

An Overview on Equity, Equality And Accessibility Of Education

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Abstract

The paper focuses on the education and the importance and relevance related to it the national development of any country depends on the quality of education. It is one of the essential factors that influence national thinking and character-building. Education reflects societal concerns, evolves social ethos, and helps generate wealth through human resource development. Education has always been accorded an honoured place in Indian society. Many educationists and thinkers have stressed the fundamental role of education and its unique significance for community development. It performs both conservative and creative functions in society. A nation cannot be said to have developed only if a few of its elite groups are educated. It is considered to have been created only if education is imparted equally to all sections of society and is accessible to all. Thus, to make education inclusive, equity and equality should be promoted, and discrimination and structural inequalities in all forms should be removed. Of all disparities, gender inequality, which has been deeply rooted in India, is considered a significant issue as it interlocks with other forms of social inequality, notably caste, class, ethnicity, religion, etc. A gender perspective should be integrated into the education system, providing equal opportunities for both men and women to participate in and benefit from education. To improve access to education and promote equity, the education system should aim at mainstreaming gender and including women in a meaningful way.

Keywords: Education, equity, equality, accessibility, sustainable development goal.

Introduction

A good education is the most effective weapon you can have, it will help you achieve all your goals. Therefore, the term "equity in education" is profoundly complicated and might take several forms, making it challenging to ascertain a summary definition. However, the fundamental meaning behind the term is the pursuit of an academic system that caters to students of all types and develops their educational expertise accordingly. This implies that irrespective of a student's background, language, race, economic profile, gender, learning capability, incapacity, or family history, every student has the chance to urge the support and resources they have

to realise their educational goals. On the other hand, "equality in education" plays a vital role for the development and growth in society. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948) proclaims that "everyone has the right to education," that "education shall be free, a minimum within the elementary or elementary stages," and that "education shall be directed to the complete development of the human personality." However, it has been observed that some students get influenced by the partial behaviour of their instructional institutes or teachers. This way, they lose an opportunity to continue their education. These students face issues owing to distinctions in

gender, race, language, or impoverishment and realise it is tough to have access to the facilities that alternative students have. Thus, students with access to ample resources get ahead, and it brings abundance to the scholars who are laid low by partial behaviour. Another important aspect of education includes “accessibility”. Accessibility is the practice of making information, activities, and/or environments sensible, meaningful, and usable for as many people as possible. Accessibility is a practise of inequitable, responsible design. Accessibility is about identifying and responding to inaccessible conditions and providing equitable opportunity, regardless of a person’s abilities or circumstances. Because accessibility is a condition of the user experience and no two users are alike (i.e., any two users may have different and even competing needs for accessing information based on their conditions of in-access), we must be especially mindful of the user experience and usability of content found on the specific requirements of in-access for a given user or user community.

Significance of Equity in education is important for several reasons

An example of equity in education is often found in lecturers who are ready to adapt their teaching style to match a student's learning capabilities. Some students excel as auditory learners, reading information aloud and asking questions as needed. Others are visual learners, absorbing information through images, illustrations, and colours that are related to the text they will read. Then some tactile learners take breaks throughout lessons, act things out that relate to what's being taught, and use models, charts, or diagrams to get the most out of their learning. Once lecturers adapt the teaching style to meet students at their level and provide them with the support they need to learn, that contributes to equity in education. Equity in education aims to provide civil rights to all students in order to develop valuable skills and information that will allow them to live a full life and contribute to society. To realise this goal, educators are tasked with transforming systems of learning that exist on the college and district levels to confirm this new approach is adopted from the top to down. The new system is then based on equity and inclusion, with safeguards, interventions, and resources built in to ensure that every student has a chance to achieve their academic goals. While it is true that change

does not occur overnight, it all begins with one step—and there are several things that academics will do to promote equity in education. For example: Addressing Systematic issues, Addressing the role of leadership and administration, removing barriers in the school environment, Addressing the role of technology, and Regular reassessment of student’s performance.

