Chapter-II

Gender in the Mainstream Debate on Right and Education

2.1. Concept of Gender:

The growth of feminist debates in the west highlight the ideas about the equal worth of all human beings centralizing on the rights of women to counter the prevailing male centred perspectives on society. Such debates focus mainly on the matters of equal treatment and equality of opportunity for all in socio-political and economic sphere and more specifically in the field of education.

At present the word 'Gender' is being used as a conceptual category by assigning it a special meaning in sociological studies. 'Gender refers to the socio cultural definition of man and women, the way societies distinguish men and women and assign them special roles. It is used as an analytical tool to understand, social realities with regard to women and men'. (Bhasin, 2000).

Broadly speaking, different schools of feminism assume the human identity, particularly with reference to gender, is either the product of socio- historical conditioning or is biologically determined. They either subscribe to the view that traits such as masculinity and feminity are biologically determined or that they are the

products of complex interplay of socio- cultural or historical conditioning. (Poonacha, 1995).This is true in the sense that 'each society slowly transforms a male or female into a man or a woman, into masculine or feminine, with different qualities, behaviour, patterns, roles, responsibilities, rights and expectations.' (Bhasin, 2000).

Social norms play a significant role in explaining why and how gender differentiation occurs, how it becomes legitimized through divisions of labour results in the contributions of girls and boys being valued differently. Norms of female dependence on males are institutionalised through a range of social mechanism so that they came to appear natural and immutable. (Pandey, 2004).

Thus in view of Ann Oakley, 'Gender is a matter of culture.'[1]It depends on a particular culture that allocates differential roles and responsibilities to men and women based on its cultural ideas. These differences in their roles also advocates for confining women into the domestic or private sphere while allowing men to enter into the public sphere as societies values women to be capable of performing only economically less significant work considering women as biologically weak in comparison to men. The manifestation of such division or separation between men and women sharpens the inequalities between them. Thus the inequality that originates through the conceptual gender division of labour is visible in every sphere of human life.

The age old discrimination against the women is the product of the patriarchal society where women's human rights are violated in variety of ways. The unequal power relationship between men and women generally lead to male domination over female and thus women are kept in a subordinate position. Women in such situation experiences a variety of discrimination initiating from preference for son,

control over their freedom and mobility, depriving of property rights, educational facilities, control over their reproductivity, sexual harassment etc. In every aspect of life women have to struggle against the discrimination that assigns them a less human status. This feeling and experience of subordination destroy their self- respect, self- esteem and self- confidence. The norms and practices which define women as inferior to men, are present every where- in the families, schools, textbooks, social institutions, religions, work places etc. Thus the subordination of one group by another to maintain power results in stereotyping roles, gender inequality and the denial of recognition of the subordinated groups contribution to the society.

2.2. Women's Rights as Human Right: The Policy Framework.

The claim for women's rights as Human Right ushered as a result of the exclusion of the women from exercising the benefits of human right, democracy and development. It had narrowed down the definition of human right by depriving the women from full participation in all social, economic, political and cultural affairs in the society. 'The exclusion of any group- whether on the basis of gender, class, sexual orientation, religion or race, involves cultural definitions of the members of that group as less than fully human.....' (Bunch, 1995).

The contribution of women writers to assert their human rights through their writings 'had been deliberately ignored over the centuries as a means of keeping women subordinate and is only now beginning to be recaptured.' The original contributors to

women's human rights were those who first taught women to read and thus to explore the world outside home and immediate community......The prerequisites for development and implementation of women's human rights are education; the means and ability to live beyond childbearing, homemaking and caring for families; freedom of movement and a measure of respect as individual human beings, not prisoners of their sex. Education involves the ability to receive, create and disseminate knowledge.......expanded literacy among women allowed those who could not escape the confines of home to learn about the outside world and through writing, to recount their experiences and express their ideas (Fraser, 2003). The history of the drive for women's human rights indicates that only when women are literate, when they can articulate their view of life in publications and before audiences, when they can organize and demand equality, when girls are educated and socialized to think of themselves as citizens as well as wives and mothers, and when men take more responsibility for care of children and the home, can women be full and equal citizens able to enjoy human rights. (Chatterjee, 2004).

