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Awareness of students towards gender equality in education

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Abstract

Gender equality is a global concern. Gender equality entails that men and women have equal chances to enjoy their full human rights and to participate in and benefit from education, economic, social, cultural, and political development. Basically, gender equality in education means that both girls and boys, as well as women and men, should have the same opportunities to go to school, participate in learning, and get the same advantages from education. The present study intended to determine the awareness of undergraduate and postgraduate students on gender equality in education. The total sample size was 480. 240 undergraduate students and 240 postgraduate students were chosen as a sample for this present study. The sample has been selected randomly. In the present investigation, a self-made questionnaire was employed for data collection, simple percentage calculations have been done for data analysis, and the study's results were presented graphically. It was found that post-graduate respondents have Very High and High knowledge than Undergraduate respondents about gender equality in education.

Keywords: Awareness, students, gender equality, education

Introduction

Within a society, every individual has the right to live his or her life without discrimination. We call it equality when all persons are treated equally, regardless of caste, gender, colour, profession, or position. Equality may also be described as a scenario in which all individuals have equal rights and opportunities to grow and succeed. Every individual in society wishes for equal rights and access to resources, yet there is a lot of prejudice. Discrimination can occur as a result of cultural differences, geographical disparities, people's skin colour, socioeconomic rank, or even gender. Gender inequality is the most common form of discrimination. It is not a localized issue and is limited to only certain spheres of life but is prevalent across the globe.

Gender equality is a global priority. Gender equality is also necessary as a human right. Gender equality implies that men and women have equal chances to enjoy their full human rights and to participate in and benefit from economic, social, cultural, and political growth. Gender equality is the state of equal ease of access to resources and opportunities, including economic involvement and decision-making, regardless of gender; and the state of equally valuing varied behaviours, goals, and needs, regardless of gender.

Education plays an important input in the development of human resources in the country. Human resource development of any nation essentially calls for optimal utilization of all sections of the population. One of the important civil goals of education is to create equal opportunities and enable backwards or disadvantaged classes and individuals to use education as a lever to improve their situation.

Equality in education means equalization of individual differences among the learners. Every individual should get equal and suitable opportunities to cultivate their talent and receive education according to their needs, abilities, and aptitudes. Gender equality in education means that everyone, regardless of gender, should have the same opportunities to learn and benefit from education. It is important to emphasize girls' education and empower them. We need to think about gender equality not just in terms of students, but also in terms of teachers, school leaders, and education workers at all levels.

However, gender equality in education should also focus on targeted interventions with explicit outcomes for girls' or boys' equality and empowerment. Gender equality in education benefits every child.

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It creates a safe environment for children of all genders to have access to quality education. Schools that challenge gender stereotypes and promote gender equality help build respectful relationships between students. Gender equality in education is the only guarantee for building an egalitarian and humane society in which the exploitation of the vulnerable is minimized. They also prevent gender-based violence. Gender equality makes our society safer and healthier.

Message from review of related literature

The literature review noticed various previous research has been done regarding gender discrimination and gender equality in India and abroad, but those are purely theoretical studies. No researcher in the country or abroad has conducted any research to know the awareness of students toward gender equality in education. This inspires the researcher to investigate "Awareness of Students towards Gender Equality in Education."

Statement of the problem

The current study stated "Awareness of Students towards Gender Equality in Education."

Rationale of the study

- Gender equality is a global priority. Gender equality is also fundamental, as well as a human right.
- One of the most significant societal goals of education is to equalize opportunity, encouraging backward or oppressed classes and people to utilize education as a lever for bettering their situation.
- Gender equality in education refers to the right of girls and women, boys, and men, to equal opportunity, engagement, and benefits from education. Gender equality in education prioritizes females' education, empowering them.
- Gender equality in education is the only way to ensure the development of an egalitarian and human society that reduces the oppression of the weak. These also protect against gender-based violence. Gender equality promotes our society more secure and healthy.
- Gender equality in education fosters an appropriate setting in which children of any gender can receive a high-quality education.

Therefore, the study was justified on the above-mentioned grounds.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were

1. To study higher education level students' awareness of gender equality in education.
2. To study post-graduate students' awareness of gender equality in education.
3. To study undergraduate students' awareness of gender equality in education.
4. To compare awareness towards gender equality in education between post-graduate and undergraduate students.

