ISSN: 2230-9926

Available online at http://www.journalijdr.com

IJDR

International Journal of
DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

International Journal of Development Research
Vol. 06, Issue, 09, pp.9513-9516, September, 2016

Full Length Research Article

STATUS OF FEMALE EDUCATION IN THE SOCIETY

***Dr. Preeti Malik**

Department of Business Administration, Maharaja Surajmal Institute, (Affiliated to Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University), C-4, Janak Puri, New Delhi-110058, India

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 22nd June, 2016
Received in revised form
19th July, 2016
Accepted 21st August, 2016
Published online 30th September, 2016

Key Words:

Education,
Socio-Economic Development,
Global Governance,
Female Deprivation,
Gender Imbalances.

ABSTRACT

This paper represents and discusses the findings of recent research related to the female education and its impact on the social and the economic benefits. This also considers the pathways through which females schooling leads to social gains. Females account for roughly half the world's population, perform two-thirds of the hours worked, receive one-tenth of the world's income, and have less than one hundredth of the world's property registered in their names. Female deprivation is particularly acute in the developing countries with high levels of poverty, though in affluent nations female also suffer low status due to conservative attitudes.

INTRODUCTION

There are two extraordinary statements about the education of female. First, that female's education is of greater importance than male's education and, secondly, that not until the equality of opportunity in education for the two genders is established will the foundations of war be removed. These challenging ideas deserve study in order for us to understand their meaning. The principle of sexual equality in education - one facet of the general principle of the equality of the sex was revolutionary. It was set forth more than half a century before western thought added sexual equality to its list of rationally-based moral principles of relevance to political life, such as democracy, secularism, and the rights of the individual and long before it became enshrined in numerous national and international documents as a politically correct, universal value. In the political and economic spheres, for example, this is conspicuous presently in the enthusiasm for global governance among thinkers, academics, and international institutions. It can also be seen in the acceptance, among many influential opinion-makers, of the need for a world currency and for international economic policy coordination.

****Corresponding author: Dr. Preeti Malik***
Department of Business Administration, Maharaja Surajmal Institute, (Affiliated to Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University), C-4, Janak Puri, New Delhi-110058, India

Objectives of the Study

- To analyze the economic and social gains from female education
- To study the pathways through which female education affects social outcomes
- To analyze the effects of Gender equality in education

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was explorative cum descriptive in nature. It is an empirical research based upon the secondary data. The secondary data was collected through study of various academic works in the relevant field.

Status of Female Education

Females account for roughly half the world's population, perform two-thirds of the hours worked, receive one-tenth of the world's income, and have less than one hundredth of the world's property registered in their names. Female deprivation is particularly acute in the developing countries with high levels of poverty, though in affluent nations female also suffer low status due to conservative attitudes. The most dramatic and telling statistic of female's status is the sex-ratio in the

population, that is, the number of females per 100 males. It is a well-known fact that life-expectancy at birth favors females. This appears to be a biological constant. Yet, the proportion of females to males varies greatly across different regions of the world. For example, the proportion of females is 52.5% in the industrialized world but in sub-Saharan Africa female account for only 51% of the population. The figures are 48% of the population in East Asia and less than 47% in South Asia. From figures such as these, economist Amartya Sen has estimated that there are 100 million female "missing" in the world. Sen describes the fate of these female as "one of the more momentous problems facing the contemporary world."

This is a moral as well as a development related problem. The overwhelming reason why 100 million female are missing in the world is excess female mortality. In the developed world, female outlive male by an average of six years; by contrast, in large parts of South Asia, male can expect to live longer than female. Differential mortality is only the most dramatic manifestation of systematic discrimination against females. Female and girls are more likely to be impoverished than male and boys. Also, studies have found that girls are fed less than their brothers and that their illnesses are less likely to be treated. It should come as no surprise then that, in most regions of the world, female literacy and education fall far short of male literacy and education while poverty and cultural factors must surely influence the extent of female deprivation, they do not explain it entirely. For example, sub-Saharan Africa is one of the poorest regions of the world but the problem of excess mortality of females is much less severe there than in South Asia.

