

Women's and Higher Education: Issues and Challenges

Ishita Sarkar*
Rupali Mondal*

"Can you better the condition of your women? Then there will be hope for your well-being. Otherwise, you will remain as backward as you are now."

- Swami Vivekananda

Abstract:

In discussing women's higher education, the researcher explains all the problems related to women's higher education and solutions to the problems. The paper fully focusing on the problem of accepting higher education of women contributes to the development of women's higher education in social development. The society in which we live is ruled by patriarchy, and women are subjected to their domination. The number of women enrolling themselves for higher education in India has risen by a jaw-dropping 1,350 percent in the last seven years; the All-India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE)¹ has revealed. From 1.2 million women in 2010-11, the number has gone up to 17.4 million women in 2017-18. "The upward mobility of woman after this (Higher Education) is very low. I did a study that shows that the only places where women are equal to men are at the position of constitutional labor; beyond that, at the any position, men are far beyond. At the university level, women are only one-fourth at the top level" Manisa Priyam; associate professor at National University for Educational Planning and Administration said. The process of taking women's decision to participate in higher education is not smooth and women have to face widespread criticisms at multiple levels. There are also cultural disadvantages of many sorts of people that severely hinder their development as citizens. Researchers on two topics of women representation; such as one-digit cooperative work for higher education and the other to recognize the hard work of women.

Keywords: Higher Education, Social Approach, Mobilization, Empowerment.

1. Introduction:

By evaluating the history of women's education in India, we see that there has been a radical change in women's higher education. It is a common notion that a child is educated when the mother is educated and therefore through teaching a woman, the whole family can be educated. Moreover, the standard of education in society for its healthy position and progress is contingent on the role of women in it. Education can improve the social status of women, which is conducive to the progress of society. The Indian constitution has given equal rights of education for men and women. The constitution has acknowledged the need for educating women, and the government has taken measures to bring various reforms to elevate women's social status by enacting various laws and orders on different occasions.

*Ex-Students, Department of Education, WBSU, email ID ishitasarkar1804@gmail.com

¹ Woman in higher education show steady rise, enrolment in top institutions not growing (2019). Retrieved on 1.02.2021 at 6.00 pm <https://m.timesofindia.com/india/women-in-higher-education-show-steady-rise-enrolment-in-top-institutions-notgrowing/amparticleshow/71267870.cms>

However, some hindrances are still existent in the field of women's higher education. Several traits and problems of women's higher education are discussed.

2. Review of Related literature:

The review of related literature is an importance aspect in this field of investigation. The researcher has tried to review a few studies in India. Reviews are appended below-

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan (University Education Commission 1948-1949)² stated that- "There cannot be educated people without educated women". Recommendations of this commission on women education are-

- Scope of woman education should be increased and they should be given facilities.
- Curriculum will be same for boys and girls.
- Woman should be respected and they should be including in different educational activates.
- Female teacher should be same salary like male teachers for same work.

National Policies on Education (1968 and 1986)³ the policies of education were framed since a radical reconstruction of education system was recommended by various commissions. The first NPE was on 1968 and second was in 1986. First NPE laid down a common scheme for women education i.e., Science and mathematics must be incorporated as the compulsory subjects for both boys and girls. Second NPE took steps of education for women's equality and special focus on the education of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and minorities.

National Commission for Women (1992)⁴ this commission also interacts for gender equality through media, social activists and academics for suggesting the ways of ensuring due representation of women in all spheres. It was constituted on 31st January 1992 with Mrs. Jayanti Patnaik as the chairperson. The mandate of this commission is to study the problems faced by the women and to make recommendations to eradicate those. It also evaluates the status of the Indian women from time to time.

National Policy for the Empowerment of Women (2001)⁵ this policy aims at bringing about the advancement, development and empowerment of women. It focuses on equal access to women health care, quality education at all levels, career and vocational education, employment and community practices by active participation and involvement of women in public offices etc.

The National Knowledge Commission (2007)⁶ this commission focused on access to knowledge, knowledge concepts and creation of new knowledge. Under this, Universities are making sincere efforts for providing facilities and necessary provisions to the female students.

