



Women In Higher Education: A Long Way To Go" It Took Me Quite A Long Time To Develop A Voice, And Now That I Have It, I Am Not Going To Be Silent."- Madeleine Albright

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Abstract

Women's empowerment is inextricably linked to education. Higher education for women plays a crucial role in empowering women. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is an important topic to discuss. According to his words, if a woman is educated, she would be able to educate her family and thus be empowered. Indian women have experienced a variety of difficulties, such as illiteracy, a lack of constitutions that include equality for women in their preambles, and a lack of fundamental rights. Even after the triumph of the Liberalization, Globalization, and Privatization model, there has been a paucity of women's involvement in public life. Therefore, this study focuses on the empowerment of Indian women through higher education. Higher education will play a significant role in empowering women.

Participation of women in higher education is a crucial step towards gender equality in the economy and society. This article analyses the participation rates of major Indian states in higher education and investigates the underlying causes of the variation between states. It uses the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of females and the Gender Parity Index (GPI) to determine the absolute and relative participation of women in higher education from 2011 to 2019. The statistical comparison of these indicators for the 16 largest states reveals that they do badly in postgraduate and technical education courses. However, they perform better in GPI at the undergraduate level. In addition, recent increases in the number of women enrolling in higher education suggest a trend toward gender parity. Fixed-effect panel data regression shows that many female teachers, a higher per capita state domestic product (a proxy for per-capita income), and the availability of colleges and girls' hostels are major factors in the GER of women and GPI in India's higher education.

Introduction

In addition to having a high level of education and work, an empowered woman must also be reasonable, intellectual, and skilled. In India, the patriarchal social order has considered women as subordinate to men since the beginning of time. They were deprived of all rights, including education, voting, and participation in public life. Due to the rigorous system of traditions, they were generally confined to the traditional position of women within the four walls of the home and always led a secondary existence. In this circumstance, giving female education priority was an illusion. When a woman is empowered, she can make decisions based on her own capabilities. The Oxford Dictionary defines "empowerment" as "to make stronger and more confident, particularly in directing one's own life and asserting one's rights." Education is essential to the development of every nation and its human capital as well. In recent decades, emphasis has been placed on educating women out of their traditional role as homemakers. This traditional role of women has changed gradually as a result of primary and higher education.

Objectives

To research upon the current topic of higher education in women's life. To analyse relationship between women empowerment and higher education.

Methodology

The present paper entitled 'Women in Higher Education: A Long Way to Go' analyses secondary sources and presented in a descriptive way. Through the process of analysis, it presents the role of higher education for women to be empowered and its significance.

Higher education It is commonly called as the education which is given after secondary education, which includes education being provided by institutions like professional schools, medicine training schools, universities, technological and institutions etc.

Concept of Higher Education

According to the recently issued AISHE (All India Survey on Higher Education) 2019-20 report from the Ministry of Education, women in India currently account for 49% of all enrolment in higher education. However, it is essential to analyse the performance at the micro-level as well as the macro-level. In India, women are not a homogenous group, and their educational experiences are influenced by socio-religious environment. All areas of a woman's life are affected by

the sociocultural backdrop of Indian society. Despite all odds, women in India get a high level of education. Women from all segments of society have enthusiastically entered the domain of higher education. From 2015 to 2019, there was an 18% increase in the number of women enrolled in higher education nationwide. The survey results also indicate a significant increase in female enrolment in MA, MCom, and MSc programmes during the past five years. In 2019-20, India's Gender Parity Index (GPI) for higher education increased from 1.00 in 2018-19 to 1.01 in 2019-20.

Changes in the GPI represent the progress made by the female student population of the eligible age group in terms of relative access to higher education relative to male students. The positive numbers represent the socioeconomic mobility of Indian households, which corresponds to increased chances for female college students. The upward socioeconomic mobility of families is associated with an increase in the number of women pursuing higher education abroad, according to research.

