

A study on Awareness of Gender Discrimination Among the prospective teachers

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Abstract

Gender discrimination is the unfair treatment of someone based on their gender, gender identity, or gender expression. This can manifest in various forms including sexism (bias against people based on sex), misogyny (hatred or disdain towards women), patriarchy (social system favoring men's power and privilege), trans phobia (discrimination against transgender or non-binary individuals), Intersectional discrimination based on multiple identities (e.g. gender, race, class), workplace discrimination and education discrimination (unequal access resources opportunities). Teacher education has passed through a major change in last few years especially with the two year B.Ed. course in the Bihar University (India) syllabus in Gender, School and society has given a lot of insight into what are the responsibilities teacher when it comes to gender equality in school and to what extent we need to change our mindsets and stereotyping on the delivered basis of gender, It also delivered about the biases that student teachers and teacher educators themselves have it comes to gender, and we need a more egalitarian (all people are equal and should have equal opportunities and rights) and open outlook toward this issue in the society which is actually taken very lightly. Education and awareness are crucial in combating discrimination, here some aspects are education, inclusive curriculum integrates diversity equality and inclusion into school curricula. Teacher training equips educators with diversity and inclusion skills. Diversity programs organize workshops, seminar and events promoting diversity. Globally men and women are treated unequally in some way or the other women are the ones who always end up leaving oppressed and marginalized.

Keywords: Gender discrimination, gender stereotyping, student teachers, inequality, egalitarian

Introduction: - India, a country with a rich culture heritage and diverse population, still grapples with various forms of discrimination this country offers a variety in every social aspect of life the Indian context is divers on various grounds like ethnicity linguistic, regional, regional, class, cast, urban, and rural north India and south India etc. still India is the largest democracy in the world. The education sector, particularly teacher education institutions, is not immune to these issues students' teachers in India often face discrimination based on other social, economic and cultural backgrounds.

Globally men and women are treated unequally in some way or the other women are the ones who always ends up doing oppressed and marginalized. According to Egwen (200 female constitutes over 50% of the world population still women get the luxury of few rights and are on the disadvantaged side. Almost half of the university student's population reports exposure to gender based discriminatory behavior (Dasli & saricobar, 2016). Robinsor and bell (1978) argued the females face disadvantages of opportunities, thus more conscious if the inequality men than "In a survey, 57% participants agreed to send their sons to schools and higher education institutes instead of their daughter (Tisdell 2002). Female university students "Jowards" women are more reaction to the topic in politics and economics especially when the topics were taught in manner that highlighted their awareness and respective on gender inequality. It was also found that the teacher's action in the equality if gender leaves an impact on the students' mind (Bukhari, 2013) (Channar, 2011).

The Study conducted on Gender awareness and attitude toward equality among students taking part in teacher training by Magia E., Biinab H., Trasbergc K., & Kruusd in 2016 used a mixed method design. The finding suggests that students perceive that, men have better position than women in the Estonian society. Only 17% of prospective teachers perceive that situation of men and women are equal.

The finding did supply some insights on the expectations and attitudes of the students in terms of treating the issue of gender inequality in university studies. The expectations of teacher training students concerning teaching of gender topics were high as compared to students of other subjects. Even though the expectations were high, yet the discussion of the issue related to only a few subjects, therefore the level of awareness among the teacher trainees was very shallow. Many students were not aware of the gender equality act as a law. Another finding showed that students

were not even aware of the degree to which their teacher educators were aware of the gender issues.

Study also revealed that lecture method is not a suitable method to deal with topics related to gender and equality rather dialoguing is more effective and other methods like group work etc.

The aim of the study on Attitude of male and female university students towards gender discrimination, conducted by Mussarat J., K. Arooj, H. Arif, N. Nazir. M. Nosheen was to decide the attitudes of men and women about gender inequality and the relationship of other variables such as age and educational levels of the individuals with respect to gender inequality. Findings show that there was more favorable attitude towards gender discrimination amongst the female students as compared to the males. There was no difference among graduates and undergraduate students on attitude towards gender discrimination. The gender stereotypes are also established through the toys that are given to children for playing. This leaves a deep-rooted belief in the difference between males and females.

The student during (Mussarat J Khan, 2018) the interview highlighted on the fixation of gender roles and self-reinforcing gender stereotypes at home and in school. It was though also found out that Estonians did not consider gender inequality an important problem, thus bringing in the idea that there is a big gap in reality and their perception towards the reality. The ability to find the gender discrimination is reduced due to the gender stereotyping that exists in the society. The low awareness of the importance of gender equality and the consequence of the inequality is deeply rooted in the mindset and attitude towards gender inequality and the inability to address it.