² Radhakrishnan Commission. Retrieved on 1.02.2021 at 6.00 pm

<https://www.tetsuccesskey.com/2016/12/radhakrishnan-commission-part-1.html>

³ Indian Education Policy. Retrieved on 1.02.2021 at 6.00 pm

<https://www.indiaeducation.net/indiaeddestination/policy/education-policy.aspx>

⁴ National Commission for Woman. Retrieved on 1.02.2021 at 6.00 pm

<http://ncw.nic.in/commission/about-us/brif-history>

⁵ National Policy on the Empowerment of Women. Retrieved on 1.02.2021 at 6.00 pm

<https://www.oxfamindia.org/blog/oxfam-indias-recommendations-national-policy-woman>

⁶ National Knowledge Commission. Retrieved on 1.02.2021 at 6.00 pm

*** Meaning of Higher Education:**

Education is the art of imparting knowledge to others for the betterment of life and preparing them for achieving their aim. Whereas the term “Higher Education” aims at training students at various types of colleges and universities to become highly skilled specialists in the fields of economics, technology, science, and literature; once they have successfully completed secondary general-education schools or secondary specialized-education institutions.

*** The Necessity of Women’s Higher Education:**

Almost half of the population in India is occupied by women⁷. They are half of the human resources. But it is very unfortunate to say that for long years there has been a strong bias against women and thereby there is a tendency to deny the equal socio-economic opportunity for them. This neglecting attitude towards women is prominent in many respects particularly in the field of education. None can deny the fact that education is the fundamental agent for the socio-economic development of a country. But women's access in the domain of education has not been fairly treated. There are two different views on the question of women's participation in higher education - traditional and modern. The traditional view supports women’s education to equip them to become better wives and mothers. This view believes that women’s present education is entirely irrelevant in their lives. It is only a waste of time and this does not help them to solve the problems of their daily life. This view believes that modern educated women are neither happy nor contented nor socially useful. She is a misfit in life and needs opportunities for self-expression. But modern attitude visualizes education as an instrument for women’s equality and development. Theoretically, the need of both males and females for higher education is the same. But practically it could be said that female education is more important than that of male. In this connection, I may refer to a statement of philosopher-president and noted educationist Dr. S. Radhakrishnan (1948)⁸. He says “there cannot be educated people without educated women. If general education has to be limited to men or women, the opportunity should be given to women. From them, it would almost surely be passed on to the next generation. Women's education has two aspects- individual aspect and social aspect. It is education which increases women’s abilities to deal with the problems of her life, her family, her society, and her nation. Education increases confidence in a woman. An educated woman can easily understand the demerits of early marriage and a high birth rate. They have the attitude of gender parity among their children right from health care, nutrition, education, and even career. The fruits of education are not only enjoyed by the woman concerned but also percolated to her family in later life. In a word, the overall development of a society depends on the development of its total members. The Kothari commission on the higher education for women, the University of Madras⁹ in 1979 rightly observed: college education for women and Men is necessary for character formation, ability to earn, creative self-expression,

<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/nationalknowledgecommission>

⁷ Tripathi, R.S. & Tiwari, R.P. (1999) Perspective on Indian Women, New Delhi.

⁸Radhakrishnan Commission. Retrieved on 1.02.2021 at 6.00 pm

<https://www.tetsuccesskey.com/2016/12/radhakrishnan-commission-part-1.html>

⁹ Report of the Commission on Higher Education for Women. Retrieved on 1.02.2021 at 6.00 pm

<https://books.google.co.in/books/about/ReportoftheCommissiononHigherEduca.html?id=emwFAAAAMAAJ&rediresc=y>

and personal development. But, if half of its members are lagged behind, obviously it will create a hindrance to the development. Our past experience shows that higher education was restricted only to men. Women did not have any entry into the domain of higher education. Nowadays, this facility has been widened and women have not equal opportunities in higher education.

3. Objectives:

- i) To find out the problems of women's higher education.
- ii) To analyze the position of women in higher education.
- iii) To highlight the social approach of women in higher education.
- iv) To know the relevance of higher education in women's life.