In India, female students who come from highly educated parental backgrounds are more likely to be "allowed" or "encouraged" to study abroad, according to a study done to examine the association between gender, study abroad, and parents' socioeconomic class (proxied by education). 80% of female students have university-educated mothers, whereas just 54% of male students studying abroad have university-educated mothers. Less than 30 percent of the world's researchers are female, resulting in a severe gender imbalance in STEM fields. This underrepresentation is a worldwide occurrence.

According to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS), less than 15% of STEM researchers in India were female. This is an alarmingly low number, given that India is the world leader in producing female STEM graduates. The dichotomy that India has STEM graduates but no researchers is striking. The number of international female students pursuing STEM degrees in the United States, particularly at the master's level, is on the rise, as evidenced by data. The Indian government is also attempting to narrow the gender gap in STEM fields. An important step in this approach is the Indo-US Fellowship for women in STEM, which gives Indian women scientists, engineers, and technicians the opportunity to do collaborative research in leading US institutes for 3-6 months.

Leap of equity

As a result, female students are more likely to enrol in top universities overseas thanks to upward economic mobility and liberation from prejudicial socio-cultural assumptions.

Women now have more options for pursuing higher education abroad thanks to concerted efforts including targeted scholarships and fellowships financed by governments, international agencies, and private groups.

The gender gap that persists in female students' worldwide mobility in higher education, particularly in STEM fields, must be closed, but doing so will need concerted efforts from all parties involved, including individuals, society, and governments.

Due to its direct correlation to the expansion and development of every nation, education has come to be regarded as the gold standard in society and has reached a high value. It indirectly benefits the country while feeding each person's mentality and developing him into a whole personality. Education is the art of sharing knowledge in order to develop a person's personality and equip them with the skills, discipline, and vocation they need. India, a growing nation, is home to 1.25 billion people and boasts the largest democracy in the world. Women's higher education growth rates are also changing the way their lives are lived, not just those of males. In order to contribute to the socioeconomic growth of the country, they position themselves as a major human resource by making up 48% of the overall population.

In its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties, and Directive Principles of State Policies, the Indian Constitution guaranteed equality for women. According to a UN assessment on women's education, it may significantly improve people's health and quality of life, and mothers can help their children make definite decisions about their future aspirations. They model for them how to be a cornerstone of their family. According to a report in one of the top newspapers in India, the percentage of women enrolled in higher education has climbed from 10% to 43.8%.

Role of Higher Education in Women Empowerment

According to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, an individual is educated by educating a man, however a family can only be educated by educating the women. According to his comments, if a woman is empowered, then India is empowered. These few comments by Nehru clarify the relationship between women's emancipation and higher education. As half of the population consists of women, empowering them can assist in advancing the national economy. Higher education is a stepping stone for empowering women to leave their traditional roles as women by overcoming numerous obstacles.

Their rising access to higher education liberates women from gender inequality's repressive practises through their abilities. There are numerous programmes implemented under Higher education for women. Higher education for women through Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Mode delivers distance learning system where teachers and learners can be flexible with respect to place and time.

- Post School Diploma gives solutions for skill development.

- Post-Graduate Indira Gandhi Scholarship for the pursuit of further and technical education by a lone girl kid
- Construction of college dormitories for women, etc.
- Introduction of women's studies at academic institutions
- Fellowships for postdoctoral study for women
- National Open University of India (IGNOU)

Steady Change of women

Indian women's education was originally attempted by Christian missionaries. Initially, the educated ladies became Christians. However, they made persistent attempts to ensure that they went to school because they were anxious to convert the higher caste Hindus and believed that the best way to do so would be to expose upper caste women to European education. They initially met with failure.

However, they received backing from an unexpected source in the second and third decades of the nineteenth century. As western-educated Indian men began to realise that teaching their wives to speak English and adopt European mannerisms would strengthen their access to the inner social circle of British society, they resorted to the missionaries to tutor their spouses. European women from the laity gradually began to take advantage of the chance to work as governesses and teachers. And a culture that had for generations forbade women from receiving formal education slowly began to practise private tutoring or instruction for small groups of women in what became known as "schools."

