

# Impact of Gender Inequality in Education on Economic Development: A Review of Evidences

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## ABSTRACT

Education seeks to nourish the good qualities and draw out the best in an individual. Education gives an individual some desirable knowledge, understanding skills, interests, attitudes and critical thinking. Gender inequality in education refers to the inequality in education between females and males. The paper reviews the evidences on the impact of gender inequality in education on economic development. Firstly, it presents the review of evidences on the impact of gender inequality in education on economic development at global level, secondly, it presents the review of evidences on the impact of gender inequality in education on economic development at national level and thirdly, it presents the review of evidences on the impact of gender inequality in education on economic development at regional level. The study finds the significant negative impact of gender inequality in education on economic development at global level, national level and regional level. The paper concludes that steps need to be taken to reduce gender inequality in education for development.

**Keywords:** Development, education, gender, inequality, review.

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## INTRODUCTION

Gender refers to either of the two sexes (male or female), especially when considered with reference to social and cultural differences rather than biological ones. Inequality refers to the condition of being unequal or lack of equality or disparity. Inequality between female and male may be of various kinds. As far as economic aspects are considered, disparity in education, life expectancy and professional life can be mentioned. However, differences in physical structure and bodily strength between female and male are certainly not of discriminatory nature but simply a biological fact.

Education seeks to nourish the good qualities and draw out the best in an individual. Thus, education seeks to develop the innate inner capacities of an individual. Education gives an individual some desirable knowledge, understanding, skills, interests, attitudes and critical thinking. Gender inequality in education means inequality in education between females and males.

Gender inequality in education is a function of gender discrimination and patriarchal social and cultural structures. According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the disadvantages faced by women and girls are a major source of inequality and, all too often, women and girls are discriminated in health, education, political representation, labour market etc. with negative repercussions for development of their capability and their freedom of choice. The pervasive denial of the human right to education experienced by women and girls across the globe by the fact that two third of the world's non-literate adults are women is a striking example of gender discrimination and therefore true gender equality in education and beyond remained far from being achieved (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 2012). According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation Institute for Statistics (UIS), as in June 2014, 758 million adults in the world are illiterates out of which 279 million are men and 479 are women that makes 63 per cent of the global illiterate adult population.

Economic development implies economic growth plus progressive changes in certain important variables which determine well-being of the people. The paper aims to review the evidences on the impact of gender inequality in education on economic development at global level, national level and local or micro level.

## METHODOLOGY

The paper reviews the evidences on the impact of gender inequality in education on economic development. Firstly, the evidences of the impact of gender inequality in education on economic development at global level is presented.

Secondly, the evidences of the impact of gender inequality in education on economic development at national level is presented. Thirdly, the evidences of the impact of gender inequality in education on economic development at local level or micro level is presented.

## DISCUSSION

### **Evidence of the impact of gender inequality in education at global level:**

Cagatay (1998) in his study mentioned that women's lack of control over fertility decisions, gender gaps in wages, gender biases against girl's education, norms about child marriage of girls and women's limited mobility stood as obstacles in escaping from poverty. Based on the Human Development Report, 1997, he observed that across countries there were relationships between general level of human poverty and gender inequality.

Using cross country and panel regressions, Klasen in 2002 found that, by lowering the average level of human capital gender inequality in education directly affected economic growth. Further, he observed that growth was indirectly affected through the impact on investment and population growth by gender inequality.

Balioune-Lutz, et al (2007) found for African and Arab countries that gender inequalities in literacy had a statistically significant negative effect that was robust to changes in specification and the results associated with the effects of gender inequality in primary and secondary enrolment were less robust. Further, the results showed that higher gender inequality had an even stronger effect on income growth in Arab countries and in more open economies. They also found that gender inequality in literacy seemed to have an additional effect, but this effect was positive indicating that trade-induced growth may be accompanied by gender inequalities.

Moheyuddin in 2005 found that gender inequality in education has negative relation with economic growth.

Balatchandirane (2007) for a number of Asian countries found that, every country that positively attempted to reduce gender discrimination in education was enormously benefited economically and otherwise.

Klasen and Lamanna (2009), for the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia, observed that gender gaps in education and employment considerably reduced economic growth.

