaching techniques to make it more diverse, so that it meets the special needs of rural children, especially girls by making it more applied based and employment oriented.
- Introduce a job-oriented school curriculum so that girls can learn skills that are useful in their daily lives.
- Establish and develop schools in rural/remote areas, because they have minimum of physical facilities (e.g., sufficient classroom space, toilets, flush water and drinking water) to required effective schooling.
- State should ensure the living of older and senior citizens and should declare the policy and programs that will provide adequate social security that they would

not be more dependent on sons or daughters that will help to minimize of giving more priority for sons.

B. Pushing Programs (Sending the girls in schools by the parents and family):

Recommendations for Immediate Action

- Organize gender awareness activities involving teachers and parents with the aim of causing attitudinal changes toward girls' education.
- Create public awareness campaigns to make people aware of the need for and importance of women teachers.

Recommendations for Medium Term Action:

- Launch various practical and scientific awareness programs to parents about their responsibility to ensure that their girls (also boys) should complete, at least, school education.
- Launch family planning activities in package program, co-relate these programs with income generation activities and enhance the earning capacity of the poor families.
- Launch advocacy and awareness programs critical of early marriage, the dowry system and other negative social practices.

Recommendations for Long Term Action:

- Only mothers are the actors who can play the role gender equalizer. But the literacy rate of house wives/adult women is not so higher. Being of older they would not like to go to usual schools. So, make provision of separate schools for housewives as "**Grihini School Education Program**" by this, house wives who are illiterate or have little educational opportunities will be helped to be aware about the girls' education. So separate schools should be started. If mother will be educated and conscious about the girls' education, fifty percent solution will be achieved. But this should be done **on phase wise** and model basis. The school time, distance and teachers should be suitable and favorable.
- Promote socio economic awareness activities and help to generate alternative source of incomes and earnings as equally important.

C. Infrastructures and environment out side the schools and family:

Recommendations for Immediate and Medium Term Action:

- Design and implement special programs for girls in districts where the enrollment rate is lower.
- Improve the roads, footpaths and bridges that students easily go to school in local level where it possible.

Recommendations for Long Term Action:

- Address socio-cultural practices that do not support the education of girls through proper educational planning.
- To promote gender equalities, implement programs under decentralized approach so that local authorities may plan and implement them according to their needs and local realities.
- Establish schools where such infrastructures are available and all targeted children may go to schools.

Finally, the government should be clear itself that, up to what grade, it would like to provide free education. Since every child who wants to go school should have opportunity to enroll and attend in schools without any barrier of economic, geographical, and social and gender etc.

5.3 Conclusion

This is the time of inclusive development and it is people's aspiration and state's requirement. To achieve this goal, gender equality in education is very significant and essential. Where there is not gender equality in education, complete inclusiveness is impossible. School education is the basic need of the people. But still in Nepal, a large number of children are out of school; either they never see schools or they have dropped out before completing the school education. The status of school education related to girls is so petty. This study was done to find out the status of gender equity and equality in schools with reference to social strata and ethnicity. Other objectives are to asses gender friendly environment, to find the problems for reducing the gender gaps and to provide practical suggestions and action steps. So this study has tried to find out the main causes of gender inequality. It also screened out the barriers for gender equality. As the findings, the current status of net enrollment rate of girls is lower than boys and the **gap is around six percent**. As the findings of the study, still, for girls, comparatively, there is less access in boarding or institutional schools.

In the process of analysis of the facts, different methods and sources were used. By analyzing of such information, it is found that the **ratio of girls in school education is**

around forty seven percent. The enrollment ratio is also lower than boys. Dropout rate is also more than boys. The ratio of female teachers is about 40 percent only. By study it is found that in B.S. 2058, the ratio of girls in total students was 49 percent. But for the years 2061 and 2063, the ratios are 48 and 47 percent respectively. Thus the figure of ratio of girls has been decreased in opposition to national level that can be seen in increasing trend. It is also found that in community schools the ratio of girls is higher. The area and sample selected for survey, most of the schools are community based and eighty four percent students are from community based schools. The curriculum and texts have not properly addressed the gender equality. This is required to redesign and revision of curriculum and texts. Due to low educational achievement in favor of women, policy of employment of at least one teacher in primary school is still behind the result. The participation of women teacher in decision making is very poor. The physical conditions of schools are not so very favorable for gender equity. The achievement of many programs adopted by government is less satisfactory. There is inadequate and lack of proper linkage between policy, planning and implementation. Regarding the barriers and issues, the existence of traditional attitude and value in society, poor management and coordination of scholarships, presence of financial problems, lower number of ladies teachers is the major findings of the study. Therefore, being of cross cutting issue, the issue of gender equality should be considered in integrated way. The inclusive society is basic foundation for correcting gender inequalities. The creation of awareness in mass level in concerned society and family is very important aspect. These should be considered on the basis of culture, religion, employment level and socio economic structure of the society and family. It should be considered from the point of indoor and outdoor issues. While establishing schools and constructing infrastructure the rights of girls and children should be considered. The conclusion of study is that to improve the girls enrollment and gender equalities, above said all issued should be addressed. In this concern, the facts and information have been analyzed in multiple ways. But there are mainly three dimension of gender education to be focused. The recommendation has been made on the basis of such areas and issues. Out of these, number one is **Pulling Programs** (to attracting the girls in schools). It is related to curriculum, texts, other teaching materials, extra activities, teachers, SMC, gender environment in schools, and infrastructures. For these, role players are government and its local level agencies, teachers, SMC, NGOs and so on. The number second is Pushing Programs (sending the girls in schools by the parents and family). These are related to occupation, employment, financial status, level of education and

awareness about the girls' education of parents, families and communities. Another vital issue is the level of education of mothers. The third one is related to infrastructure and environment. These are related to the distance of schools, conditions of road, bridge and foot path, means of transportation available, neighbors family and community, socio-economic-religious and cultural pattern of the concerned society and communities. So, while formulating and implementing the policy and programs, the matters should be considered. To make the recommendations more practical, applicable and pro-management, the recommendations have been categorized in time basis i.e. immediate (short term), medium term and long terms accordingly.