It was Christine de Pizan who for the first time in 1405 published 'the Book of the City of Ladies', argued for women's right to be educated, to be able to live and work independently and to participate in public life. De Pizan used her education and experiences as a basis for independent thought that was a necessity for girls. Joan Kelly, the feminist historian, argued that de Pizan opened the debate about women by establishing the basic postulates of feminism- meaning the struggle for equality for women (Fraser, 2003). Thus de Pizan was among the foremost feminists urged for women entering into the public sphere instead of conferring into the private sphere of family and home by educating themselves. The idea of women's human rights is often

cited as beginning in 1792 with Mary Wollstonecraft's book 'A Vindication of the Rights of Women' published in response to the promulgation of the natural rights of man theory. Inspiring by the writers of Thomas Pine, Madame de Genlis and Olympe de Gouges, Wollstonecraft advocated for girl's education and women's political rights. Dismissing Rousseau's natural rights of man, Wollstonecraft wrote for the promotion of women's education and on women's health. She argued that women should be more active physically and more knowledgeable about health, anatomy and medicine.

The long struggle of their demand for human rights started early in the 17th century by Christine de Pizan and Mary Wollstonecraft, along with the continuous efforts of the feminist scholars, women's movement and the role of NGOs all over the world in the 18th and 19th century, received ultimately an international legal status in the midst of the 20th century with the declaration of the UN Charter to be recognized women's right as human right. The equal rights of men and women clause[2] in the UN Charter established a legal basis for the international struggle to affirm women's human rights. Now the international legal framework recognizes that women have the same human right as men. Similarly in the line of UN Charter, the international consensus on human rights is represented by the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which states, "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights".[3] "Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status".[4] The use of the ungenderd term "everyone" in the UDHR rejects the very notion of "men's right" that had been prevailing since long history of international documents on rights.

Another remarkable legal setting in the history of women's rights was the establishment of the Commission on the Status of Women which purpose was to promote women's human rights in all fields of human endeavour. The Commission has initiated studies on several questions relating to the life of women, such as equal access to education at all levels, equal economic rights and opportunities for women; equal pay for equal work and various aspects of family law and property rights. Under the auspices of the Commission many world conferences on women held in Mexico (1975), Copenhagen (1980), and Beijing (1995), emphasizing equal rights for both men and women. The world conference on human rights held in Vienna in 1993 was another remarkable international conference that called for the elimination of the gender bias that arises between men and women. In 1979, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was established. Article1 of the Convention defines discrimination against women as "any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field". States parties to the Convention are bound to take all the necessary legislative, judicial, administrative or other appropriate measures to guarantee women the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on the basis of equality with men.[5] Meanwhile the establishment of the two important treaties- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights recognise civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights for

both men and women and emphasize on the principle of non- discrimination on the ground of sex in the enjoyment of these rights.

1.3. The Rights of the Girl Child:

Children face vulnerable experiences everyday all over the world. They are denied the fundamental human right in many respects. The problems faced by girls are much more sensitive in this context. The violation of girl's right is generally 'caused by gender bias, physical limitations and traditional societal roles'. There had began a concern over the issues of child rights in the international level since the 20th century under the League of Nations when it adopted the Geneva Declaration in1924, specifying the concept of children's right. The Declaration recognized that "mankind owes to the child the best it has to give" and its five brief principles focused on the provision of all children.[6] In 1959, the UN General Assembly adopted a more comprehensive Declaration on the Rights of the Child. The rights language is evident in the preamble and the principle one, which proclaims that "every child, without any exception whatsoever, shall be entitled to these rights, without distinction or discrimination, on account of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, whether of himself or if his family". However both the Geneva Declaration and the 1959 declaration were not legally binding international documents.[7]

The first legally binding international documents International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and International Covenant on

Economic, Political, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) has also its provision on Children's right. Article 24 of the ICCPR specifically recognizes the child stating that 'every child has a right to a name, to a nationality,' and 'to such measures of protection as are required by his status as a minor, on the part of his family, society and the state'.[8] In 1979, the UN General Assembly decided to observe the year 1979 as International Year of Child with a view to promote child's right all over the world. The most comprehensive legal document providing the children's right is the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) adopted by the General Assembly on 20th November, 1989. Article1 of the Convention defines the term 'Child'. It provides that for the purpose of this convention a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless, under the law applicable to child majority is attained earlier. The CRC in its different articles explains different rights of the child encompassing from protection against discrimination of any kind, civil rights and liberties, right to family environment, right to health, education, right to special protection in emergency, the right against exploitation etc.

The CRC is very important from the perspective of girl's right. For a girl child, who faces gender bias in every sphere of life, the principle of non- discrimination mentioned in the CRC is very significant. Article 2 protects the child's right to be free from discrimination. All children are entitled to the rights contained in the CRC "without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status". This principle is essential for ensuring the rights of the girl child.

