

Course title: Gender and education

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Gender segregation

Gender segregation is mostly observed and studied within occupational and economic structures, which reflects women entering into a particular kind of profession in the regime of any economic reform. Purdah or the practice of female seclusion is widely followed across countries and communities and it prescribes obvious gender segregation in rural tasks and activities. In Bangladesh, the practice of female seclusion operated according to the inside/outside divide (Kabeer 1990). The author says that the poor women in Bangladesh are subjected to a twofold process of stereotyping. Poor women are perceived to be passive and vulnerable, yet they are regarded as the potential target groups for development. These images of women have been reinforced through cultural constructions like, women are always in need of male protection for their survival. For example, the notion of the inside/outside divide has curtailed women's freedom to move beyond the premises of the household. Therefore, they perform activities within the sphere of domesticity. In the labour market, there is a wide division between men and women in terms of differential wages, access to MGNREGS job card, nature of work and the amount of work. Traditionally, women have been perceived to be dependent as far as employment is concerned. For instance, within the family women have access to resources through their male counterparts; similarly women in the labour market go through the male channels in accessing wage and other job opportunities. Majority of women are concentrated in the unorganized sector. In the case of unorganized sector, 95.79 per cent of females are concentrated in the sector as compared to 89.77 per cent of male workers. There is segregation on the basis of gender within the labour market and this division has led to rising socio-economic insecurities for women working in the unorganized and private sectors (Seth 2001). The author indicated that the states having low female status are into low paid and hazardous employment. Similarly, women's participation in the field of political and technical employment is very low. In the agricultural sector, women have substantial contribution; however they are mostly employed as marginal workers. In agriculture, there is segregation

with regard to nature of work assigned to women and men. In most of the states in India, men are engaged in ploughing and irrigation related activities and women have exclusively engaged in tasks like sowing, nurturing of plants, and harvesting. It is seen that men are mostly associated with marketing operations of the agricultural produce, and the control of resource and surplus is considered to be the domain of men. Further, the role of women as primary caretaker made them negotiating with flexible and temporary jobs. As rightly pointed out, married women are always been considered as "reserve army" which could be kept outside the labour market to be used during labour crises. Women have no formal contract as employees and are exposed to poor safety conditions and other vulnerabilities. Women as the workforce are of primary importance to the global economy and at the same time devoid of health and labour protection.