There are numerous reasons why equity in education is important, including:

1. Creating a chance for disadvantaged and underserved students so that they are able to overcome disadvantages and realise success
2. Giving everyone the opportunity to be told in the manner that best suits their learning style Making students more engaged in their learning by ensuring that they see others of their same race, gender, ethnicity, and so on in their learning
1. Granting students more access to the resources that may bolster their education
2. Strengthening the association between a student’s family and their teacher, fostering a more enriching academic environment,
3. Guiding students to success in their educational career, and on the far side,
4. Closing the chance and accomplishment gap by creating equal
5. Improving a school district's metrics performance and adoring standardised testing Having a positive impact on the community, such as lowering crime rates and increasing property value. making an overall economic profit by getting students ready to become contributors to society and saving cash on public help

Equity in education aims to provide equal opportunity to all students to develop valuable skills and knowledge that help them live an entire life and contribute to society. To achieve this goal, educators are tasked with reworking systems of learning that exist on both the school and district levels to ensure this new approach is adopted from the top to bottom. The new system is then built on fairness and inclusion, with safeguards such as interventions and resources to ensure every student has every opportunity to achieve their academic goals. Similarly, equity in education is seen when students of different races and ethnic groups can see examples of people of their race and the community

around them in the classroom. On the other hand, the term "equity," which is related to social well-being, supports the principle of personalised and universal education. In this case, equity and quality are thought of as the two sides of the same coin, likewise as creating respect for the very fact that if there's laziness and indifference, there'll be no equity. The analysts themselves provide lines of research focused on aspects directly related to equity, such as diversity. This study seeks to analyse how the term "equity" is treated within the space of education by the scientific community. In doing so, it seeks to supply a more concrete and specific perspective, each to the academic community and to the scientific community, for understanding the approaches to and scope of the term "equity."

Meaning of Equality

'Equality' can be broadly defined as: "the state of being equal to one another". Generally, at intervals in education, references to equality centre around ideas like equal access to resources and equal opportunities. This often appeared to be a fascinating finish line, with all students receiving similar treatment from their academics. However, as a concept, it has clear limitations too. One drawback with the will for equal treatment and access to resources is that students are in entirely different circumstances, which might necessitate a difference in treatment and support. In fact, as a part of Scholastic's Teacher and Principal Faculty Report, "equity in education" 87% of teachers expressed that many of their students face barriers to learning outside of the academic environment. For example, if one student grows up in a low-income household with restricted access to technology and with special educational needs, whereas another student grows up in relative prosperity with no special educational needs, treating the two students equally in terms of resources, support, and funding is unlikely to provide a good outcome. Equality says that every student, regardless of where they come from, should have equal access to a high-quality education. Equality in education is required for students to have the same opportunity to begin with favourable educational outcomes.

It's believed that there are five critical dimensions on which it is essential to pursue equality of condition so that individuals will seek a decent life. These five dimensions of equality are resources, respect,

recognition, care, and learning. When we talk about "parity of resources," we don't just mean equality in the primary form of economic capital, like wealth and financial gain, but also in the states of social capital, like family, social networks, and affiliations, and in the forms of cultural capital, like academic credentials. Time, health, and environmental resources, such as high-quality health care and a clean environment, are vital alternative resources. Equal respect and recognition are not included in the liberal concept. Equal rights and the right to vote are guaranteed to every citizen, regardless of where they live. Therefore, in an authentic sense, we are all citizens of the world. Uniformity of work would require a severe rebuilding of the division of labour. Learning is essential for more reasons than just getting ready for work. The goal is to ensure that everyone participates and enjoys learning, which helps them grow as people. Equality is also important because it helps to reduce crime, promote social justice, and increase society's net economic benefits.

Why Accessibility?