The issues of health, labour, education and sexual exploitation effect both boys and girls. But their particular impact on girls is compounded by gender bias and sexual discrimination. The Committee on the Rights of the Child, in its January 1995 report on its work preparing for the Fourth World Conference on Women, noted that "girls [are not] a special group entitled to special rights"; rather they "are simply human beings who should be seen as individuals and not just as daughters, sisters, wives or mothers, and who should fully enjoy the fundamental rights inherent to their human dignity.[9]

2.4. Right to Education of Girl Child and Women:

The importance of education for empowerment of women is undeniable. Education is one of the most important factors that play the most crucial role in claiming women's rights because it enables them to respond to opportunities to challenge traditional roles and to change their lives. It also brings awareness among women and girls about their rights and gives self confidence. But it is unfortunate that like all other rights and privileges, girls are often denied the right to education due to age old discrimination and gender bias. In this context the 'rights discourse provides a powerful overarching framework for discussing gender equality, particularly as it has been validated through international dialogues on the nature of international co-operation in recent years. In particular, the citation of human rights in education finds its basis in international law, which has provided the legal standards that States commit to when they ratify international treaties' (Subrahmanian, 2004). States that have

committed to relevant international instruments have clear obligations to progressively realize the right to education and gender equality in education (Wilson, 2003, Subrahmanian, 2004).

According to UNESCO, women and girls are "the largest single category of persons denied equality of educational opportunity in the world today". Girls are often kept at home to perform gender-based chores or discouraged from attending school because of gender stereotyping.[10]

Since education is pivotal for women to play a full and equal role in society, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council of the General Assembly has been focused on the question of equal access of women to educate and on the question of elimination of discrimination against women in matter of education. The Economic and Social Council in its Resolution of 12 July, 1954, has recommended the Members as well as the Non-Members of the United Nations:

(a) To take necessary steps to ensure that women have equal access with men to all types of education without distinction of any kind.

(b) To enact the necessary laws and regulations to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women in education and to ensure access for women to all types of education including vocational and technical education, and equal opportunities to obtain states scholarship for education in any field and in preparation for all careers.

(c) To take necessary measures to institute free compulsory primary education and take full advantage of the facilities and resource of UNESCO in developing additional educational opportunities for girls and women as needed.[11]

According to UNICEF (United Nation's International Children's Emergency Fund), a number of unmistakable connections link education for girls and important benefits for women and society:

- The more educated a mother is, the more infant and child mortality is reduced.

- Children of more educated mothers tend to be better nourished and suffer from less illness.

- Children (and particularly daughters) of more educated mothers are more likely to be educated themselves and become literate

- The more years of education women have, the later they tend to marry and the fewer children they tend to have.

- Educated women are less likely to die in child birth.

- The more educated a women is, the more likely she is to have opportunities and life choices and to avoid being oppressed and exploited by her family or social situation.

- Educated women are more likely to be receptive to participate in and influence development initiatives and send their own daughters to school.

- Educated women are more likely to play a role in political and economic decision-making, at community, regional and national levels.[12]

The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) incorporates provisions concerning advancement of education of girls. Article 10 of the CEDAW provides same condition for career and vocational guidance, access to studies, same curricula, examination, teaching staff, school premise, benefits of scholarship, access to educational information, opportunities to participate in sports for both boys and girls.

The CRC (Convention on the Rights of the Child) addresses both access to education and the issue of quality education. Article 28 of the CRC requires States Parties to "recognize the right of the Child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity". Article 28 goes on to elaborate that, in particular, States Parties must make primary education compulsory and available free to all, secondary and vocational education available and accessible to every child, higher education accessible to all according to one's own capacity, take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of dropout rates. Also Article 29 requires that education of the child shall be directed to the development of the child's personality, respect of human rights, respect for child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, to develop among them the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality among sexes and respect for the nation etc. Both these article 28 and 29 are very significant for girls and applying these articles to the educational problems by the girls requires exceptional gender sensitivity. UNICEF has offered a ten- point strategy for improving schools and promoting girls attendance. These are—

- Providing free or subsidized education, so that parents do not have to choose between sending a son or a daughter to school,

- Designing a 'child centred learning experience' to encourage individual learning,

- Recruiting and training teachers to be more aware of and sensitive to gender issues and children's rights, including recruiting more women teachers,

- Ensuring that school administrators are trained in and sensitive to gender issues,

- Eliminating gender bias from educational materials,

- Involving communities and families in schools,

- Placing schools closer to families' homes,

- Scheduling classes flexibly so children can assist with family duties'

- Providing early childhood education programmes, so children are prepared for school,

- Maintaining education data.[13]

