
Gender, Education and Development – A Human Rights’ Perspective

Dr V Basil Hans¹

Sowjanya S Shetty M²

Raghavendra Rao³

1. Associate Professor and Head, Dept. of Economics, St Aloysius Evening College, Mangaluru. Email: vbasilhans@yahoo.com
2. Lecturer in Economics, Poornaprajna College Udupi
3. Lecturer in Economics, Dr NSAM First Grade College, Nitte.

Abstract: *Today more than ever before, there is ‘gender amidst the scenario of concern’. That is because of the fact that despite centuries of feminist struggles, voices from the margin etc, the present era of neo-liberalism is not free from ‘contradictory’ practices by state and non-state actors as far as women’s issues are concerned. Schemes for women and girl child, and programmes for women entrepreneurship development cannot change the big picture: women are either victimised or caricatured. What is more alarming is that, many perceive feminism to be an outdated ideology at the most to be discussed by women only. This paper tries to relocate feminism in the context of both Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals. Taking cue from the global recognition of women’s rights as human rights since 1993, human rights are essential for dignified human existence encompassing rights for fulfilling basic needs as well as for the development of human potential and personality. It is argued that if ‘empowerment’ has to be realised through education for women, then that education has to deal with human rights in general and women’s human rights in particular. In addition the paper also examines the status and rights of Indian women, with a glimpse into the future.*

Key Words: *Education, Empowerment, Equality, Sustainable Development.*

Introduction

“We do need to salute the hard labour – physical and intellectual – which women of different categories over generations have fought for gender justice” (Barik, et al, 2010).

Education plays an important role in sustainable development of a nation. By educating the people, highly populated nations like India can minimise the ills of rising population and transform humans into resources and can reap the demographic dividend. An educated citizen is a boon and is vital in implementing informed and sustainable development. In fact, a national sustainability plan can be enhanced by the level of education attained by the nation's citizens. Nations with high illiteracy rates and unskilled work forces have fewer development options. An educated work force is the key to move beyond an extractive and agricultural economy. As nations enter into global competition, it does not make sense to eliminate half of the nation's economic potential and workforce by not educating females. It is a strategic economic measure to educate the entire potential workforce and thereby be poised to use the human resource potential of both men and women. Educating girls strengthens our families, communities, societies, economies, and governments. Investment in education, especially for females, has been shown to have positive short and long-term benefits for economies and societies. Unfortunately, higher education levels are associated with increases in resource consumption, which also is perceived as a major threat to sustainability.

In many countries, the current level of basic education is low, severely hindering national short and long term plans for a sustainable future. Many countries are investing more in primary, secondary and adult and female literacy and education. However, a just society is one where educators will equip the students 'to stand up and be counted'. Clinically the understanding of human rights as basic to all humanity and freedom from socio-economic and cultural myopia is needed. It is rights' based education that frees us of the option to view women's denigration of themselves as self-determination. The UN has concluded that there is no country in the world where women have equal status with men. Even in the LPG era, women have been victims of the economic 'structural adjustment' policies of wealthy nations. The notion of equal respect and responsibilities between men and women in the family or household must permeate throughout the lifecycle. In and through education it is possible and necessary to be committed to human rights principles (Wetzel, 2008).

Education gives the promise of a brighter, more prosperous world, in which people can contribute to the sustainability of their societies. Reducing gender gaps in education attainment has been an important priority for international education policy, and is explicitly listed as one of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), 2000-2015 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 2015-2030¹.

As in other developing countries, education policy in India has placed a priority on reducing gender disparities in education, and both the Five Year Plans and *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA), the flagship national programme for universal primary education, have called for an increase in recruiting female teachers as a policy for increasing girls’ education. However, much more needs to be done. Despite much work on human development and empowerment, women’s rights discourse has been sidelined. Decline in unionised labour movement apart, other organisations such as the SHGs must take up this agenda. Women’s work, productivity, security and livelihood issues must become today’s agenda of rights’-based economic development. Awareness of human rights both in their exercise and violation is an important factor in all areas of living today. It is therefore, imperative to incorporate this at the school curriculum itself. It should then touch ‘human rights education’ and spread ‘human rights culture’ (Selvan, 2010). If we agree upon the fact that ‘equality’ is the basic element in both public and private spheres, then women’s rights must also be seen and treated as equal in the political and ideological as well as domestic and private arena (Agosin, 2001).