The nineteenth-century social reform movement, however, made a significant dent in the traditions that prevented women from obtaining an education. This movement, which picked up steam in the 1840s, had two main goals: first, a concerted effort to secure legislation outlawing practises like sati, child marriage, female infanticide, and the dental of remarriage to widows; and second, a firm and steady campaign based on the belief that education alone could unseat the deeply ingrained customs that bind women to these behaviours. Without a doubt, the efforts of the social reforms were mostly restricted to the former British provinces of Bengal, Bombay, and Madras, and they were concentrated on urban upper and middle castes and classes. However, there was a notable improvement in the education of women in this segment of the Indian population.

Women`s Entry into the Nurturing Occupations

At the end of the nineteenth century, social reformers endeavoured to educate widows and other disadvantaged women with an education that would enable them to earn a living and become independent. This mission was pursued in the face of significant opposition. 4 Nurturing professions, such as nursing and school teaching, were among the few that society reluctantly permitted women to pursue.

As a result of the establishment of women's health services and schools for girls, there was a consistent demand for nurses and female school teachers. Those with a willingness to work were quickly absorbed. However, until the third and fourth decades of the twentieth century, it was assumed that women with a high school diploma or a bachelor's degree should not work unless they were compelled to. The privileged were expected to be socially engaged and to perform social volunteer activities. Nevertheless, a small number of women entered the professions of law or medicine, as well as school and university teaching, not out of necessity but for self-actualization.

However, there were exceptions that defied the norm. Moreover, in order to achieve their goals, they typically had to forego marriage. At the beginning of the twentieth century, when Gandhi enlisted women in the freedom fight, he emphasised that their education was crucial for the success of the campaign and for the nation's development into a powerful nation after freedom was won. The Congress party's list of post-independence goals included the education of women as a priority. Surprisingly, Gandhi's advocacy of women's education did not result in the creation of work opportunities for them. Prior to the 1940s, the attitude of society about their employment was virtually unchanged. Educated women were employed by middle-class households in cities such as Bombay and Calcutta during the Second World War due to a dearth of men and an unusual spike in living expenses.

This resulted in a dramatic shift in metropolitan attitudes on women's employment. This circumstance was no longer considered unfortunate. It was gradually acknowledged as a commendable attempt to.

The Constitutional Guarantee of Equality

After independence, both women's education and employment grew substantially. The constitution of independent India emphasises their citizenship equality. Both state and federal government strategies and initiatives stressed their education. As a result of the revolution of increased aspirations and living conditions, an increasing number of educated women were eager to work. They were swiftly assimilated into the expanding employment prospects. In the meantime, both the concept of women's right to work and the real employment of educated women acquired substantial support from the feminist movement, which gained power during the international women's Decades (1975–1985).

By the sixth plan era, government documents began to discuss women's "empowerment" and their right to equal employment opportunities. Today in India, women are present in all employment sectors and at all levels. While the majority of educated working women continue to prioritise their roles as wives, mothers, and homemakers and subscribe to the nation's belief that their jobs must be accommodated within these commitments, career-focused women are no

longer the exception. In the amazing heterogeneity of Indian culture, however, modernity coexists with absolute orthodoxy and traditions at various stages of evolution. The condition of women in higher education administration must be assessed considering this fact.

Women's Reference for the Academic Profession Today

As previously indicated, school teaching and nursing were the first occupations permitted to women of the middle and higher classes and castes in Indian society. Possibly because Indian society has historically ascribed a high level of respect to vocations involving knowledge and instruction, school teaching was viewed as particularly desirable. When women began teaching at universities, their position was far higher than that of school teachers.

Even though women today have access to virtually every profession, independent business, and numerous other extremely prestigious and profitable work opportunities, many chose the academic vocation. Given that most jobs in the management of higher education are awarded to academics who have distinguished themselves as researchers, scholars, or teachers, it is essential to comprehend this predilection and examine the performance of women who enter academia.