The history of women education began with the controversies about women's right to education. Today women enjoy a formally and explicitly recognized right to education. But it does not seem to be recognized that girl's access to education is secured. Evidences through out the world prove that there is still gender inequality in education; equal access to both girls and boys has been achieved only in few countries. Also the expansion of educational facilities making school more accessible to girls does not mean getting quality education by the girls. Concerning over this issue the World Declaration for Education for All (EFA), 2000 states that 'the most urgent priority is to ensure access to, and improve the quality of, education for girls and women and to remove every obstacle that hampers their active participation". The EFA Dakar

Framework for Action, 2000 (UNESCO, 2009) proposes 12 major strategies and sets 6 major goals to achieve quality education for all by 2015. The gender specific goals are as follows—

Goal-2 is to ensure that by 2015, all children particularly girls children in difficult circumstance and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality".

Goal-4 is to "achieve a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults"

Goal-5 is to "eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieve gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality"[14].

Also the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) targeted in 2000, under the UNO to bring rapid progress in the world's countries include education related specific targets. These are-

Goal-2 is to "ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling".

Goal-3 is to "eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015"[15].

These two goals are distinguished as 'gender parity' (achieving equal participation of girls and boys in all forms of education based on their proportion in the relevant age-groups in the population) and 'gender equality' (ensuring educational

equality between girls and boys) goals. In turn these has been characterised as quantitative and qualitative goals respectively. In order to consider progress towards both types of goal, both quantitative and qualitative assessment needs to be made of the nature of progress towards gender equality (Subrahmanian, 2004). However, the world is expecting the goals to be fulfilled that gender inequality in education would be eliminated within the targeted year and girls could avail the benefits of right to education in its fullest sense.

2.5. Gender Debate on Education:

Gender has become an accepted category in policy and programme formulations. The goal of bringing gender equality in education is much broader than achieving gender parity in education. An education system with equal numbers of boys and girls participating, who may progress evenly through the system, may not in fact be based on gender equality. A consideration of gender equality in education therefore needs to be understood as the right *to* education (access and participation), as well as rights *within* education (gender aware educational environment, processes and outcomes) and Rights *through* education (meaningful education outcomes that link education equally with wider processes of gender justice).[16]

The existing social structure that assigns inferior position to women has undermined the self- esteem of them. This discrimination and neglect in the childhood generally leads to life- long deprivation and exclusion of the women from the social

mainstream. 'Gender biased educational process, including curricula, educational materials and practices, teacher's attitude and classroom interaction, reinforce existing gender inequalities'. (Pandey, 2004). In general, Girls are not a homogeneous or singular category and gender does not operate in isolation but in conjunction with other social categories resulting in girls' having to experience multiple forms of disadvantages. The dimension of location (rural- urban), caste, class, religion, ethnicity, disabilities etc., intersect with gender to create a complex reality and shapes her lived experiences. Developing such an understanding is necessary if improving classroom practices, curriculum, training and strategies for reaching the remaining out of school children is to be achieved.[17] The single most important factor preventing girls from attending and achieving in school is gender discrimination. Girls and boys both have hurdles to overcome. For girls the hurdles are, for the most part, higher and more frequent—simply because they are girls. (UNICEF, 2007).

In actual term gender inequality in education reflects the broader inequalities that prevail in a particular society. Societies differ in their values, tradition and cultural practices all over the world that determines the range of inequality where women and man plays different political, economic, social and cultural roles. Social practices in most of the societies are the determining factor which assigns man and women higher and lesser position in other political, economic or cultural field. The age old tradition of assigning the male household to take every decision in the family ultimately proceeds to the way to control over the entire social and institutional framework by them. This has resulted in the restriction of female folk in the educational participation also as it depends on how much the household decision maker is interested as regards to the participation in school for the women. Also along with these patriarchal norms, other

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prevailing factors are like son preference, child labour, armed conflict, physical weakness or diseases, girl's safety issues etc.

'The societies that exhibit extreme form of patriarchy have a strong cultural preference for sons' (Pandey, V.C.2004). This reflects the discrimination against daughters in every sphere of life perpetuating gender inequality in education. One of the most common factors for children not attending school is that their families need them to work. Sometimes this work is paid but mostly it is unpaid and takes place within the household.[18] It is unfortunate that these household activities are generally performed by girls and thus their labour remained unpaid. Again different cultural practices all over the world have remanded to set a uniform legal age of marriage for women. In these parts of the world 'where female autonomy is considered unstable or risky, early marriage is used as a means of securing daughter's futures' (Pandey, V.C., 2004). Early marriage prior to the age of 18 prevents girls from attending school and pushes them for bearing motherhood in the early ages. Another problem associated with this is the physical weakness or different types of diseases for girls caused by negligence and discrimination by parents. Lack of nutritious food supplement to the girls in general and non attention of parents to their health issues forces the girls to suffer from different disease which is also a factor for non- attending of girls in school. 'Other constrains to girls schooling include concerns about girls' safety both in school and journeying between home and school, and concerns about privacy.......... issues concerning puberty and sexuality also relate to safety concerns. Parents fear that contact with boys and male teachers may lead to inappropriate sexual activity or to physical abuse.' (Herz *et al*. 1991, Oxaal, 1997). Thus long distance to school from home or lack of separate toilet for girls in school may be the cause of drop-out of girls from school. Again 'armed