Research Questions

Research questions of the study were:

1. What is the awareness of higher education level students on gender equality in education?

2. What is the awareness of post-graduate students on gender equality in education?
3. What is the awareness of undergraduate students on gender equality in education?
4. Are there differences in the awareness of gender equality in education between post-graduate and undergraduate students?

Definition of important terms used in the study

- **Gender Equality:** Gender equality is a principle that proposes that all men and women, regardless of biological differences, should be treated equally to enjoy the same rights. They should not be deprived of an equal opportunity to do well in school and in life.
- **Awareness:** Knowing and understanding that something is happening or exists. Awareness is the state or ability to perceive, feel, or be aware of events, objects, or sensory patterns. In this study, the term 'Awareness' refers to both undergraduate and postgraduate students' awareness of gender equality in education.
- **Students:** A student is a person enrolled in a school, college, university, or other educational institution. In, this study students refer to those who were enrolled in undergraduate and post-graduate at different govt. aided colleges and universities in West Bengal.

Methodology of the study

- **Method Adopted for the study:** The present study used a descriptive type survey method.
- **Approach of the Study:** The researcher used a qualitative research approach for conducting the present research. Because the qualitative analysis was carried out in the study.
- **Population of the Study:** All the undergraduate and postgraduate students of the West Bengal state were the population for the present study.
- **Sample and Sampling procedure:** A total of 480 higher education students, 240 undergraduates, and 240 postgraduate students were chosen as a sample for the current investigation through a random sampling technique.
- **Instrument for Data Collection:** The researcher used a self-made questionnaire as a tool for data collection.
- **Procedure for Data Analysis:** A simple percentage calculation was used for data analysis, and the study's results were presented graphically.

Delimitations of the Study

1. Higher education level students (PG & UG) were considered as samples.
2. The study was delimited only in West Bengal state.
3. Only regular-mode higher-level students were considered as samples
4. Social science and science stream students were considered in the study.
5. Qualitative approach and analysis done only.

Data analysis and Interpretation: Objective wise

Analysis of Objective 1: To study higher education level students' awareness of gender equality in education.

Table 1: Percentage of levels of awareness of higher education level students towards gender equality in education.

Levels of Awareness	No of respondent	Percentage (%)
Very High (81 and above)	121	25.2
High (61-80)	167	34.80
Average (41-60)	102	21.25
Low (40 and below)	90	18.75
	480	100%

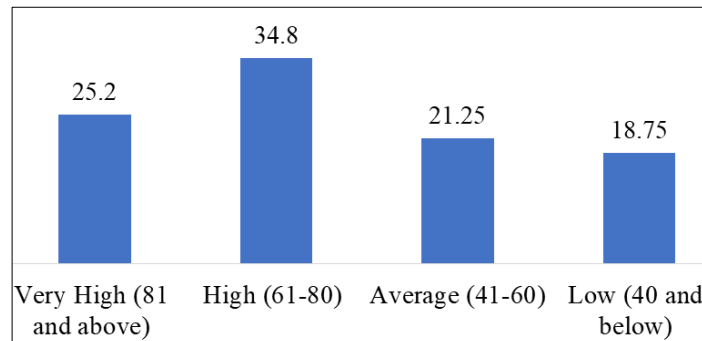


Fig 1: Percentage of levels of awareness of higher education level students towards gender equality in education.

Interpretation

Above graphical presentation depicted that out of total respondent 25.2% respondent have Very High awareness, 34.8% respondent have High awareness, 21.5% respondent have Average awareness, 18.75% respondent have Low awareness, towards gender equality in education. So, majority of the respondent have Very High awareness (25.2%) and High awareness (34.8%). Some of them have Average awareness (21.25%) and few of the respondents have Low Awareness (18.75%).

Analysis of Objective 2

To study post-graduate students’ awareness of gender equality in education.