Accessibility means that all education sources should be accessible to every student, and that all materials should be useable by every student from the start. As stated in Sustainable Development Goal 4, "Quality Education" ensures inclusive and equitable quality education and promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all. The target under SDG4 is to provide equal access to affordable technical, vocational, and higher education for all women and men. Education reduces poverty, decreases social inequalities, empowers women, and helps individuals reach their full potential. Accessibility in the context of education means that all people can perceive, understand, navigate, and interact with electronic information and be active, contributing members of the digital world. Visual, auditory, physical, speech, cognitive, and neurological disabilities should be considered when implementing accessibility measures. Accessible education helps people with permanent disabilities, temporary disabilities, and situational disabilities while enhancing usability for people without disabilities. Educators can adapt to digital formats and still use their teaching methods.

Accessible Education is the process of designing and developing a teaching style to meet the needs of

people from a variety of backgrounds, abilities and learning styles. It takes into account a range of student characteristics, including ethnic background, age, gender, language abilities, disabilities, and preferred learning style. Accessibility implies that all scholarly sources should be accessible to each student and that all materials should be usable by every student from the start. As declared in Sustainable Development Goal 4, "Quality Education" ensures inclusive and fair quality of education and promotes womb-to-tomb learning opportunities for all. The target under SDG4 is to provide equal access to reasonable technical, vocational, and better education for all ladies and men. Education reduces poverty, decreases social inequalities, empowers women, and helps people reach their full potential. Accessibility within the context of education means that all individuals will perceive, understand, navigate, and act with electronic information and be active, tributary members of the digital world. Visual, auditory, physical, speech, cognitive, and medical specialty disabilities ought to be considered once accessibility measures are implemented. Accessible education helps people with permanent disabilities, temporary disabilities, and situational disabilities while enhancing usability for people who do not have disabilities. Educators will adapt to digital formats and still use their teaching methods. Accessible education is the method of planning and developing a teaching style to fulfil the wants of individuals from various backgrounds, talents, and learning styles. It considers multiple student characteristics, including ethnic knowledge, age, gender, language abilities, disabilities, and the most well-liked learning style.