conflict is a major barrier to development in general and to gender equality in education in particular. Most of the Asian and African people are victims of armed conflict'. In such circumstances the situation of women and children become worst and they are the target of militants. During conflict period educational infrastructures are destroyed and it lacks several times to rebuild these institutions resulting in the drop-out of children for many years. The effects of armed conflicts are different for men, women, boys and girls. Where male members and boys are detained or executed, women and girls, on the other hand, are continually threatened by rape and sexual exploitation......... In times of war, in addition to the danger of gunfire, bombing, landmines and sexual assault, women and girls also face the risk of increased domestic violence............ the availability of weapon that male family members have experienced or caused, the lack of jobs, shelter and basic services are the reason behind these violence.[19] Thus girls have to compromise from getting education throughout their life for the injustices prevails in the society in many forms.

A gender perspective on education suggests attention to the context and value of what schools teach and the kind of environments they provide for girls, not just whether girls attend schools or not. Girl's sense of second class citizenship may be reinforced by the school of environment, where the curriculum or teacher attitudes perpetuate sexist stereotypes, or where there is a lack of female role models.[20] In view of Oxaal (1997), different research proves that constrains to girls schooling explains the persistence of gender gaps. Girls in poor households are particularly likely to miss out on schooling because of the perceived and actual costs to households of girl's schooling. These costs are both direct (e.g. fees, books, pencils, paper, required clothing, transport) and opportunity costs. The opportunity costs of girl's schooling are high for poor

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households in developing countries and often exceed the opportunity costs of boys' schooling. Opportunity costs include lost chore time and foregone earning.[21] Girls are generally required to spend more time on household chores than boys. Girls' labour is used to substitute for mothers in work such as caring for siblings, fetching wood and water, caring for animals, pounding gain (Herz et al, 1991, Oxaal 1997). The costs of education to households affect both the enrolment and dropout rates. Even when girls are attending school they are still required to help with household chores, which can hamper their achievement in school and thus their possibility of continuing in education. Unforeseen incidents such as the illness of a household member can mean that daughters are required to dropout of school.[22]

Subrahmanian (2004) has given a detailed account how socially constructed gender identities operate in different ways in different context, give rise to inequalities between women and men in gaining access to participating in and benefiting from various resources. First, prevailing norms about what women and men do, and how their activities and roles are to be valued determine the opportunities to which they have access. Thus households may discriminate, as they often do, against girls in favour of boys in access to education. These are clearly relative phenomenon, as boys are also likely to be excluded from school in contexts of poverty and/or conflict, but where children are sent to school, boys are often advantaged over girls in access to schooling. Second, constraints arise out of what women or men do which serve to curtail or restrict their freedom to access opportunities. This means that even if opportunities are presented to women, the nature of their reproductive responsibilities/burdens, which are often time-intensive and home-based, can often prevent women from gaining equal access to opportunities that may in theory be available to them. Thus for instance

schools may be available to girls and boys, but constraints arising from the nature of the work that girls do may impede their ability to participate in schooling. Examples abound of girls being unable to participate in school because their work within the home is far more time-intensive than work boys may undertake in wage activities – thus girls' work is often not compatible with schooling, whereas boys' work is more likely to be so. Third, even where women are able to negotiate their burdens in order to participate in different opportunities on offer, gender inequalities are often institutionalised in the norms, processes and structures of interventions and institutions and present barriers to equitable outcomes. Teachers' attitudes, the nature of the curriculum, harassment, concerns about safety, and the quality of the infrastructure may all serve to push girls out of school. Finally, the pervasiveness of social norms that curtail freedoms for women and are based on undervaluation or devaluation of what women do, can lead women themselves to internalise negative self-perceptions and doubt their own abilities. Thus women often exclude themselves from opportunities that may be on offer, and active encouragement may be necessary to support women to challenge internalised social norms that may informally be placing barriers on their participation. Thus the importance of focusing on how the content and processes of education enable women to challenge negative evaluations of their contributions and worth, by strengthening their ability to advocate on their own behalf, cannot be excluded from considerations of progress towards gender equality in education. Opportunities outside and beyond education could also play a significant role in shaping aspirations for girls and boys, either through challenging or reinforcing stereotypes about typical feminine and masculine attributes, traits and abilities. Focusing on the aspirations that girls and boys voice could tell us something important about how opportunities and rewards are