1. Objectives

The objectives of this paper are as follows:

- i. To understand the problem of gender exclusion in education
- ii. To highlight the role of gender education in sustainable development
- iii. To analyse the consequences of gender exclusion in development process
- iv. To examine women’s education from a human rights perspective

2. Methodology

This paper is based on the secondary data obtained from various published works such as books, reports, articles, magazines, periodicals, and electronic web materials.

3. Importance of Education for Women

The connection between increased education of females and declining population growth has been well-documented. Education is one of the most effective as well as acceptable means of intervention available to decision-makers with regard to the population problem, which is perceived as a major threat to sustainability.

The importance of education of women and its relevance cannot be narrowed down to feminist agenda or movement. Female education is a necessity and it is everyone's responsibility. A woman needs education to fulfil her other needs and not be trapped in poverty – both economic and human. Constitutions of democratic countries guarantee equal rights to both men and women. Education is considered as a fundamental right for livelihood, dignity and sustainability.

An educated woman desires to have a smaller family size and seeks the necessary health care. She has fewer and healthier children. An educated woman has high educational and career expectations of her children, both boys and girls.

With regards to education of women both during the learning process and thereafter there will be host of factors that will be subject to change – social, cultural, psychological, etc. One such change that is already happening in India is the change in perception of parents and the society with regards to girls' education, life and career. In Haryana for instance, the *Apni Beti Apna Dhan* scheme provides incentives for delaying marriage for educating women (Yadav, 2017). The woman of today with the power of knowledge and the tool of empowerment is also boldly fighting against atrocities on the one hand and gender stereotyping on the other.

Women today are more and more into non-traditional works and they want to exercise their choices. At the same time they are aware of the forces of oppression and suppression that are still at work. Domestic violence and violence at workplaces are unfortunate but not uncommon. Even for her own security, dignity and honour she needs the armour of education. Her fight for justice then gets strength. Law become effective in action. She becomes stronger and self-reliant. She overcomes any inferiority complex. She is able to see herself with a greater scope and hope. Awareness, awakening and accessibility to growth with justice are enhanced with girls' education. Individually, as members of a family, in a community and the society, educated women contribute a lot by way of resources – money, ideas and leadership. They also brighten the country's future. Thus, education and empowerment with its strong legal foothold makes for a just society.

3.1 Expenditure on women's Education: Consumption vs Investment

Society is made up of human beings no matter boy or girl. Discrimination based on gender is highly intolerable and unjustifiable. We need to create a society where all are equal. Education needs to be made available to men and women. Investments in the education of girls may be regarded as highest-return investment available in the developing world. As far as returns to investment on education is concerned, sizeable rates of the order of 7-15 percent have been found, with magnitudes dependent on country, level of education, and time period. Much of the increased returns to schooling in the past few decades can be linked to a sharp increase in demand for skilled labour and a slow rise in the supply of skill to the labour market. Without restricting to women in emotional skills we need to value other skill sets too – higher-order cognitive, basic cognitive and technical – for employment and advancement. These are in fact the twenty-first century skill needs. According to ILO Report 2012 global GDP could grow by USD 1.6 trillion versus the current trajectory, if gender gaps in participation rates moved half way towards the median gap observed across all countries in the European Union and North America (Thangaraj, 2016).

According to Lawrence H. Summers, Chief Economist of the World Bank, educating females, especially female children, is one of the most important challenges of this decade. The benefits to families, societies, and economies are high and well understood; however, many barriers remain. In many societies, male children have traditionally received more educational opportunities than females at every level of education (Hans, 2009).