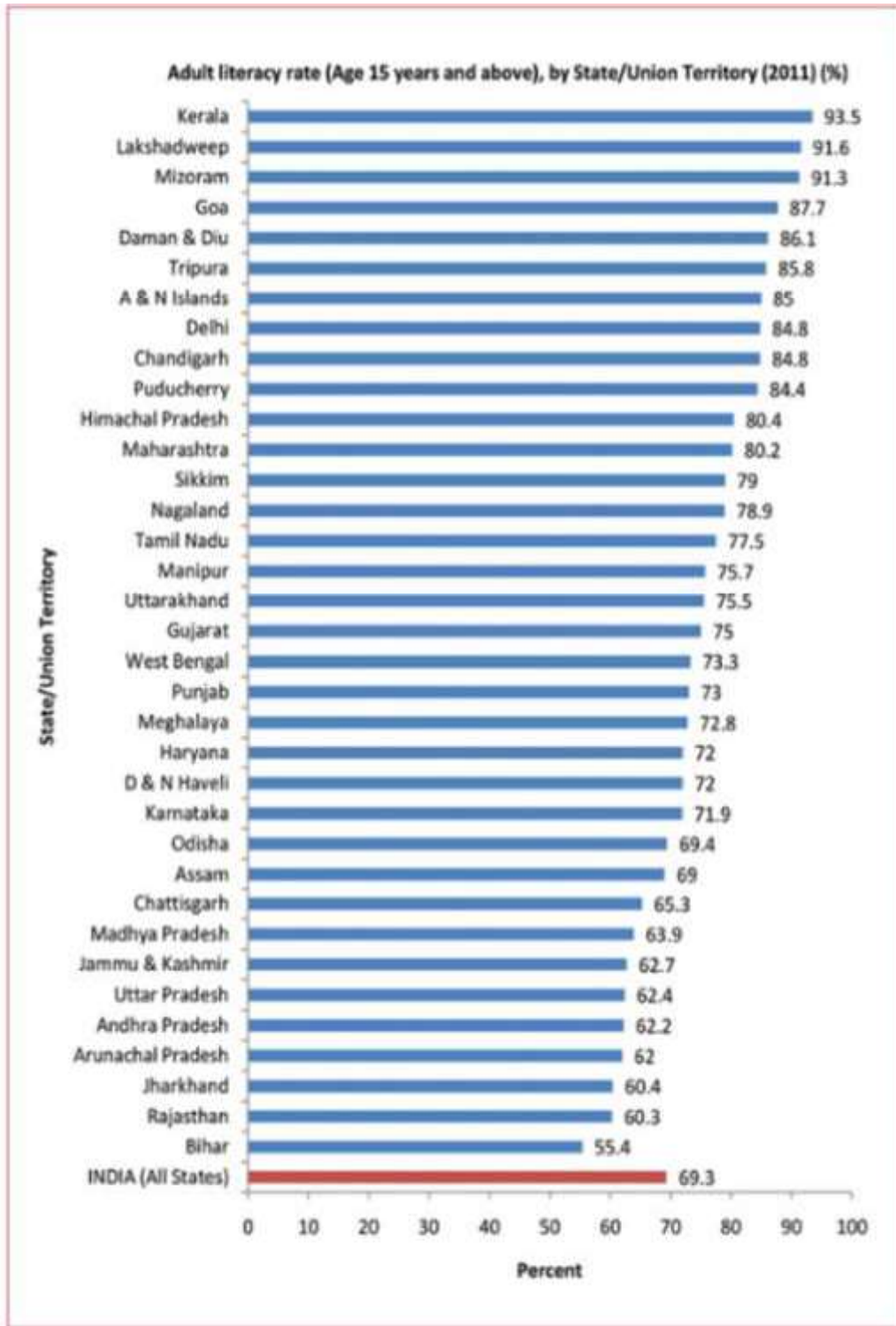
Barriers to education for Women

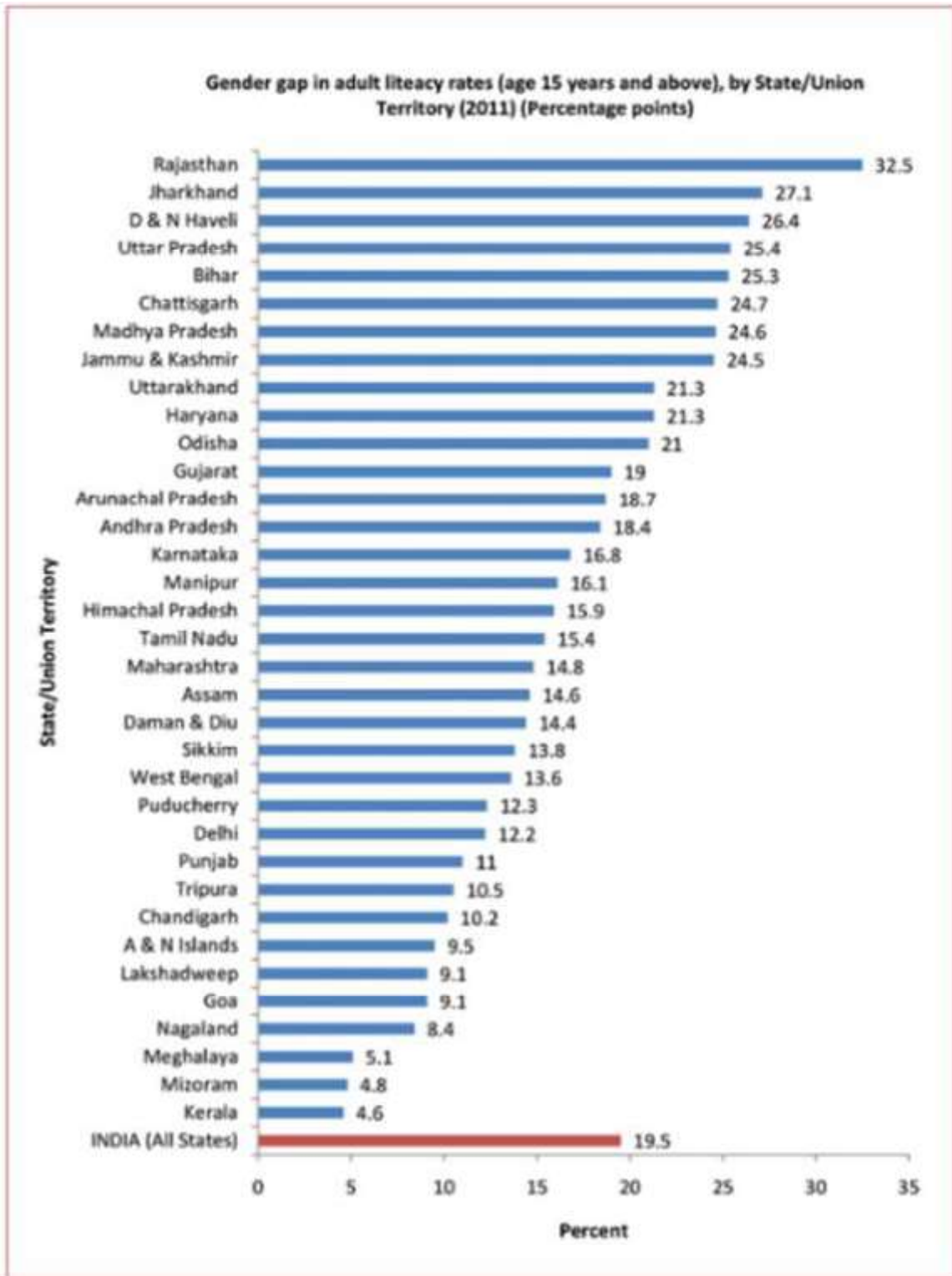
As per the report of the World Bank (2001), Gender Inequality in education is the largest in South Asia, with women in South Asia comprising only about partial as numerous times of education as men and womanish registration rates at the secondary position are only two-thirds of manly rates. For the vision of development to become a reality, the focus has to be laid on women's education, as this would help address the colourful development docket of poverty reduction, child mortality, health and hygiene, child labour, income inequality, etc. Kerala's achievement in creating education and human development stands as evidence in this

regard. A wide range of social, cultural, and economic factors inhibit women 's access to education, which are discussed as follows:

Inadequate School Facilities: Another barrier to education in India is the need for adequate school facilities. According to a PROBE survey, 63 percent of the schools had leaking roofs, 52 percent had no playground, 58 percent had no drinking water, 89 percent had no functioning toilets, and 27 percent had no blackboards. Only 2 percent had all the facilities, while 8 percent had none (PROBE, 1999). Gender sensitivity in the infrastructure of schooling, particularly the provision of toilets, water, better security, etc., requires attention.