The present study is an attempt to understand the awareness level of the prospective teachers who are a part of an urban population and have better exposure to life. Venturing into teaching what role they have to play in building the future citizens is very important hence it is imperative that they know about the societal issues that we face in day-to-day life on the basis construct like gender. Thus, the objective of the study was to find the awareness level.

Type of Discrimination

1. Caste- Based Discrimination

Despite laws prohibiting caste- based discrimination, student teachers from marginalization castes often face bias & exclusion

2. Gender based discrimination: - Female student teachers may encounter sexism harassment and in equal opportunities

3. **Socio-Economic discrimination:** - Students from lower socio-economic backgrounds may struggle to access resources, opportunities and social networks
4. **Regional and linguistic discrimination:** - Student teachers from regional or linguistic minority groups may face language barriers, cultural insensitivity, and limited opportunities
5. **Religious Discrimination:** - Student teachers from minority religious groups may face prejudice and exclusion.

Impact of Discrimination

Discrimination can have severe consequences on student teachers' academic performance on student teachers' academic performance, mental health, and professional development, it can lead to:

- **Social isolation**
- **Limited career opportunities**
- **Mental health issues**
- **Low self-esteem and confidence**
- **Poor academic performance**

Addressing Discrimination

To create an inclusive and equitable learning environment, teacher education institutions must acknowledge and address these forms of discrimination strategies can include:

- a. Sensitization and awareness programs
- b. Zero- Tolerance policy for discriminatory behavior
- c. Inclusive curriculum design
- d. Diversity and equality training for faculty.
- e. Support system for marginalized students

By recognizing and addressing

Discrimination, India can cultivate more inclusive and equitable education system, empowering student teachers to become agents of positive change.

Key Elements

1. **Institutional bias:** Teacher education institutions in Bihar often perpetuate gender-based discrimination, with inadequate infrastructure, biased curriculum, and unequal opportunities.

2. Societal norms and expectations: Female student teachers face pressure to conform to traditional gender roles, limiting their career aspirations and autonomy.

3. Limited access to resources: Female student teachers face barriers in accessing resources, such as technology, libraries, and mentorship opportunities.

4. Sexism and harassment: Female student teachers are vulnerable to sexism, harassment, and violence, affecting their mental health and well-being.

- **Diversity and Representation:** Include diverse perspectives, experiences, and representations of various social groups.
- **Equity and Accessibility:** Ensure equal access to learning opportunities for all students, regardless of their background, ability, or disability.
- **Cultural Responsiveness:** Incorporate culturally responsive teaching practices that value students' cultural backgrounds and experiences.
- **Critical Thinking and Reflection:** Encourage critical thinking, reflection, and analysis of social justice issues and power dynamics.
- **Flexibility and Adaptability:** Design curriculum that is flexible and adaptable to meet the diverse needs of students.

Strategies for Inclusive Curriculum Design

- **Integrate Diverse Texts and Resources:** Incorporate texts, images, and resources that reflect diverse perspectives and experiences.
- **Use Inclusive Language:** Use language that is inclusive and respectful of all students, regardless of their background, ability, or disability.
- **Incorporate Multiple Learning Styles:** Incorporate various learning styles, such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic, to engage students with different learning needs.
- **Address Power Dynamics and Social Justice:** Address power dynamics and social justice issues, such as racism, sexism, and ableism, to promote critical thinking and reflection.
- **Involve Students in Curriculum Design:** Involve students in the curriculum design process to ensure that their voices and perspectives are represented.

Benefits of Inclusive Curriculum Design

- **Improved Student Engagement:** Inclusive curriculum design can improve student engagement and motivation.
- **Increased Sense of Belonging:** Inclusive curriculum design can increase students' sense of belonging and connection to the learning material.
- **Better Academic Outcomes:** Inclusive curriculum design can lead to better academic outcomes for all students.
- **Preparation for a Diverse World:** Inclusive curriculum design can prepare students for a diverse and complex world.
- **Promoting Social Justice:** Inclusive curriculum design can promote social justice and equity by addressing power dynamics and systemic inequalities.

Challenges and Limitations

- **Resistance to Change:** Some educators and stakeholders may resist changes to the curriculum.
- **Limited Resources:** Inclusive curriculum design may require additional resources, such as training and materials.
- **Balancing Competing Demands:** Educators may struggle to balance competing demands, such as meeting state standards and incorporating inclusive practices.
- **Assessing Inclusivity:** Assessing the inclusivity of curriculum design can be challenging.
- **Sustaining Inclusive Practices:** Sustaining inclusive practices over time can be difficult.

