

Gender Inequality in Basic Mathematics Persists in Rural India

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Introduction

Gender gap in basic mathematics has been a persistent issue in rural India for a long time. Despite efforts to bridge the gap, the problem persists. This gender gap in mathematics is not only a social issue but also a serious concern for the development of the country. This essay aims to explore the prevalence and persistence of the gender gap in basic mathematics in rural India. Firstly, it is essential to understand the extent of the problem. According to the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2020, only 36.5% of girls in rural India can do basic arithmetic. This percentage is significantly lower than the percentage of boys, which is 45.9%. This indicates a significant gender gap in basic mathematics skills in rural India. The ASER report further shows that the gender gap in mathematics proficiency starts at an early age, with boys performing better than girls in basic arithmetic skills in primary schools. The report also highlights that the gender gap in mathematics skills widens as children progress to higher grades.

Description

Several factors contribute to the prevalence and persistence of the gender gap in basic mathematics in rural India. One of the main reasons is the cultural and social norms prevailing in rural areas. Many families in rural India still believe that educating girls is a waste of resources as they will eventually get married and move away. This mindset leads to girls receiving lower levels of education than boys, and as a result, they lack basic skills in mathematics and other subjects. Additionally, the lack of female role models in mathematics further discourages girls from pursuing education in this field. Another factor that contributes to the gender gap in mathematics skills is the poor quality of education in rural areas. Many rural schools lack adequate infrastructure, teaching staff, and resources to provide quality education to students. This lack of quality education affects girls more than boys, as they often face social and cultural barriers in accessing education. Girls are more likely to drop out of school due to poverty, early marriage, and other social pressures. As a result, they miss out on the opportunity to acquire basic mathematics skills. The persistence of the gender gap in mathematics is also linked to the teaching methods used in schools. Many teachers in rural areas still rely on rote learning methods, which focus on memorization rather than understanding concepts. This method of teaching can be particularly challenging for girls, who may struggle to understand the abstract concepts of mathematics. As a result, they may lose interest in the subject and not pursue it further [1].

Furthermore, the lack of female representation in the teaching profession also contributes to the gender gap in mathematics skills. In rural India, there is a severe shortage of female teachers, especially in mathematics and science. The absence of female teachers may make it difficult for girls to relate to the subject and may contribute to their lack of interest in mathematics. To bridge

the gender gap in basic mathematics skills in rural India, it is essential to adopt a multi-pronged approach. Firstly, there is a need to change the social and cultural norms that discourage girls from pursuing education. This can be achieved through awareness campaigns and advocacy efforts that promote the importance of education for girls. Additionally, families must be encouraged to send their daughters to school and provide them with the necessary support to continue their education [2-5].

Conclusion

In Secondly, there is a need to improve the quality of education in rural areas. This can be done by providing adequate infrastructure, teaching staff, and resources to rural schools. Additionally, there is a need to introduce innovative teaching methods that focus on understanding concepts rather than rote learning. Teachers must also receive training to improve their teaching skills and create a positive learning environment for students. Thirdly, there is a need to increase the representation of female teachers in rural schools, especially in mathematics and science. This can be done by providing incentives to female teachers to work in rural areas and creating a supportive

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