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perceived to be gender-differentiated by young people, with the result that gender inequalities are perpetuated rather than challenged as they leave educational institutions and enter adulthood.[23]

2.5.1. The Feminist Perspective on Girls' Education:

The issues of gender inequality in education have been given prior importance by the feminist scholars. The reality is that the school itself experiences different treatment for girls and boys where the hidden curriculum in teaching materials like textbooks, the attitudes of teachers, and administrators, all treats girls as inferior to boys. For feminist sociologists, the issue is therefore, not limited to measuring the educational achievements of girls, but to draw out issues of hidden curriculum, of stereotypes and role models and to everyday interactions in the educational system......... Feminist educators see the curriculum and teaching methodologies as sites of, struggle and as potential areas for change.[24]

Feminist theories deal with the issue of education to a great extent by conceptualizing education and gender and also their interrelationship from their ideological perspectives. Gender inequality is under stood in terms of education and emphasis is given on the role of education in determining this inequality. Following are some feminist theories which are important to develop a conceptual understanding on the issue of girls' education.

Liberal Feminism: Since 1700, liberal feminism has fought to extend the rights and duties of liberal political discourse to women focusing on civil rights, education, political and religious freedom, individual choice, and self determination. It has addressed gender inequalities through campaign for inclusion within civil rights legislation, access to education, and equality of opportunity. (Weedon, 2007).

Liberal feminism has argued that women are as rational as men and that gender should not affect the forms that education takes. The liberal feminist struggle for inclusion goes back to the early 1700, when British feminist Mary Astell voiced women's demands for equality with men. Writing in the 1790s at the time of the French Revolution, Olympe de Gouges in French and Mary Wollstonecraft in Britain argued powerfully for rights for women. In A Vindication of the Rights of women, Wollstonecraft (1972) suggested that given comparable education and socialization, women would be as rational and capable as men. (Weedon, 2007).

Over the past few centuries, liberal feminism like liberalism more broadly has been a force for positive social change. Liberal feminism have campaigned for equal access to education and the professions, property rights, the vote, and all other rights enjoyed by men. They have argued for women's equality on the basis of sameness, insisting that, given equal education, women are as rational and capable of holding public office and administering property as men. To make these arguments, liberal feminists have inevitably played down women's differences from men- whether these differences are understood as biologically determined or as socially produced- arguing that gender difference should neither determine how one is regarded as a human being nor how one is educated. (Weedon, 2007).

Marxist Feminism: The central idea of Marxist feminism is that women's oppression is rooted in class oppression and the economic and social structures of the capitalist mode of production. Within the broad category of Marxism some feminists draw upon the work of Engel's where in he explains the origin of female subordination to private property. Others have linked women's subordination to capitalism and patriarchy. (Chanana, 1988). However Marxist frameworks have been used to focus on the role of education, especially the role of curriculum, in class reproduction. (Apple, 1982; Bourdieu, 1977; Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Chanana, 1988).

While explaining the role of education the Marxist feminists focused on the 'role of school in the reproduction of gender relations. They have also highlighted the contribution of hidden curriculum in reinforcing traditional gender stereotypes. Again the neo-Marxists have paid attention to the fact that there seems to be a correspondence between unequal enrollment and differential experiences and the sexual division in the family and in the labour market. There is a correspondence between the amount and the type of education received by women, on the other hand, and the expectations of masculine and feminine roles. For instance, boys are more likely than girls to go in for higher education and to study science and technology. This segregation extends into the vocational courses with girls tending to take up domestic science. (Chanana, 1988)

Radical Feminism: Radical feminism started in late 60s, rejects both the theoretical frame work and political practice of liberalism and orthodox Marxism. In view of radical feminists, gender is seen as an elaborate system of male domination, which is at the basis of all social organization. (Weedon, 2007). Sulamith Firestone used Marxist

framework but replace the term class oppression with that of sexual oppression to describe women's subordination in the text 'The Dialectics of Sex'.

Radical feminists have looked to history and anthropology to given evidence of the universality of women's oppression. A powerful and influential example of such work is Mary Daly's Gyn/Ecology. She locates the primary mechanism of male control women not in male ownership of the means of production but in male control of women's mind and bodies, in particular their sexuality and their reproductive powers. Where women elude such control, they are destroyed as, for example, widows and spinsters who are burned as witches or Indian brides who outline their husbands and then are subjected to Sati. Much male energy, however, goes into preventing women from ever becoming a threat, and patriarchal education plays a key role here. (Weedon, 2007).