Around the world, local school boards and national ministries of education are now attempting to enrol more female children and retain them in school from kindergarten through university. Although many barriers remain, great progress has been made in the last ten years towards enrolling females and enhancing their education opportunities. There are many benefits of educating girls and women mainly the link between education and sustainability. Education as a good or service has utility and when consumed gives satisfaction to the consumer. Women by consuming education will experience utility in place, time, form, ownership and service, as organs and organisations. Since their education also encourages and strengthens other indices like health, security, dignity, capability, leadership, and empowerment, education is very much an investment. Society and governments must therefore, plan properly for such investments.

In a wider sense, women's education should start with their own consumer education, even from a gender perspective. Most values of consumer movement are similar to women's movement. The consumer rights to information, freedom from discrimination, and education are directly related to the possibility of choice. So is the case with the availability of necessary economic means to exercise these rights. These rights promote transparency and balance in social relations, both those based on gender and those occurring in the marketplace.

Integration of education with rights through appropriate 'interventions' will broaden people's horizons and new possibilities for 'invention' (Ittura, et al., 2004). Thus, consumption meets 'innovation' and 'investment'. The real value of education for women is to be gauged from market and non-time spent in the economy. Hence it is the responsibility of all women that they spend quality time – enjoyable and productive – and anything that deviates from the maxim is discriminatory without doubt.

There are studies (Blaug, 1972; Becker, 1975; McMahon, 1982; Marias, 1993)² offering evidences of positive consumption benefits of education – benefits (after holding earnings constant) to the family's health, schooling, return on savings, purchasing efficiency, home management skills, and affective sources of happiness. Against this, the counterproductive effects relating to divorce and the time intensive activities in the home requiring less skill must be netted out. Beyond testing for additional effects, needed next steps include using shadow prices to impute values (both positive and negative) to each of these non-monetary benefits for individual families, and also for total consumption and total product at the macro level in the national income and product accounts. There are arguments that the rate of return for women's education is lower compared to men's education. But this raises several questions:

- i. Is women's education only consumption where as that of men investment?
- ii. If this attitude exists among parents, does it not pass on to employers too?
- iii. Is this not because of lower labour participation by women and/or wage discrimination?
- iv. Is the drop-out of women – after certain age or after marriage – from labour force or change in work pattern say from full time to part-time taken into account in studies concerning women's earnings?

Whatsoever the sources of the argument, one should also take into account – among other factors – the size of educated women in total labour force as well as the wage rate differential between educated and less educated women rather than average earnings. Most studies prove that higher a woman's education level, closer her income approaches to that of 'similarly' educated men (Woodhall, 1973). Poverty, geographical isolation, minority status, disability, early marriage and pregnancy, gender-based violence, and traditional attitudes about the status and role of women, are among the many obstacles that stand in the way of women and girls fully exercising their right to participate in, compete and benefit from education. Addressing these threats is the responsibility of every state and civil society.

3.2 State and the Status of Women's Education

The Indian state always proclaims for women's upliftment and hence there is no dearth of policies and programmes for increasing their literacy and education. But several studies show that not only the BUMARU states but even the rest of India suffers from problems of low allocation of funds for female education, deplorable facilities for girls in schools and colleges, and high drop-out rates. The fall in funding for education is part of the big cut in social sector spending (see Table 1). A cursory look at the scenario of education in general and humanities education in particular – with reference to basic infrastructure, teaching-learning resources etc. in many of the schools and college, including women's colleges will validate the point. This situation is not limited to some remote tribal or rural part of India but even some cities that are on the anvil of 'smart cities'.

This fact must be seen against the backdrop of vast decline in spending on activities in the welfare sector as a whole, post globalisation (Banerjee and Roy, 2004). This needs a reversal of the situation – legislative measures for (i) women welfare against victimisation; (ii) welfare through domestic empowerment; (iii) welfare through economic empowerment; and (iv) welfare through social empowerment; and (iv) welfare through political empowerment. This is how we can ensure inclusive growth of women in progressive India (Pradeep, 2016). We must therefore, appreciate any effort that puts together good governance, growth and gender to transform a marginalised and rigid society into an inclusive and flexible one (Hans and Hegde, 2014).