The Economic and Social Gains from Female Education

Equality of the sexes - in terms of male and female's command over resources, their access to education and health, and in terms of freedom to develop their potential - has an intrinsic value in its own right. The equal treatment of the sexes for intrinsic reasons is, in the parlance of welfare economics, the equity reason for reducing gender-imbalances. A second important reason in favor of reducing gender-imbalances is what might be termed the instrumental reason, that is, the gains to be had from granting equality. For example, if with equal education, female's contribution to economic development (or to other desirable goals) is comparable to males, then reducing gender-imbalances in education will enhance female's capacity to contribute to economic progress. This is the efficiency reason for reducing gender inequality in areas where female are currently deprived.

Economic efficiency

Human capital theory suggests that just as physical capital (machines) augments people's economic productivity, so human capital acquired through education improves the productivity of individuals. Studies of the sources of economic growth demonstrate persuasively that education plays a major role as a factor in the rise of output per worker. The new growth theories in economics place education and human resource development at the centre of their explanation for long-term economic growth. Confidence has grown in the belief that education affects economic growth because many studies have shown the positive correlation between a country's educational effort and its economic status, and causality has been attributed to education. Prominent examples of this are the so-called "miracle" economies of East Asia. If female schooling raises human capital, productivity, and economic growth as much as male schooling does, then female's disadvantage in education is economically inefficient. Research world-wide shows that, in general, the economic benefits from female's education - calculated as the economic rate of return to education - are comparable to those from male's education. Thus, from the point of view of economic efficiency, the gender gap in education is undesirable.

Social efficiency

While the economic benefits of educating girls are similar in size to the economic benefits of providing education to the boys, recent findings suggest that the social benefits from investing in female education are far greater than those from investing in male education. Specifically, female education has powerful effects on the total fertility rate (and hence on population growth), the infant mortality rate, the female disadvantage in child survival, and on child health and nutrition. By contrast, statistical analyses show that male schooling has relatively much smaller effects on these important social outcomes. For example, a recent study by Subbarao and Raney (2005) using national aggregate data from 72 countries regressed the total fertility rate of 1995 on the male and female secondary school enrolment rates lagged by 10 years, i.e. on the enrolment rates of 2005. The objective was to examine the effect of education on fertility, controlling for a number of other factors such as family planning service provision and per capita income. The results show that female secondary school enrolment (lagged by 10 years) is inversely correlated with the total fertility rate but that male secondary school enrolment shows no strong correlation.

Similarly, a regression of the 2005 infant mortality rate on 10 year lagged male and female secondary school enrolment rates shows that while female education is associated with lower infant mortality, male education has no statistically significant effect. A similar exercise by Murthi, Guio, and Drèze for India using district level aggregated data shows that whereas the district female literacy rate had a strong inverse correlation on the district average total fertility rate, on under-five child mortality rate, and on the female disadvantage in child survival, the district male literacy rate had no significant effect on each of these outcomes. Moreover, district per capita income, urbanization, and the spread of medical facilities were not statistically significant determinants of total fertility rate. While these latter three variables do have positive effects on child survival levels, their effects were relatively small compared with the powerful effect of female literacy. Numerous studies have been carried out using household-level data that confirm the findings from studies using aggregate data. To cite one example, an examination of the determinants of fertility in fourteen countries of sub-Saharan Africa by Ainsworth, Beegle, and Nyamete (2006) using household survey data shows an inverse correlation between female schooling and fertility in virtually all of the countries, though the relationship is non-linear: female primary schooling has an inverse relation with fertility in about half of the countries only

but female secondary schooling is universally associated with lower fertility, and the strength of the correlation increases with increasing years of schooling. Among ever-married female, husband's schooling has no significant relation with fertility in about one-third of the countries.

Moreover, in cases where both female's and male are schooling matter, female's schooling exerts a much larger negative effect on fertility than male's schooling. Simulations show that the benefits from expanding female education are far greater than the benefits from other public interventions such as improving family planning service provision or increasing the number of physicians in the population. For example, Subbarao and Raney (footnote 12) found that a doubling of the 1995 average secondary school enrolment ratio in the 72 sample countries from 19% to 38% would have reduced the average number of births in 2005 by 29% compared to the actual number in 2005, whereas a doubling of the family planning provision would have reduced the number of births by only 3.5%. The gains in terms of deaths averted are also striking. Simulations predict that doubling the female secondary school enrolment ratio from 19% to 38% in 1995 reduces infant deaths in 2005 by 64% while doubling the number of physicians reduces the number of infant deaths by a mere 2.5%. Doubling per capita income (or GDP) from the average of $650 in the 72 sample countries to $1300 would have no effect on the number of infant deaths! Subbarao and Raney also reported data on desired family size from the World Fertility Survey for 37 countries.