According to the available evidence, some devoted scholars and researchers enter academia because they believe it is the only area where they may find personal fulfilment. However, they also reveal that many women enter the academic field since it allows them to balance their responsibilities as homemakers more easily than any other occupation. They can do overdue household chores during school and university breaks. Having the same work hours and vacations as the children is also advantageous.

However, this is not all. In the intricate process of India's shift from tradition to modernity, men have been abandoning academia for more lucrative and renowned careers. Nonetheless, they appear to desire for their wives to enter this profession and earn the family the status that continued commitment in learning confers.

In this circumstance, women who enter the academic field are well-qualified, and frequently more qualified than their male colleagues. But relatively few possess the research and writing skills, PhD and post-doctoral degrees, and academic distinctions essential for promotion to managerial roles. The pressure of juggling their roles as mothers and homemakers makes it difficult, and sometimes impossible, for women to make the necessary additional investment. In addition, even people who earn extra credentials are not necessarily willing to shift away from mainly administrative jobs due to the increased time commitment. Even less popular are purely administrative and managerial professions, as these frequently conflict with their responsibilities as homemakers.

The fundamental issue appears to be that most women in academic professions view their function as professionals or earners as secondary to that of men in the home, and consequently lack the motivation to advance. Obviously, all of this is rapidly evolving. As indicated previously, many women today place equal value on their obligations as career women and homemakers, and some even place greater value on their occupations.

Acceptance within the System and Self-Concepts of Women Managers

Numerous barriers limit women's access to management positions in higher education, as evidenced by the preceding discussion. However, the author's personal experience and that of others she has spoken with show that those who attain these positions are generally well-received by their students, faculty, and authorities. This is supported by the limited available evidence.

The National Institute of Educational and Public Administration (NIEPA) in Delhi and the SNTD Women's University in Bombay, both of which regularly hold courses for women higher education administrators, have been gathering information to assist them in planning and managing these courses.

NIEPA data on the principals of 300 out of 800 women's institutions indicate that women principals perform with the same level of confidence as their male colleagues. On a scale of 16 to 36, women scored an average of 30.32 points compared to 30.22 points for men, according to a survey that evaluated their confidence in relation to twelve issues related to their profession. The details of the data indicate several tiny but intriguing variances. In the same survey, female principals were asked to describe the challenges they confront and to identify the training they require. In general, men and women described the same kind of problems. Many respondents claimed that there is no difference between the issues faced by male and women administrators.

However, several women did mention what they perceive to be gender-specific issues. Mobility is one of the most stated features. Many female principals believe that it is more difficult for women than for males to attend government offices, Delhi, or the state capital for administrative purposes. In addition, they believe they are less mobile, less sociable, and, hence, less knowledgeable on pertinent matters than their male counterparts. Several respondents find it challenging to exercise control over male subordinates, especially if they are male chauvinists.

In addition, they find it harder to chastise female subordinates who demand more compassion, understanding, and forbearance from their female bosses. Several respondents mentioned the political and corruption pressures they encounter. They believe that it is more difficult for women to tolerate and resist these demands than for men, because those who exert them do not hesitate to engage in character assassination. Of course, in addition to this, many women also cited the challenges they encounter juggling their roles as school principals and homemakers.

The Need to take Cognizance of the Regional Differences

It is also essential that training programmes account for regional disparities in attitudes toward the job status of women. These are deeply embedded in the history and cultural ethos of each nation. Although the matter has not yet been thoroughly investigated. It is evident that the relatively more positive attitudes to the employment of women in Bombay in particular and the south of India in general could be explained by a number of factors, such as certain elements of the Dravidian Culture; the Kerala tradition of matriarchy; the fact that two of the first three universities established by the British were located in the southern region (Bombay and Madras); and that the nineteenth century movement for social reform on behalf of women was centred in the southern region.

To comprehend what it is that supports women's participation in school administration, it is vital to rigorously investigate these hypothetical explanations. In the meantime, as previously indicated, there are at least two moments in the arrangement of training for female higher education administrators at which the difference between the South and North and the rise of Bombay must be considered.