4. Methodology:

This paper is descriptive and analytical in nature. This paper attempts to analyze the problems of women's higher education. The information used in it is purely from secondary sources according to the need of this study. Therefore, the theoretical description followed by the documentary review was founded to be the most appropriate method. The study was qualitative in nature because data collection fully depending on previously published documents, like books, doctoral theses, journals related to the topic. After collection of information, the researcher has tried to explain and interpret the meaning higher education, main barriers in woman's higher education, issues and challenges of woman's higher education from social perspective and also discussed the role of the government to improve higher education.

5. Some Issues Related to Women Higher Education:

5.1 Main barriers of Women's Higher Education:

- (i) The conservative attitude of society towards women discourages their participation in decision making.
- (ii) Despite the sensitization of empowering women through education, their enrolment in higher education is not very satisfactory (though there is a remarkable change in some states and some quarters of the country).
- (iii) The absence of a gender dimension in the higher education curriculum should be taken care of. These are the pertinent challenges that ought to be attended to and amended. The study entitled "Women in Higher Education Management" identified the principal barriers preventing the participation of women in the decision-making arena-
 - Limited access to education, especially higher education.
 - Discriminating appointment and promotion practices.
 - The stress of striking a balance between family and professional roles.
 - Family attitudes.
 - Career interruptions.
 - Cultural stereotyping.

- (iv) Alienation from the male culture and continued resistance to women in management positions.
- (v) Propagation of the glass ceiling syndrome which privileges covert criteria for advancement.
- (vi) Absence of adequate policies and legislation to ensure the participation of women.

5.2 Issues and Challenges of Women's Higher Education from Social Perspective:

(i) Gender Issues:

There is a lot of discrimination between men and women in Indian society. The priority here is more than just men. For this reason, many women face many obstacles in the face of reaching higher education.

(ii) Social perspectives and family support:

The first to apply support for his family to a girl to go to the higher education zone but in most cases, it is seen that women do not get the support from the family considering that social perspective. For example, in the case of higher education, girls have difficulty in studying outside the home. As a result, girls have adverse effects.

(iii) Lack of home directory:

In most cases, women in rural areas are more likely to suffer from this problem. Because the rural families are not covered under education. As a result, many girls do not get an institution in higher education.

(iv) Unsafe Feeling:

In most cases, many prejudices of the society have prevented women's higher education. So, after entering higher education, such insecurity may cause by a woman. Even after taking various government measures and girls are given early marriage from home.

(v) Economic obstacles:

If a woman wants to take higher education, she is bound to spend a lot of money, which is why she becomes an extra liability on the shoulders of the parents. Because many families cannot afford this.

6. Government Role in Women's Education for Solution:

(i) Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme¹⁰:

This scheme focusses on implement a sustained social mobilization and communication campaign to create equal value for the girl child and promote her education.

(ii) Kanyashree Prakalpa¹¹:

The purpose to help of this initiative is to uplift those girls who are poor families and thus can't pursue higher studies due to tough economic conditions.

(iii) One Stop Centre Scheme¹²:

¹⁰ Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao Yojana. Retrieved on 1.02.2021 at 6.00 pm

<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/BetiBachao,BetiPadhaoYojana>

¹¹ Kanyashree Prakalpa. Retrieved on 1.02.2021 at 6.00 pm

<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/KanyashreePrakalpa>

These centers are being established across the country to provide integrated support and assistance to women affected by violence, both in private and public spaces under one roof.

(iv) **Swadhar Greh**¹³:

The scheme envisions a supportive institutional framework for women victims of different circumstances so that they could lead their life with dignity and conviction. It envisages that shelter, food, clothing and health as well as economic and social and social security are assured for such women.

(v) **STEP scheme**¹⁴:

The STEP scheme aims to provide skills that give employability to women and to provide competencies and skill that enable women to become self-entrepreneurs.

(vi) **Nari Shakti Purusker**¹⁵:

It is an annual award given by Ministry of Woman and Child Development of Government of India to individual women or to institutions that work towards the cause of woman empowerment.