Econometric analysis of this data suggested that after controlling for per capita income, female secondary school enrolment was a highly significant determinant of desired family size (and therefore of the total fertility rate and population growth rate). Male school enrolment ratio, however, had no impact on desired family size. Finally, a large body of microeconomic evidence shows that increases in female's education generally lead to increases in their labor force participation as well as in their earnings. Educated female's greater participation in labor market work and their higher earnings are thought to be good for their own status (economic models say "bargaining power") within the household, and are good for their children because it appears that a greater proportion of female's income than male's is spent on child goods. On the down side, it may be thought that educated female's greater labor force participation takes them away from their children for longer periods of time (than is the case for uneducated or less educated female) and this may disadvantage educated female's children through neglect. At present this is a relatively non researched issue. However, limited evidence suggests that children whose mothers work have just as good or better educational outcomes than children whose mothers do not work.

The findings in the studies cited above are corroborated by international as well as national studies, and they demonstrate the powerful role of female's agency and female's educational empowerment in reducing desired family size, fertility, population growth, child morbidity, child mortality, and gender-bias in child mortality, while at the same time showing that male's education mattered comparatively less to these important social outcomes.

Pathways through which education affects social outcomes

Why should education of females significantly reduce the fertility and mortality rates and improve child health? What are the pathways through which girls' education leads to these social gains? Economists tend to focus on the role of incentives as a way of understanding phenomena. They reason that female education lowers the fertility rate by reducing desired family size and that this, in turn, is because education raises the value of female's economic activities by raising the labor market rewards from going out of the home for work. In other words, the opportunity-cost of staying at home for child bearing and rearing increases as female become more educated and, so, educated female desire smaller families. Education may also change female's preferences about the quantity versus the quality of children, with educated female choosing fewer children but of better "quality". Moreover, as mentioned earlier, recent research suggests that a greater proportion of female's cash income than males is spent on child goods, so that female's education and the consequent increase in female's income would appear to have particular benefits for child quality. Education of female improves child health because of educated mothers' greater knowledge of the importance of hygiene and of simple remedies. All this lowers infant mortality, which in turn means that a family does not need to have a large number of children in order to hedge against the possibility of premature death of some children. Further, it appears that education of female's increases the age at marriage (or at cohabitation) and through this delay, lowers the total fertility rate, i.e. number of children ever born to a woman. Finally, some studies find that mother's education has a greater impact on the educational attainment and school achievement of children than father's education. This is plausible given the greater interaction between mother and children in most families since, in most countries, fathers are usually the main earners in the household. In this way, education of females contributes more significantly (than the education of males) to increases in human capital, productivity, and economic growth not only in their own generation but also in the next generation.

Gender Equality in Education: A Universal Value?

It appears that there is an increasing challenge to the principle of gender equality not only from religious fundamentalists but also from a broader current, particularly in Asia, that questions the universality of the principle, contesting it as a "western value". For example, when a recent study found that Pakistan had forgone much economic growth between 1990 and 2005 because of its large scale failure to invest in the education of its females, a large group of angry Pakistani economics academics called education of females a "western value" and argued that education of females had led to increased incidence of divorce, family breakdown and social problems in western countries. As Fred Halliday, professor of International Relations at London School of Economics, says, perhaps the most pervasive and difficult of all the moral issues confronting the world at the moment is that of universal versus particular values. Indeed, the Pakistani detractors who questioned the usefulness of female's education and claimed that it had wrought family breakdown in western countries might have a

valid argument. Access to education *per se* is not sufficient; the content of education is also important.

The Way Forward

In order to see how more girls can be educated, it is essential to ask what holds them back from gaining education currently. There are many reasons why female's education seriously lags behind male's education, particularly in developing countries as seen in Table 1. The most commonly cited is that in certain societies many parents continue to envisage a strict gender division of labor. If for most of her adult life a daughter will be a housewife, it seems pointless to educate her. The immense contribution that education can make to female's efficiency in child rearing and in domestic tasks is insufficiently recognized. In some countries, societal norms such as early age marriage or the dowry system militate against girls' education. But, most importantly, when people live on low incomes - as in rural areas of all developing countries - it is the mismatch between the costs and benefits of girls' schooling that causes the gender gap in education to persist. In most developing countries, where typically there is no social security or state pension, male children still provide old age support to their parents but female children do not, any benefits of a daughter's education being reaped by her in-laws. Thus the expenditure on boys' schooling results in benefits for the parents but not expenditure on girls' schooling. In other words, there is an asymmetry in parental incentives to educate sons and daughters.