First, we must raise awareness. Second, it is vital to locate training programmes and activities for female higher education administrators in northern India. In training classes, it would be beneficial to describe historically, analyse, and discuss these disparities between the North and South. According to the author's personal experience with training courses for women's managers, such conversations assist to show the limits that women confront and have encountered, as well as the ways in which they have advanced and can continue to do so.

The Need to Lift the Aspirations of Women in the Academic Profession

In designing training programmes for women, it is also important to keep in mind the previously mentioned facts, namely that most women who enter the academic profession are highly qualified but not particularly competitive, that many of them choose these professions over more lucrative and sometimes more prestigious occupations, primarily because it combines more easily than most other occupations with their responsibilities as home-makers, and that most women who enter the academic profession are highly qualified but not particularly competitive.

To improve the participation of women in the management of higher education, it is necessary to include in training programmes elements that raise their aspirations, stimulate their ambitions, and encourage them to reevaluate and revise their own assessment of their role and responsibilities as professionals as subordinate to their role as homemakers. In fact, it is vital to raise this understanding with their male co-workers and subordinates.

Extension and Continuing Education

Finally, it must be determined whether women can make a unique contribution to the management of higher education in India. There are eight hundred fifty-one women-only colleges and five women-only universities. Similarly, two hundred colleges of home-science, forty-six schools of social work, thirty-two colleges of nursing, and several colleges of education largely serve female students. All the nation's women's universities and most women's colleges are led by women.

Also present are several colleges of home science, schools of social work, nursing, and education. The women who manage these institutions can affect the futures of thousands of women. At a time when the nation is explicitly committed to use education as a tool for the empowerment of women, this is a truly exceptional opportunity. Exclusively female colleges validate the notion that women must be secluded from males. One can assume that this concept is obsolete.

However, the fact that the number of women's colleges expanded from 609 in 1980–81 to 851 in 1991 demonstrates that many strata of Indian society are still hesitant to send their daughters to coeducational institutions. Despite the prevalence of orthodoxy, the country's constitution proclaims unequivocally the equality of women, acknowledges that decades of denial of opportunity have reduced them to a minority in society, and affirms a national commitment to their advancement. Consequently, the difficulty is to utilise these colleges as focal points for a targeted attempt toward this objective.

The dimensions of their deficiency must be discovered, and measures for empowering them in each must be developed. Training programmes must equip female managers to fulfil this obligation. Women's economic independence, for example, is one of the most crucial requirements for their empowerment. In order to accomplish this, it is vital to ensure that the degrees and diplomas students earn equip them with marketable abilities. At professional institutions.

Where courses are already employment-focused, such as at colleges of nursing and social work, the issue is primarily one of ongoing upgrading, updating, and revising of courses to keep pace with developments in knowledge and skills and

with employment market trends. However, the effort is considerably more challenging at colleges of arts and commerce, where courses are currently primarily focused on providing a comprehensive general education. It is reasonable to examine why all of this is attributed to the unique contribution of women. In fact, the suggestion is based on the observation that, thus far, women have performed this task more effectively than men – not because of any inherent superiority, but because, during the decades of colonial rule, while educated Indian men grew distant from their indigenous culture, women remained somewhat closer, likely because the spheres in which they functioned kept them in touch with tradition.

Similarly, women who manage institutions with a significant proportion of female students are uniquely positioned to promote the social and political growth of their pupils. They can do so by acquainting students with legal rights available to women with constitutional provisions in their favour and by informing them about opportunities for education and employment as well as different kinds of facilities and support systems provided by the state and central governments as well as by other voluntary bodies. They can also establish programmes to heighten students' awareness of gender discrimination, to raise their aspirations, and to alter their self-perceptions. Above all, they may utilise existing resources such as the national social service and genuinely engage women students.