Table 2: Percentage of levels of awareness of post-graduate students towards gender equality in education

Levels of Awareness	No of respondent	Percentage (%)
Very High (81 and above)	79	32.91
High (61-80)	67	27.91
Average (41-60)	56	23.33
Low (40 and below)	38	15.83
	240	100%

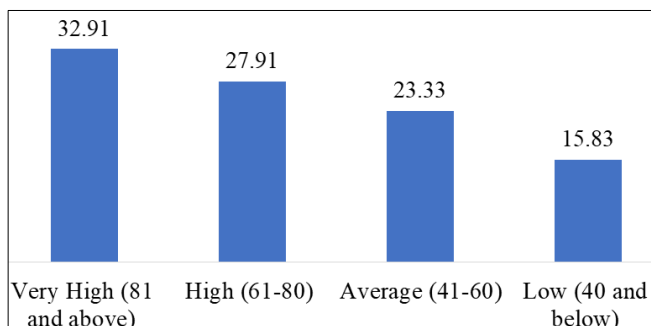


Fig 2: Percentage of levels of awareness of post-graduate students towards gender equality in education

Interpretation

The above graphical presentation demonstrates out of the total respondent, 32.91% of respondents have Very High awareness, 27.91% of respondents have High awareness, 23.33% of respondents have Average awareness, and

15.83% of respondents have Low awareness, of gender equality in education.

So, most of the respondents have Very High awareness (32.91%) and High awareness (27.91%). Some of them have Average awareness (23.33%) and a few of the respondents have Low Awareness (15.83%).

Analysis of Objective 3

To study undergraduate students’ awareness of gender equality in education.

Table 3: Percentage of levels of awareness of undergraduate students towards gender equality in education

Levels of Awareness	No of respondent	Percentage (%)
Very High (81 and above)	66	27.5
High (61-80)	58	24.16
Average (41-60)	67	27.91
Low (40 and below)	49	20.41
	240	100%

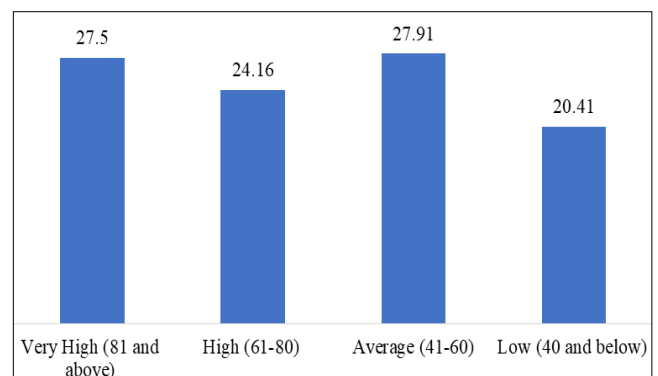


Fig 3: Percentage of levels of awareness of undergraduate students towards gender equality in education.

Interpretation

Above graphical presentation clearly showed that out of total respondent 27.5% respondent have Very High awareness, 24.16% respondent have High awareness, 27.91% respondent have Average awareness, 20.41% respondent have Low awareness, towards gender equality in education.

So, majority of the respondent have Very High awareness (27.5%) and High awareness (24.16%). Some of them have Average awareness (27.91%) and few of the respondent have Low Awareness (20.41%).

Analysis of objective 4

To compare awareness towards gender equality in education between post-graduate and undergraduate students.

Table 4: Comparison of levels of awareness towards gender equality in education between post-graduate and undergraduate students

Levels of Awareness	Undergraduate Students		Post-graduate Students	
	No of respondent	Percentage (%)	No of respondent	Percentage (%)
Very High (81 and above)	66	27.5	79	32.91
High (61-80)	58	24.16	67	27.91
Average (41-60)	67	27.91	56	23.33
Low (40 and below)	49	20.41	38	15.83
	240	100%	240	100%