Inclusive curriculum design is essential for promoting equity, diversity, and social justice in education. By incorporating diverse perspectives, experiences, and representations, educators can create learning environments that are inclusive and engaging for all students. While there are challenges and limitations to inclusive curriculum design, the benefits of improved student engagement, increased sense of belonging, and better academic outcomes make it a worthwhile pursuit.

Sensitization and training: Sensitization is the process of raising awareness and understanding of social issues, such as gender equality, diversity, and inclusion.

Objectives: Sensitization aims to challenge stereotypes, biases, and prejudices, and promote empathy, tolerance, and respect for diversity.

Methods: Sensitization can be achieved through workshops, training sessions, discussions, role-playing, and exposure to diverse perspectives and experiences.

Training: Training is a structured learning experience designed to enhance knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Objectives: Training aims to equip individuals with the necessary skills and competencies to promote inclusivity, diversity, and social justice.

Methods: Training can be delivered through various formats, such as workshops, lectures, case studies, group work, and coaching.

Key Components of Sensitization and Training

Gender Equality: Understanding and promoting gender equality, challenging patriarchal norms and stereotypes.

Diversity and Inclusion: Recognizing and valuing diversity, promoting inclusive practices and challenging discriminatory behaviors.

Social Justice: Understanding and addressing social injustices, such as racism, sexism, homophobia, and ableism.

Power Dynamics: Recognizing and challenging power imbalances, promoting equitable relationships and decision-making processes.

Emotional Intelligence: Developing self-awareness, empathy, and social skills to effectively interact with diverse individuals and groups.

Benefits of Sensitization and Training

Increased Awareness: Enhanced understanding of social issues and their impact on individuals and communities.

Improved Relationships: More effective and inclusive interactions with diverse individuals and groups.

Enhanced Skills: Developed competencies to promote inclusivity, diversity, and social justice.

Positive Attitude Shifts: Changes in attitudes and behaviors, leading to a more inclusive and equitable environment.

Increased Empathy: Greater understanding and empathy for diverse perspectives and experiences.

Challenges and Limitations

Resistance to Change: Some individuals may resist changes in their attitudes and behaviors.

Limited Time and Resources: Insufficient time and resources may hinder the effectiveness of sensitization and training initiatives.

Cultural and Social Barriers: Cultural and social norms may create barriers to promoting inclusivity and diversity.

Sustainability: Ensuring the sustainability of sensitization and training initiatives can be challenging.

Evaluation and Assessment: Assessing the effectiveness of sensitization and training initiatives can be difficult.

Recommendations

1. **Inclusive curriculum design:** Integrate gender-sensitive perspectives and content into teacher education programs.
2. **Sensitization and training:** Provide regular training and sensitization programs for faculty, staff, and students to address gender-based discrimination.
3. **Infrastructure development:** Improve infrastructure, including separate facilities for female students, to create a safe and inclusive environment.
4. **Mentorship and support:** Establish mentorship programs and support systems for female student teachers to promote their academic and professional growth.

Future Directions

1. **Community engagement:** Engage with local communities, parents, and teachers to raise awareness about gender equality and promote inclusive practices.
2. **Research and data collection:** Conduct regular research and collect data to monitor and address gender-based discrimination in teacher education institutions.

3. **Policy reforms:** Advocate for policy reforms at the state and national levels to promote gender equality and address discrimination in education.

By addressing gender discrimination amongst student teachers in Bihar, we can create a more inclusive and equitable education system, empowering female teachers to become agents of positive change.

DISCUSSION & SUGGESTIONS

The study shows that gender discrimination is a submerged part in the Indian society and its eradication is yet to happen. Though we belong to 21st century and call ourselves a developing nation, Individuals, especially students still have to undergo the watcheyes of the society face the discrimination because of gender and stereotypes that people have in their mind. The future of the nation or any part of society depends largely on the teachers' attitudes and how they handle the various societal issues in the classroom and school. Thus, the researcher suggests some revamping of teacher education as follows -

There need to be brought about a conceptual change in the administration where there are preferences when it comes to recruit manpower because of gender.

Teacher Education curriculum needs to undergo a change to bring about the change in perspectives of teachers and make them aware of the present context of the gender related issues and what progress we have made in the field of education.

Students of different genders need to be motivated to join the teaching field to remove the stereotype that exists that female can be better teachers.

Conclusion: Gender Discrimination amongst Student Teachers in Bihar Gender discrimination amongst student teachers in Bihar is a pervasive and complex issue. The existing power dynamics, societal norms, and institutional practices perpetuate inequality, affecting the academic, personal, and professional lives of female student teachers.

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