Community service improves rural and urban residents' understanding of and sensitivity to social, political, and economic realities, while concurrently engaging them in the service of society. In addition to advancing the futures of the girls enrolled in the institutions that they oversee; women higher education administrators can use their position and the resources at their disposal to improve women's access to higher education. The number of women enrolled in higher education has climbed from 748,525 in 1980-81 to approximately 1,367,495 at present; yet, women still account for only 32% of higher education enrolment. One of the simplest methods for women managers to contribute to the improvement of this scenario is to increase enrolment through promotional programmes aimed at high school-aged females.

These programmes must not only inspire girls to enrol in universities and polytechnics, but also convince parents to offer the necessary assistance. Since girls' access to higher education is frequently hampered by the fact that they reside in rural areas and towns without colleges or universities, it is vital to develop and strengthen women's hostel facilities. The UGC is acutely aware of this and gives generous funds for women's hostels. However, these grants are rarely properly utilised as there are significant differences in the operation of girls' hostels. By preparing women to establish and operate hostels for female students, training programmes for female managers of higher education could meet a pressing demand.

Since many girls are forced to discontinue their education or opt out of higher education altogether due to early marriage, motherhood, or residence in remote areas far from institutions of higher education, woman managers could make a significant contribution by developing correspondence courses and self-instruction programmes for women. All of this necessitates a sharp education for what is relevant, a dynamic, open, and unconventional approach to knowledge and skills, as well as the ability to employ this information creatively; therefore, training courses must help women managers develop this open attitude and stimulate their creativity.

Women in management positions at coeducational institutions can also make a unique contribution by educating male students about gender discrimination and sensitising them to its injustice. Although women in management positions at Women's institutions are in the best position to implement the recommendations made thus far, women in management positions at coeducational institutions can also make a unique contribution by educating male students about gender discrimination and sensitising them to its. They can contribute to bringing similarity to coeducational institutional domains such as nutrition, textiles and garment production, and food processing. These approaches are now taught almost exclusively in colleges of home science or polytechnics that cater solely to women.

Administration and promotion of women's studies

Higher education in India is extraordinarily well-equipped with the necessary resources. Ten years have passed since the University Grants Commission approved specific programmes in women's studies to approximately thirty universities and other institutions of higher education in India. This activity by the UGC has been bolstered by assistance for these programmes from several ministries and foreign organisations such as the Ford Foundation and IDRC (Canada). Unfortunately, the results do not match the level of investment.

Discussions with members of the UGC Review Committee, which is now drafting a report on the topic, show that the programmes lack oversight and direction. Where women's studies programmes have been successful, they have produced research discoveries and analytical insights that extend far beyond gender equality. For instance, they have modified certain age-old economic and demographic notions. They have also made it possible for professors and students to engage with reality in a manner not achievable with traditional courses and curricula.

There is a desire and excitement to expand women's studies, but it is unquestionable that women higher education administrators in India must provide the leadership and direction necessary to improve women's studies in the country. It is important to recognise that it is not enough to promote Women's Studies at Departments of Social Science and of

Humanities, as is currently the case. Feminist research has revealed some shocking facts about women and nutrition, women's health, women's relationship to housing and shelter, women's relationship to the environment, and so on. Therefore, training courses must enable women managers from all sectors of higher education to develop Women's Studies in the fields in which they operate.

Conclusion

In today's male-dominated culture, women are assuming leadership roles in a variety of sectors, including education. From education to astronomy, women have made their mark in every field. In fact, their journey can be compared to that of humans striving for perfection. Through higher education, women acquire the required creative talents and discover their identities. In India, a greater proportion of women are pursuing higher education than in the past. When women can discover their identities and contribute to the national economy as a result of their empowerment, the government should adopt more higher education-related schemes, scholarships, and awareness programmes. Additionally, we have attempted to demonstrate how their participation could be increased and made more effective. It would be foolish, however, to assert that men or women managers in higher education in India today can do much if efforts to improve their competencies are not backed by structural reforms. Therefore, it would be appropriate to conclude this paper with a strong recommendation that training courses for female managers should inform them of their responsibilities in this area and instruct them on how to present a united front in order to bring about the necessary structural changes and reduce political intervention.

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