Vulnerability of Adolescent Girls: Adolescent girls become more vulnerable, are denied the opportunity for education, and are removed from formal schools at puberty. Some of them are forced to enter matrimony, and they become young mothers before realising their potential. It is clear that the dropout rate for female children is higher in the 12 to 14-year-old age group. Apart from this, sexual harassment and violence are significant factors preventing parents from sending their daughters to school. Deprived households find it difficult to transport their girls safely to school, especially when their secondary schools are far away from their homes.





The Right to Education Act: History and Genesis

Article 21-A and the RTE Act came into effect on April 1, 2010. The title of the RTE Act incorporates the words "free" and "compulsory." "Free education" means that no child, other than a child whose parents have been admitted to a school that the appropriate government does not support, shall be liable to pay any fee or charges or expenses that may prevent them from pursuing and completing elementary education. "Compulsory education" casts an obligation on the appropriate government and local authorities to provide and ensure admission, attendance, and completion of elementary education by all children in the 6–14 age group. With this, India has moved forward to a rights-based framework that casts a legal obligation on the central and state governments to implement this fundamental child right as enshrined in Article 21A of the Constitution, following the provisions of the RTE Act. The most important aspect is however, is to ensure that the teaching-learning process is free from stress and anxiety with obvious implications for curriculum reform.