These explanations of the gender disadvantage in schooling have important policy implications. First, they suggest the need for public education about the intrinsic and instrumental value of female's education. Such a policy step would aim to change conservative attitudes towards girls' schooling. Secondly, they suggest that public policy should compensate for the asymmetry in parental incentives to educate girls and boys by giving extra subsidies for girls' schooling. This makes sense because many of the benefits of girls' education are public benefits, i.e. they accrue not only to the educated individual and her family but also to society in general - for example, lower infant mortality and fertility rates. One further policy suggestion is that governments should improve the economic incentives for female's education by attempting to reduce job and wage discrimination against female in the labor market, for example, through stricter labor legislation. This would raise the economic returns to female's education. Evidence suggests that cultural inhibitions can be overcome if the labor market (i.e. economic) incentives for acquiring education are strong enough.

Conclusion

At the end via this paper we can conclude that the findings of recent research showing that the social gains from female schooling are generally far greater than those from male schooling. These findings have led, in recent years, to a widespread recognition of the importance of female's education, though the principle still faces challenges from certain quarters. International agencies that provide development assistance to economically less developed countries have come to realize the momentous advantages of expanding girls' access to schooling and are now enthusiastically championing the cause. The main policy prescriptions of this paper are that governments and other organizations should attempt to educate people about the equity and efficiency benefits of female education and that public policy should encourage girls' access to schooling by extra subsidies in order to compensate for the asymmetry in parental incentives to educate sons and daughters in poor societies. I have also argued that education *per se* is not sufficient. It is clear that societies which have achieved universal education are currently extremely deficient socially despite their economic prosperity. The next step in the evolution of secular thinking will, it is hoped, be in the important area of the content of education.

REFERENCES

Ainsworth, M. Beegle, K. and Nyamete, A. 2006. "The Impact of Female's Schooling on Fertility and Contraceptive Use: A Study of Fourteen Sub-Saharan African Countries," *World Bank Economic Review* 10.1 (January): 85-122.

Amartya Sen, 1999. "Female's Survival as a Development Problem," *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 43, 14-29. Also see A. Sen, "Missing Female," *British Medical Journal* 304 (2002): 587-8.

Birdsall, N., Ross, D. and Sabot, R. 2004. "Underinvestment in Education: How Much Growth Has Pakistan Forgone?" *Pakistan Development Review* 32.4 (Winter): 453-92.

For a recent example of such a study, see Geeta Gandhi Kingdon, "Does the Labor Market Explain Lower Female Schooling in India?" Development Economics Research Programme, STICERD Discussion Paper No. 1 (New Series), London School of Economics, January 2007

Fred Halliday, 2003. "The New World and its Discontents," Discussion Paper No. 4, Centre for the Study of Global Governance, London School of Economics, 2003.

Janet Momsen, 2006. *Female and Development in the Third World* (London: Routledge) 1-2.

John Hoddinott and Lawrence Haddad, 2005. "Does Female Income Share Influence Household Expenditures?" *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics* 57.1, 77-96.

Murthi, M. Guio, A. and Drèze, J. 2007. "Mortality, fertility, and gender bias in India," in J. Drèze and A.Sen (eds.), *Indian Development: Selected Regional Perspectives* (Delhi: Oxford University Press).

Paul Streeten's paper "Global Institutions for an Interdependent World," *World Development* (Sept 2009).

Schultz, T.P. 2003. "Returns to female's education," chapter 2 in E. King and M. Hill (eds.), *Female's education in developing countries* (Washington D.C.: Johns Hopkins Press for the World Bank).

Simon Appleton, 2006. "How Does Female Education Affect Fertility? A Structural Model for Cote D'Ivoire," *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics* 58.1 (February): 139-66.

Strauss, J. and Thomas, D. 2005. "Human Resources: Empirical modelling of household and family decisions," in J. Behrman and T.N. Srinivasan (eds.), *Handbook of Development Economics*, Vol III.

Subbarao, K. and Raney, L. 2005. "Social Gains from Female Education: A Cross-National Study," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 44.1 (October 2005): 105-128.

****