Education in radical feminism is a process of unmasking the ways in which patriarchal institutions—including schools, universities and mainstream scholarship have colonized women's minds in the interest of patriarchy. Endorsing the binary oppositions between man and woman, radical feminists seeks to transform and revalue the meaning of the terms 'female' and 'women' celebrating the female body as a site of strength, endurance, creativity and power. Knowledge and education are central to this project. In her text, "Women and Nature: The Roaring inside Her", Susan Griffin, for example, exposed how man have used science and religion ever the centuries to colonize both women and nature and to shape them in his own interests. She argued that man has sought to gain ascendency over women and nature by separating himself from them and cultivating forms of rationality denied to women. (Weedon, 2007). Thus the

central idea of radical feminism is that existing theory and education are both male defined and patriarchal in their norms values and object of study.

Radical feminists also point out men's control over knowledge through the designing of official curriculum. Studies have been undertaken in Britain which indicates that boys get a greater share than girls of teacher attention in mixed classrooms. (Clarricoates, 1978; Spender, 1982; Evans, 1979; Chanana, 1988). Again classroom projects are designed keeping the interest of boys in view and leadership roles are assigned to them. (Clarricoates, 1978; Chanana, 1988).

Radical feminists also undertake research on the study of gender typing and gender differentiation in the curriculum. It has helped them uncover explicit and implicit gender biases in curriculum. (Spender, 1981; Bowels and Duelli Klein, 1983; Chanana, 1988). Scholars have been concerned with this issue in India too and efforts are being made to re-examine the curriculum to make it sex neutral. (Barnabas, 1977; Mazumder, 1978; Kalia, 1979; NCERT, 1982, 1984; Chanana, 1988). The underlying assumption that most disciplines have a gender bias has been exposed systematically in the analysis of textbooks.

Feminist Reproduction Theory: In the second half of the twentieth century, especially during the second wave of feminism, the primary focus of educational research was the role of education in the reproduction of gender and class relations in the state. These feminist reproduction theorists in 1960s and 1970s began to rethink the nature of 'egalitarian post war aims of education and their significance in eradicating gender inequality'. The historically derived argument raised by reproduction and neo-

Marxist feminist was that national education system was characteristically modelled on a class notion of citizenship and civic participation reflecting a residual public/ private split. (Dillabough, 2007).

Informed by the writings of Bowles and Gintis (1976) and British and European Marxist movement, feminist sociologists conceptualized education as an institutional tool of capitalism that reproduced the positing of women in the domestic sphere and in particular the classed subordination of working class girls into a social status residing outside the domain of legitimate citizenship. (Dillabough, 2007). This social status determines girl's educational experiences, identities and forms of consciousness. In this early vision of gender reproduction theory, the study of school structures (e.g. curriculum subjects) and their links to the economy was privileged over issues of cultural identity, difference and social agency. (Dillabough, 2007).

Dillabough (2007) opines that feminist reproduction theory stands in contrast to the liberal view that gender differences are somehow linked to individual traits and abilities. This reproduction theory also rejects Emile Durkheim's socialization theory which 'imagined concept of education for national stability because it inevitably raised problems of gender inequality and led to substantial economic instability for women, particularly if socialization into the realm of domestic field often to equate with substantial poverty, family violence or single parenthood for women'. Scholars concerned with gender equity would, therefore, need to recognize the significance of the economic sphere and its effect on institutional culture of schooling as it pertained both the women's history in the liberal state and to girls and women's employment futures. (Dillabough, 2007).

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Most of the feminist reproduction theorists like Madeleine Arnot, Lois Weis, Beverley Skeggs and others are influenced by Pierre Bourdieu's concept that masculine domination in all aspects of social life has its greatest impact in social institutions. Bourdieu pointed particularly to education as a central and ideologically powerful site for the accumulation of specific form of gendered capital and the subsequent class formation of social stratification. (Dillabough, 2007). Thus reproduction theorists are concerned with the issue whether 'education through informal curriculum perpetuate to existing division of labour in society by pushing women to poorly paid and lower category jobs (Chanana, 1988) by focusing on both masculine hegemony and women's oppression for material interest.

Sex Role Socialization Theory: Sex role socialization, also termed gender socialization, involves developing beliefs about gender roles, the expectations associated with each sex group, and, also gender identity, an understanding of what it means to be a male or female. Gender socialization is probably one of the most basic aspects of the general socialization process. Research suggests that children learn that the world is gendered at a very young age and soon after develop a sense of their own gender identity. (Stockard, 2007).