Table 1: Percentage Share of Developmental Expenditure, and Spending on Social Services in Total

	1988-89		1993-94		2001-02	
	T D	S S	T D	S S	T D	S S
Andhra Pradesh	73.8	38.2	68.2	36.8	61.0	34.1
Bihar	68.7	41.0	62.8	33.0	48.6	34.5
Gujarat	73.0	38.0	71.6	33.7	73.6	42.4
Haryana	71.2	39.3	63.9	42.6	59.4	31.0
Karnataka	68.4	40.9	67.3	38.3	63.0	34.5
Kerala	65.3	46.8	60.2	41.4	56.2	36.8
Madhya Pradesh	71.0	40.2	69.8	35.6	54.4	33.8
Maharashtra	69.3	35.8	56.3	29.0	47.3	36.0
Orissa	65.3	39.0	65.6	38.0	46.2	32.7
Punjab	69.7	47.3	52.2	28.4	43.4	28.0
Rajasthan	69.5	38.1	66.3	37.2	55.1	40.2
TamilNadu	72.6	41.6	70.3	41.0	57.3	36.6
Uttar Pradesh	65.6	35.2	57.0	30.5	44.0	30.7
West Bengal	66.3	43.0	62.1	39.1	52.0	35.5
All 14 states	69.3	39.4	64.0	35.0	54.4	34.8
Index No	100.0	100.0	92.3	88.8	73.3	80.6

Note:

TD: Total Development. SS: Social Sector.

Source : Nirmala Banerjee and Poulomi Roy, *EPW*, Oct 30, 2004, p. 4835.

When the policy-makers and executors bring forth schemes to increase enrolment and education of women, but make little public funding and pay less attention to related facilities like wash/restrooms in colleges, transport and accommodation (e.g. Girls' hostels) facilities, and not to forget safety of women in public places, then such announcement remain lip service. Missing women is because of missed opportunities; not using schooling to break the glass ceiling. This is the cause of dualism in women's education today – some positives (e.g. slowly increasing enrolment), and some negatives (e.g. male-female gaps in diploma courses, research institutions etc). This is highlighted in Table 2.

Table 2: Status of Women in Higher Education in India (Enrolment)

	Male	Female	Total	Female % in Total
PhD	67,330	45,482	1,12,812	40.32
M.Phil	13,676	18,695	32,371	57.75
PG	18,47,651	19,61,671	38,09,322	51.50
UG	1,40,88,649	1,24,87,491	2,65,76,140	46.99
PG Diploma	1,09,371	77,177	1,86,548	41.37
Diploma	16,18,329	6,29,101	22,47,430	27.99
Certificate	78,597	97,310	1,75,907	55.32
Integrated	83,101	49,091	1,32,192	37.14
TOTAL	3,32,72,722	1,53,66,018	3,32,72,722	46.18

Note : UG = Under Graduate; PG = Post Graduate

Source: Report of All India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE), 2014-15.

India with a 141 million total population in the age group 18-23 years (girls 67.8 million) has total enrolment in higher education: 33.3 million of which 17.9 million are boys and 15.4 million are girls; girls constituting 46 percent of the total enrolment. This is a positive sign of change given the fact that 22.7 percent female gross enrolment ratio (GER) in 1971-72, 24.5 in 1975-76, and 28.5 percent in 1981-82. The overall male and female national GER is 23.6 percent (female 22.65 per cent). While girls are less found in Diploma course, they dominate in MPhil.

Admittedly the worrisome feature in India is the gross inequalities across states (Akula and Reddy, 2017). While Lakshadweep has female GER 6.03 per cent, Chandigarh has 59.68. Other than that only Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Delhi have female GER above 40 percent. Karnataka has 25.74 percent. Thus, enhancement of women’s education must begin with enrolment.