The RTE Act provides for the:

- I. Right of children to free and compulsory education till completion of elementary education in a neighbourhood school.
- II. It clarifies that 'compulsory education' means obligation of the appropriate government to provide free elementary education and ensure compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education to every child in the six to fourteen age group. 'Free' means that no child shall be liable to pay any kind of fee or charges or expenses which may prevent him or her from pursuing and completing elementary education.
- III. It makes provisions for a non-admitted child to be admitted to an age-appropriate class.
- IV. It specifies the duties and responsibilities of appropriate Governments, local authority and parents in providing free and compulsory education, and sharing of financial and other responsibilities between the Central and State Governments.
- V. It lays down the norms and standards relating inter alia to Pupil Teacher Ratios (PTRs), buildings and infrastructure, school-working days, teacher-working hours.

- VI. It provides for rational deployment of teachers by ensuring that the specified pupil teacher ratio is maintained for each school, rather than just as an average for the State or District or Block, thus ensuring that there is no urban-rural imbalance in teacher postings. It also provides for prohibition of deployment of teachers for non-educational work, other than decennial census, elections to local authority, state legislatures and parliament, and disaster relief.
- VII. It provides for appointment of appropriately trained teachers, i.e., teachers with the requisite entry and academic qualifications.

The unique differences between equity and equality often cause confusion. While both equity and equality are basis of social justice and fair resource allocation, they are significantly different. Same way the accessibility within education works for the rights of persons with disabilities. In Dec. 2006, the UN adopted convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities elaborating in detail the rights of persons with disabilities and setting out a code of implementation. The International Treaty is seen as marking a paradigm shift from a charity-based approach, which views persons with disabilities as "objects" of charity, medical treatment, and protection, to a rights-based system of seeing them as "subjects" capable of claiming their rights. The benefit of the new system is that disability is now proclaimed to be a mainstream issue. Their status will be reflected in a national assessment of development and poverty reduction strategies and corresponding international frameworks. Article 1 of this UNCRPD defines persons with disabilities as those with long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments, which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. The convention's purpose is to promote, protect, and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights by persons with disabilities, depending upon their needs and situations. It covers several key areas such as accessibility, personal mobility, rehabilitation, participation in political life, etc.

Conclusion

Equal opportunities do not mean identical opportunities. Not everyone will be given seats for medical or engineering education. Opportunities are equally distributed, but not benefits. Each,

according to their ability and merit, is given opportunities. A quota of opportunities is specially earmarked for the disadvantaged. The best among these sections will get opportunities up to the lower ceiling. Equal access is guaranteed, as are different results. Instead, some weight is also given to social handicaps in the form of lowering a marginal percentage of marks at qualifying examinations for eligibility, increasing the age limit for applications, etc.; these are considered compensations for handicaps that could not be addressed through systemic interventions. Once equal opportunities are given through reserved seats, scholarships, hostel facilities, fee concessions, and library resources, the beneficiaries must compete with the rest and excel. While equality is a value, equity refers to the strategies adopted to realise the value of equality. The value of equality can only be realised

through equitable interventions that are concrete, transparent, and physically observable. All initiatives of the government and other actors, by way of elementary, secondary, and higher education and different non-formal education methods, should move forward and promote equality. In addition, the availability of good-quality vocational and life-skill educational opportunities, in line with gender concerns, can generate the necessary momentum and contribute to attaining developmental goals. Investment in women education at one time has a multiplier effect, yielding additional benefits in the future. In summary, education is a powerful tool for promoting gender equity and the accessibility of education to all. which would help reduce poverty, unemployment, and inequality, improve health and nutrition, and promote human development.

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