Mukherjee and Mukhopadhyay (2013) investigated how gender inequality in education and labour force participation affect economic growth, using cross country regressions. Their result revealed that gender inequality in education adversely affects economic growth.

Al Rakhis (2015) in her study for Arab Region found no significant relationship between gender inequality in education and the labour force on economic growth.

In 2015, Licumba, Dzator and Zhang for five Southern African countries found a positive and significant effect of gender equality in education on economic growth.

Kleven and Landais (2017), documented gender convergence in educational attainment and considered its effects on earnings inequality for a huge number of countries and argued that these were significant but less dramatic than the effects of fertility.

Ezeh (2020) examined the impact of gender inequality in education on economic growth using 40 Sub-Saharan African Countries. Using ordinary least squares and fixed effect within group estimator in a panel data set, the main findings suggest that there exists a statistically significant negative relationship of gender inequality in education at the primary and secondary level on economic growth.

Altuzarra, Galvez-Galvez and Gonzalez-Flores (2021) in their study upon "Is Gender Inequality a Barrier to Economic Growth? A Panel Data Analysis of Developing Countries" found that gender equality in education contributes to economic growth and it is a common feature in developing countries.

### **Evidence of the impact of gender inequality in education at national level:**

Pervez, et al (2011) in their study analysed the impacts of gender inequality on economic growth of Pakistan. They used the data for the period 1972-2009. They regressed growth rate of real gross domestic product per capita on labour force growth, investment, trade openness and a composite index of gender inequality. They found that labour force growth, investment and trade openness had statistically significant and positive impact whereas gender inequality had a significant and negative effect on economic growth.

Akram, Bashir and Hamid in 2011 analysed the impact of gender equality on economic growth in Pakistan by taking the data for the period of 1972-2010 and using the cointegration analysis. They showed that gender inequalities in

education undermine economic growth and if these inequalities are removed then the country may grow faster. They also found that, in comparison to gender inequalities at primary and secondary level, gender inequalities at higher level are more severe for economic growth.

Erdogan, Yildirimand Tosuner(2012) in their study “The Effect of Gender Inequality in Education on Health: Evidence from Turkey”, mentioned that the reduction in infant and under five mortality rates and increase in life expectancy at birth are the basic indicators of improvements in health. The result of their study reveals that the effect of gender inequality in education on health is positive in the long run.

To examine the impact of gender inequality in education on economic growth for Turkey, Yumusak (2013) analysed in detail the relationship between primary schooling, high schooling, vocational high schooling and university education with economic growth and found a long run negative relationship between gender inequality in education and economic growth.

Ali (2015) found a positive relationship between economic growth and gender equality in education and empowerment in Pakistan. Moreover, he found that, labour force participation rate of male age 15+, labour force participation rate of female age 15+, gender parity index and openness of trade, exports and imports have a positive impact on Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth which means that if the gender inequality is reduced then there will be increase in GDP growth of Pakistan in long run.

#### **Evidence of the impact of gender inequality in education at local or micro level:**

Arora (2012) in her study used access to education and health as the indicators of gender inequality and examined gender inequality and state level openness in the different states of India. The study showed that at the sub-national level in India higher per capita income was accompanied with lower gender inequality. However, in some high-income states gender inequality was found to be very high. Higher gender inequality was also observed in the states which score high in the openness index.

Basumatary and Das (2015) investigated how and to what extent gender bias in education affected total fertility rate, infant mortality rate, birth rate, death rate, overall sex ratio, life expectancy at birth, net state domestic product, per capita net state domestic product and development of education in Assam, India. They found that gender bias in education had significantly positive impact on total fertility rate, infant mortality rate, birth rate, death rate and negative impact on sex ratio, life expectancy, net state domestic product, per capita net state domestic product and development of education.

Rahman, Chaudhry and Farooq (2018) explored the impact of gender inequality in education on poverty in Multan district of Pakistan. By using logistic regression, they found that gender inequality in education has adverse impact on household poverty.

### **CONCLUSION**

It is observed that the impact of gender inequality in education has negative impact(s) on economy at the international, national and local/ regional levels. The development of an economy is obstructed by the negative impact of gender inequality in education on economic growth or other sectors of the economy. Therefore, gender inequality in education should be reduced or eliminated. The decision makers need to make policies to reduce or eliminate gender inequality in education. While making the policies, the reasons of the gender inequality in education need to be taken into account.

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