4. Women’s Education and Human Rights

In recent years “women’s rights as human rights” has emerged as a new transnational agenda and approach to demanding women’s empowerment. Such an approach, no doubt has its own advantages and limitations. Nevertheless it is a challenge for change. Several NGOs such as the Women

in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF), a multinational NGO have been championing the cause of “women’s rights as human rights” to educate women about their legal rights, lobby for national legislative reforms, extend the scope of state accountability, and mobilise international support (Hodgson, 2002).

Human rights are essential rights for dignified human existence encompassing rights from fulfilling basic needs as well as rights for adequate development of human personality (Nagendra, 2008). Almost all countries have declared education and health for all as fundamental rights. All but two countries in the world³ have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and over 174 countries on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). They have clear obligations to progressively realise the right to education and gender equality in and through education. A merging of international monitoring of Education for All and international human rights law would allow an integrated rights framework to compliment the political promises of governments, and ensure that these processes promote rights in and through education, rather than simply counting numbers of children, or investment, in education. In this context, the continued and deepening openness towards human rights evident in the Education for All Global Monitoring reports is to be welcomed.

4.1 Exclusion from Education: Human rights violation

Exclusion from education is part of an intricate web of human rights violations. It reflects a complex, progressive and sustained process of ‘being excluded’. Exclusion from education touches all aspects of a child’s life. Children who are excluded from education are probably also living in conditions of poverty, marginalisation, geographic isolation, racial discrimination, or gender bias. These children often live with additional burdens of disease, disability, and sexual exploitation. These children often live with additional burdens of disease, disability, sexual exploitation, unfair labour etc. The outcome is tragic. Without access to relevant, good quality education, children cannot acquire knowledge, skills, and self-confidence to act on their own behalf later in life. Unfortunately, exclusion happens at all points within the educational systems.

Exclusion is expressed through: non-enrolment, passivity, absenteeism, failure, repetition, and dropping out. Exclusion is a process as well as an event which – from social, economic, and political context – excludes children and their parents from many aspects of life. Therefore, to remedy exclusion, policy

changes cannot focus on schools alone. Exclusion can be countered by efforts of inclusion at all points that contribute to it. Unfortunately, exclusion from education is a pervasive problem in cultures around the world, and exclusion affects females entering every level of education. In many countries, schools enrol a smaller percentage of girls than boys. Girls tend to stay in school for fewer years than boys, receive lower marks on standard assessments, progress to the next level of education in smaller numbers, and graduate less frequently than males. The resulting gender gap demonstrates an evident disregard for the underlying causes of discrimination and disadvantage against women and girls. The roots of such disparity in education are complex, and the causes change from society to society. Governmental policies, cultural traditions, familial expectations, and immediate economic pressures, for example, thwart the education of girls and women.

5. Education for Empowerment and Equality

Education makes women economically sound which is source of other all types of women empowerment i.e., social, psychological, technological, political (Hans, and Sowjanya, 2016). It is necessary to view the status of women in India in the era of inclusive growth in terms of some key constituents which ensures women empowerment like education, health and nutrition, sex ratio, economic participation, incidence of violence against women, participation in decision making, economic and political issues. Education is an important human right which is a tool of personal empowerment and a means for social and human development. Education inculcates human and spiritual values of great significance for the empowerment of women.

5.1 Key Recommendations for Addressing Inequalities

Addressing the right to education, without addressing rights in education and through education may mean compelling attendance in education that may be of limited use and relevance to increase equality between the sexes. Governments hold the primary responsibility ensuring the full realisation of the right to education for all. Various strategic measures are needed to ensure gender equity in education.

Eradication of illiteracy is the first step towards empowerment of women. Literacy rate of India in 2011 is 74.04 percent. According to Census 2011, the male literacy rate is 82.14 per cent and female literacy rate is 65.46 percent. Even in the field of education, men dominate over women. The female literacy rate in India is though gradually rising; it's lower than the male. Girls drop out of school after a few years of education. Consequences

are that early marriage and child birth pronounced in families lead to lower socio-economic status. The universal education and the elimination of gender disparity in education is the starting point for promoting gender equality and empowering women. It is education that kindles the urge for independence, hard work, achievement and self- actualisation (Rita and Rajasekar, 2012).