7. Conclusion:

In the words of Swamiji, "There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of woman is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing." Likewise, a society will be lagging if she disrespects women in society for women and men are two wings of a society. If women are helped socially, economically, and politically in higher education and are free from prejudice and pressure, women's new life will be immense in the coming decades. As Virginia Woolf in *A Room of One's Own*, argues a woman can only be free if she is free from economic and social burdens. To adapt to the environment, the ministry of human development will have to take a new project for women's higher education. They will have to reinforce social values and social justice. If we can overcome the problem of women's higher education in the country, we will have a brighter future ahead.

Many obstacles have already been encountered in the field of women's education. At present, the Government is thinking of many benefits for women in higher education, but it still has the mentality of looking down on them for some superstitions in the society. While a woman is highly educated, she has stood in the way of maintaining equality in the society and family. Again, it is seen that girls are not allowed to go to higher education yet because if they are highly educated and empowered, men will have no value no value in the society. So, even if we think of woman's education, until there is a complete change in the mindset of the people in the society, women will not yet enough value in the field of higher education and in the family. So, in the end

¹² One Stop Centre Scheme. Retrieved on 1.02.2021 at 6.00 pm

<https://vikaspedia.in/social-welfare/women-and-child-development/women-development-1/poorna-sakti-kendras>

¹³ Swadhar Greh. Retrieved on 1.02.2021 at 6.00 pm

<https://vikaspedia.in/social-welfare/women-and-child-development/women-development-1/swadhar>

¹⁴ 'step' Schme for Economic Empowerment of Poor Women. Retrieved on 1.02.2021 at 6.00 pm

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=124444>

¹⁵ Nari Shakti Puraskar. Retrieved on 1.02.2021 at 6.00 pm <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/NariShaktiPuraskar>

it should be said that first of all we should change the attitude of women towards higher education. Only then will they be able to survive in the society with their heads held high.

References:

Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao Yojana. Retrieved on 1.02.2021 at 6.00 pm

<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/BetiBachao,BetiPadhaoYojana>

Indian Education Policy. Retrieved on 1.02.2021 at 6.00 pm

<https://www.indiaeducation.net/indiaedudestination/policy/education-policy.aspx>

Kanyashree Prakalpa. Retrieved on 1.02.2021 at 6.00 pm <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/KanyashreePrakalpa>

Nari Shakti Puraskar. Retrieved on 1.02.2021 at 6.00 pm- <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/NariShaktiPuraskar>

National Commission for Woman. Retrieved on 1.02.2021 at 6.00 pm- <http://ncw.nic.in/commission/about-us/brif-history>

National Policy on the Empowerment of Women. Retrieved on 1.02.2021 at 6.00 pm

<https://www.oxfamindia.org/blog/oxfam-indias-recommendations-national-policy-woman>

National Knowledge Commission. Retrieved on 1.02.2021 at 6.00 pm -

<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/nationalknowledgecommission>

One Stop Centre Scheme .Retrieved on 1.02.2021 at 6.00 pm

<https://vikaspedia.in/socal-welfare/women-and-child-development/women-development-1/poorna-sakti-kendras>

Tripathi, R.S. & Tiwari, R.P. (1999) Perspective on Indian Women, New Delhi.

Radhakrishnan Commission. Retrieved on 1.02.2021 at 6.00 pm

<https://www.tetsuccesskey.com/2016/12/radhakrishnan-commission-part-1.html>

Report of the Commission on Higher Education for Women. Retrieved on 1.02.2021 at 6.00 pm

<https://books.google.co.in/books/about/ReportoftheCommissiononHigherEduca.html?id=emwFAAAAMAAJ&redirec=y>

'Step' Schme for Economic Empowerment of Poor Women. Retrieved on 1.02.2021 at 6.00 pm

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=124444>

Swadhar Greh. Retrieved on 1.02.2021 at 6.00 pm

<https://vikaspedia.in/social-welfare/women-andddd-child-development/women-development-1/swadhar>

Woman in higher education show steady rise, enrolment in top institutions not growing (2019). Retrieved on

01.02.2021 at 6.00 pm- <https://m.timesofindia.com/india/women-in-higher-education-show-steady-rise-enrolment-in-top-institutions-notgrowing/amparticleshow/71267870.cms>