This approach suggests that children develop sex- typed behaviours that conform to expectations for their sex group and do not reinforce non conforming behaviours. Within the family, this approach suggests that parents, as agents of socialization, interact with boys and girls in ways that reinforce sex-typed behaviours. Within education the theory suggests that teachers differentially reinforce sex- typed

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behaviours of children. (Stockard, 2007). In terms of gender socialization in education, it is important to note that these sex differences occur long before children enter elementary school. It is also found after the study of peer group interactions that 'schools are of course, a major arena in which peer socialization occurs as young people develop friendship and interact with others'.

Delamount (1983) is of the opinion that social scientists have undertaken studies on sex role socialization and its inter-linkages to traits such as submission, nurturance and dependency. They seem to be in agreement with other feminists who argue that schools reinforce tradition by shaping the self concepts of girls and future roles which are sex differentiated. (Lee, 1973; Chanana, 1988). These reform oriented feminists are optimists in so far as they belief that girls can be socialized differently by consciously changing the method of teaching. (Chanana, 1988).

Third World Feminism: Third world feminism has developed as a part of post-colonial feminism rooted mostly in the context of gender discrimination in the developing and third world countries. In view of the third world feminists the post colonial countries are generally the victims of colonial exploitation and as a result the countries in this region persistently face the problem of poverty along with caste, class, linguistic and religious differences. Thus socio- cultural practices and economic backwardness are the barriers to girl's education in the third world countries. Inequality in the educational access of girls and boys is a function of whether they come from a rural or urban context and also with social class or linguistic groups they represent. Cultural tradition and gender role stereo-types are mainly responsible for continuation

of such inequalities (Chitrakar, R., 2009). It is a matter of concern that the household expenditure for girls in schools are less than boys and most of the girls who are prevented from access to schooling are from poor families who want to make their girl economic earner by doing domestic help in other houses. So poverty (overlapping with caste, tribe and rural residence) and gender are the main parameters of denial of education (Chanana, K., 1988). The third world feminists seek to establish the links between socialization and education as processes. The educational policies and programmes are rooted in social values and premises. Schools and schooling are active instruments of cultural reproduction and social control without seeking to alter the informal process of socialization (Chanana, K., 2003). The sharp distinction between male and female socialization persists in the developing countries. In these societies the socialization of girls emphasizes the acceptance of the predominant sex roles, with marriage and family, not employment in the labour market, as the ultimate goal of women. This behaviour is the rational response to constrains imposed by poverty in most of the families in such societies (Hill, M. & King, E., 1993). This approach suggests for more policy initiatives, programmes and special initiatives to address related issues.

Some of the above discussed theories pay much attention to individuals while some others highlights on groups or social structure. Liberal feminism always put emphasis on individual liberty including individual learning, effort and achievement. However, it also emphasises on women, as a group, who have been systematically discriminated and denied equal opportunities. Marxist feminism recognizes capitalism and patriarchy side by side as an exploitative social structure for women. The division

of class and labour and the patriarchal culture, including the social institutions like school which are stratified by gender, always perpetuate gender inequality by practising gender stereotype roles. Instead of class oppression like the Marxist, the radical feminists like to call it sexual oppression to describe the women subordination in the dominating patriarchal society where the male control over the women's mind and bodies. All the educational and social institutions are the instrument of women's oppression. The sex- role socialisation theory accepts sexual dualism where there is the prevailing notion that individuals are divided into two sexes—male and female and almost everyone contains some attributes like masculine identity and feminine identity. These identities always influences the role played by a person in the society. The schools, colleges and universities are the institutions where these stereotype roles are practised in the curriculum, syllabus, textbook and classroom experiences. Again patriarchal culture and gender stratified institutions are of major concern to feminist reproduction theory. It recognizes the significance of the economic sphere and its effect on institutional culture of schooling and thus put emphasis on social class, social change and the distribution of power guided by economy in the society. The third world approach deals with the complexities, arising out of class, caste, ethnic differences along with the problem of poverty and their impact on girl's education in the post-colonial societies.

Thus these theories that deal with gender and education mainly conceptualize education in accordance with their theoretical ideologies. By forwarding a detailed discussion on the existing inequalities in society that perpetuate gender inequality in education they suggest the ways how equity or equality can be achieved. Also in some way or another, directly or indirectly these theories have provided the investigator a

fruitful insight to understand the chosen problem and context of the problem. It enables the investigator to penetrate into the field of education by highlighting on the concept of girls' right and its entitlement by them in actual practice.

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