Education imparted should be of use to the student, not only in seeking employment, but also more importantly in protecting health and well-being. Sufficient educational opportunities for girls are only the first step. Treating boys and girls in the same way can reinforce, rather than redress social disadvantage as education can serve to underline existing stereotypes of women as unsuited to academic achievement, an image which can be portrayed (often unconsciously) in textbooks showing female role models at home, while men are history-makers and intellectual pioneers. The aims of education in human rights law include ‘the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes’. Addressing the implications of this requirement – what children learn and why – requires the re-orientation of education to contribute to gender equality and mutual respect. This calls for ensuring equality as an explicit focus on economic policies and strategies. To immediately address the extremes of poverty and address vertical inequalities, nation and states should encourage systems of progressive taxation and equitable redistribution, commit to a focus on employment, youth employment, skills and job matching and career advancement.

Addressing inequalities requires political will and leadership and a conscious decision to direct resources, services and power to those who have more difficulty in accessing them. Governmental policies, cultural traditions, familial expectations, and immediate economic pressures hurt the education of girls and women at every level of education. Fortunately, gender inequity in education is amenable to change through public policy which is progressive and positive in approach. Changes in governmental policy can dramatically increase educational opportunities for females of all ages. We need to adopt a central framework based upon equality, equity and human rights that deliberately seeks to improve the life chances of the poorest and most vulnerable with a focus on resources for the most marginalised. This could be done by framing development goals in terms of universal access and human rights, with targets and indicators for every goal that focus on reducing disparities between the rich and poor and addressing the needs of the most marginalised. Even in the era of globalisation implementing social safety nets and protection floor systems is required.

As the most pervasive group based equality, gender equality needs to continue to be a priority. The evidence is now also indisputable that the achievement of other human development goals is dependent on women and girls' empowerment and access to power, resources, services and opportunities. Building on existing international commitments, the next developmental agenda should retain a transformative goal to achieve gender equality and women and girls' empowerment and address the structural factors that contribute to gender inequality by including targets that address strategic priorities that will have a significant impact (Hans, Raghavendra and Sowjanya, 2016). The deadline for MDGs is over but we now have before us the SDGs. Overcoming marginalisation, in the midst of globalisation, holds the key to India's progress.

Primary education for girls while simultaneously building upon the successes of the goal for universal primary education must work for increased quality in education and decreases in drop-out rates emphasising health and employment, as well as the right to equality between the sexes. Where this is not the case in practice, the aims of education as set out in international human rights standards are not maximised. Therefore, education should ensure the full development of the human personality and enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society.

Safe, healthy and prosperous public places (with a private sphere too) is what women need today in the context of some of the troubling gender issues such as honour killing, moral policing and sexual harassment. Not only girl students, but also lady teachers, professors and researchers are not absolutely safe even in educational environs.

The state and society need to re-double commitment to women's economic and political empowerment, and inclusive and equitable quality education as a pre-requisite to achieve sustainable development. Gender equality, women's empowerment and promotion and protection of women's rights catalyse a shift in societies towards economic development, social stability and promote greater equilibrium between societies and nature. Steps are needed to eliminate gender inequality in employment by decreasing women's reliance on informal employment, closing gender gaps in earnings and reducing occupational segregation.

Globalisation, Liberalisation and other socio-economic forces have changed the outlook of the people and have given some respite to a large proportion of the population in general and women in particular. Investing in women's

‘capabilities’ and empowering them to achieve their ‘choices’ and ‘opportunities’ is the surest way to contribute to economic growth and overall development (Patttnaik, 2000). Women need to be given access to programmes of continuing education, including adult and functional literacy programs, particularly those aimed at reducing, at the earliest possible time, any gender gap in education, and also equal opportunities to benefit from scholarships and other study grants. One aspect that needs crucial attention is secondary importance given to women in sports and physical education. Any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women must be eliminated at all levels and in all forms of education by encouraging co-education and other types of education that will help to achieve this aim and, in particular, by revising textbooks in schools and teaching methods. In this open access environment we must provide specific educational information to ensure the health and well-being of women and families, including funds and all other resources required to vindicate their rights through international and national legal systems. This ensures quality in education and human resource development.