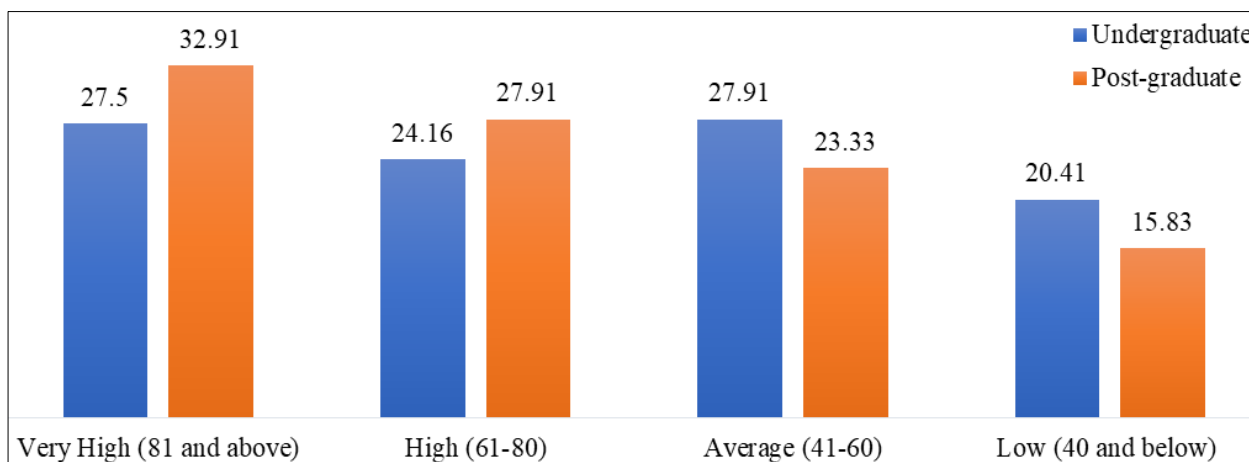


Fig 4: Comparison of levels of awareness towards gender equality in education between post-graduate and undergraduate students

Interpretation: Above graphical presentation clearly showed that out of the total respondent, 27.5% of respondents have Very High awareness, 24.16% of respondents have High awareness, 27.91% respondent have Average awareness, and 20.41% respondent has Low awareness, of gender equality in education.

The above graphical presentation demonstrated that out of the total respondent, 32.91% of respondents have Very High awareness, 27.91% of respondents have High awareness, 23.33% of respondents have Average awareness, and 15.83% of respondents have Low awareness, towards gender equality in education.

So, Post-graduate respondents have Very High and High knowledge than Undergraduate respondents about gender equality in education.

Findings: Objective wise

The study revealed the following findings:

- It was found that (25.2%) of higher education level students have Very High awareness, (34.8%) High awareness, (21.25%) have Average awareness, and (18.75%) have Low Awareness of gender equality in education.
- It has been revealed that (32.91%) of postgraduate students have Very High awareness, (27.91%) High awareness, (23.33%) have Average awareness, and (15.83%) have Low Awareness of gender equality in education.
- It has been discovered that (27.5%) of undergraduate students have Very High awareness, (24.16%) High awareness, (27.91%) have Average awareness, and (20.41%) have Low Awareness of gender equality in education.

- It has been observed that (32.91%) of postgraduate students have Very High awareness, (27.91%) High awareness, (23.33%) have Average awareness, and (15.83%) have Low Awareness of gender equality in education. (27.5%) undergraduate students have Very High awareness, (24.16%) High awareness, (27.91%) Average awareness, and (20.41%) Low Awareness towards gender equality in education.

So, Post-graduate respondents have Very High and High knowledge than Undergraduate respondents about gender equality in education.

Conclusion and Discussion

To flourish, a country must regard both genders equally. When both genders have equal access to opportunity, society develops in all areas. Equal rights in decision-making, health, politics, infrastructure, and profession will undoubtedly propel our society to new heights. Gender equality is also important and a human right. Gender equality in education is the only way to ensure the development of an egalitarian and human society that minimizes the exploitation of the weak. These also protect against gender-based violence. Gender equality makes our society more secure and healthy. Gender equality in education fosters a safe environment in which children of all genders can receive a high-quality education.

Implication of the Study

According to the researcher, the importance of this investigation is mentioned below-

- It will be possible to organize various awareness programs, seminars, and workshops on gender equality.

- Additional research on gender representation in textbooks is anticipated by this investigation.
- The result of the study acts as a review of the literature for future research.
- The result of the study will add knowledge to the existing field of study.
- The result of the study will be helpful for the welfare of society.
- The result of this research enriched the field of gender studies.

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