Quality education based on a human rights approach means that rights are implemented throughout the whole education system and in all learning environments. The whole legal framework should be so strong that it protects rights of girls/women at all times and situations. Schooling and training, physical and health security, job and financial security, social and political security should be not be just worded but provided in spirit. A big challenge today is in guaranteeing protection from physical abuse, and neglect with context-specific indicators and interventions. There are some attempts in this direction but more needs to be done. So is the case with women’s property and inheritance rights. Higher levels of political participation and collective leadership can contribute much towards this. Meanwhile we have questions to ponder such as – why is individual autonomy less discussed in educational sphere compared to institutional autonomy? Why should topics of feminism and women empowerment be areas of research only for women? Can woman start enjoying dignified and respectful autonomy beginning with her body? Our first hypothesis in such instances must be above (or about?) gender stereotyping (Hans, 2017).

5.2 Current Trends and Future Prospects

The Union Budget 2017-18 is quite promising in that there is a big rise of 18 per cent in government spending on women-related schemes. The allocation for gender-related schemes is up by 18 percent. The gender budget accounted for 4.8 percent of total government spending in Budget 2016-17 and 5.2

percent in 2017-18. PM's pet project Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (Save the girl child, educate the girl child), has been allocated four times more funds for 2017-18. With thrust on raising skills among youth, job creation packages, greater autonomy and innovations in institutions of learning and research (including the University Grants Commission) we seem to be in store for big opportunities and quality changes. All this has to be absorbed very well because as it is India ranks very low in gender development indices. Only 27 percent of women are in the labour force (one of the lowest in Asia, next to Pakistan). About 1403 females never attend any educational institution for every 1000 males who don't. In 2016 India's rank in Global Gender Gap Index was 87. Will it improve?

Conclusion

Today in the agenda of development, every participant or stakeholder plays an active role in the process of development. Whether they be the creators, the receivers, the benefactors or the providers, men or women as equal in his or her capacity to participate in global change. Despite the diversity of the world's people, humanity holds a remarkably clear vision for the future. World of future belongs to the children of today. This vision is one of peace, justice, honesty, equality and rights. These principles become not only the vision but also the means of its implementation and will see our goal of achieving equality and justice being attained. Further progress in our current path of development requires structural change, but most importantly, it requires a significant shift in mind-set and attitude that puts at its core a commitment to equality of all: minorities and majorities, women and men, marginalised and underprivileged. It is only then that we will come closer to our vision of the world we want for all. All individuals have not only a right but a responsibility to play their role in the processes of constructing a world that is more just, more peaceful, more sustain able and one that yields greater happiness for all people. Ultimately, there is no 'us' and 'them'. While we have divided ourselves into 'developed' and 'developing' countries, into 'benefactor' and 'recipients', into 'North' and 'South', we all have much to learn from one another and much to contribute in these efforts. To achieve the levels of solidarity that our vision requires we must attain levels far beyond what we have achieved to date and we must see ourselves as 'we.' We stand for non-discrimination and equity. Education ensures the full development of the human personality irrespective of gender and enables all persons to participate effectively in a free society. For that, we might have to confront issues of traditionalism as well as of professionalism.

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(Footnotes)

¹ Goal Number 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all; and Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

² For more, read Mark Blaug, *An Introduction to the Economics of Education (Modern Economics)*, Penguin Books Ltd., Geneva, 1973; Gary S. Becker, *Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis with Special Reference to Education*, NBER, 1975; Walter W. McMahon, *Consumption Benefits of Education*, BEBR Working Paper, Univ. of Illinois, March 1982; and Tony Marias, *The Consumption Benefits of Education*, Discussion Paper, Univ. of Australia, January 1995.