

Status of Higher Education and Gender Issues in Karnataka

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Abstract : The higher education sector is a vast and varied terrain – it encompasses general subject disciplines (sciences, humanities, arts, mathematics, social and cultural sciences), technical (engineering, medicine, agricultural and life sciences and other applied sciences), education and training, vocational and skill-based programmes, training for the service and hospitality sector, teacher education, management education and so on. This sector has grown rapidly, is becoming more diversified and today covers all types of higher education, training and research institutions. Every few years not only are new areas of study added, we also see new forms of education and training (e-learning, work-study programmes, and barefoot colleges) considerably altering earlier modes of higher education that were primarily institution-based (university, college, institute). In addition to full-time study, students can opt for part-time or limited hours programmes and distance learning through correspondence courses. In most countries (especially in the Asia-Pacific region) the progression to higher education is linear, meaning that an aspirant has to complete primary and secondary education before venturing into tertiary education.

IndexTerms : Education, Gender, Women

I. INTRODUCTION

Equally, proactive promotion of greater and equitable participation of women and men of all social and ethnic groups can have a significant downstream impact. More women both in public and private sectors, such as school teachers, health care providers, journalists, development workers, bank employees and so on, have a ripple effect – creating role models for women and girls in traditional communities where gender discrimination and sex segregation are the norm. Today gender inequalities in social and economic domains are still remained deep and persistent across India. Inequality or disparities between men and women in population growth, literacy level, sex ratio, workforce and political participation and economic status is very much evident when these two genders are compared. In this paper, an attempt is made to analyze the prevalence of gender disparities in Karnataka using various indicators based on the secondary data. It was observed that the gender based disparities have remained the most prevalent across districts and the State with respect to sex ratio, literacy level, enrollment in higher education, workforce, wage rate, political participation.

An African proverb goes: “If you educate a man you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you educate a family (nation).” Education is a vital tool for bringing about gender parity and simultaneously catalysing national development. A UNICEF panel succinctly sums this up: “That women might have the chance of a healthier and happier life should be reason enough for promoting girls’ education. However, there are also important benefits for society as a whole. An educated woman has the skills, information and self-confidence that she needs to be a better parent, worker and citizen.” Women’s education is a special priority in India, with our history of gender discrimination, inequality in education and the workforce, and our current need to achieve rapid economic development.

“Educate one man, you educate one person, but educate a woman and you educate a whole civilization”. --- Mahatma Gandhi Needless to say, higher education has a very crucial role to play in improving the quality of life of women, who constitute the most vital resource for building a nation. It is expected that strengthening of the higher education system would increase access to education for women and enable them to pursue careers of their choice and contribute their full potential to the nation. Higher education, apart from enabling women in contributing towards national development, also equips them with critical abilities to face challenges. As a matter of fact, education has the latent

force in it which can demolish mental, social and economic barriers faced by women and usher in women empowerment in all realms of life. Hence, what is of utmost importance is to expand opportunities of higher education to all women who deserve and desire it.

Access to higher education is influenced by many factors. First are those relating to the students themselves and their families, which includes academic performance in primary and secondary education, and also parents' economic situation and the value they place on education. Second is the government policy for higher education, including affirmative action, the fee structure and scholarship/incentive programmes for female students and other socially disadvantaged groups. Third is the students' environment, such as the physical distance to educational institutions and the quality of education which encourages or discourages young people to advance to higher education. Moreover, these influencing factors are further reinforced by other elements such as sex, ethnicity, caste and race. Higher education does not stand alone. Being at one end of a linear scale, the cumulative baggage of educational, social and gender-based disadvantages are carried into the higher education space. Therefore, it is not possible to analyse gender inequality-related issues in higher education without referring to the burden of non-learning, discrimination induced loss of self-esteem and confidence, or facility with language.

II. The Gender Gap Index (GGI)

The World Economic Forum (WEF) prepares the Gender Gap Index (GGI) which is a composite index comprising the sub-indices of economic participation and opportunities, educational attainment, health and survival and political empowerment. The WEF has stressed that although India is above average with regard to political empowerment, she lags behind in the context of health, education and economic opportunities. The WEF warned that this would turn out to be detrimental to India's growth in future. The table below shows the ranks and scores of India in the GGI. Improvement in GGI score is marginal as is clearly evident.

Table 1: Gender Gap Index Rank and Score of India

Year	Rank	Score
2006	98 (115)*	0.601
2007	114 (128)	0.594
2008	113 (130)	0.606
2009	114 (134)	0.615
2010	112 (134)	0.615
2011	113 (135)	0.619
2012	105 (135)	0.644
2013	101 (136)	0.655

Source: The Global Gender Gap Report 2013, World Economic Forum

Since the focus area of this paper is higher education we show the rank and score of India pertaining to the Educational Attainment Index, in the table below. The scores are very low here as well. As the WEF has already warned, urgent actions need to be taken towards improvement in these figures so as to bring the educational level of Indian women at par with the world standards---otherwise gender inequity in education might thwart developmental goals of the country.

Table 2: Educational Attainment Index Rank and Score of India

Year	Rank	Score
2006	102(115)*	0.819
2007	116 (128)	0.819
2008	116 (130)	0.845

2009	121 (134)	0.843
2010	120 (134)	0.837
2011	121 (135)	0.837
2012	121 (135)	0.852
2013	120 (136)	0.857

Source: The Global Gender Gap Report 2013, World Economic Forum

*figures in brackets indicate the total number of countries

The following table reveals the details of EAI of India in 2013 along with the ranks and scores in various categories. It may be noted from the table that female representation is less in all categories (except primary).

Table 3: Educational Attainment Index of India (2013): Details

Category	Rank	Score	Sample Average	Female	Male	Female to Male Ratio
Overall EAI	120	0.857	0.934			
Literacy rate	123	0.68	0.87	51	75	0.68
Enrolment in primary education	1	1.00	0.92	93	93	1.00
Enrolment in secondary education	111	0.79	0.60	-	-	0.79
Enrolment in Tertiary education	107	0.73	0.87	15	21	0.73

Source: The Global Gender Gap Report 2013, World Economic Forum

It is amply clear from the statistics provided by the WEF that India lags behind the international standards with regard to educational attainment. Therefore, India needs to bridge the gender gap in the educational sector, particularly in higher education, on an urgent basis in order to promote gender equity and also to usher in women empowerment. Prior to assessing the Indian higher education system on the basis of gender-determined criteria, it is pertinent to review the status of literacy in the country.

III. Literacy Rates in India

The table below shows the literacy rates in India as computed by the different census.

Table 4: Male- Female Literacy Gap in India (in %)

Census Year	Literacy Rates			Male-Female Literacy Gap
	Male	Female	Total	
1951	27.16	8.86	18.33	18.30
1961	40.40	15.35	28.30	25.05
1971	45.96	21.97	34.45	23.98
1981	56.38	29.76	43.57	26.62
1991	64.13	39.29	52.21	24.84
2001	75.26	53.67	64.83	21.59
2011	82.14	65.46	74.04	16.68

Source: Census 2011

The literacy rate in India has increased from 64.8% in 2001 to 74.04% in 2011. What has been encouraging for the country is increase in female literacy rate (10.9%) has been much higher than the increase in male literacy rate (5.6%). Female literacy increased from 53.67% (Census 2001) to 65.46 % (Census 2011). Besides, out of the total of 217.70 million literates added during the period 2001 to 2011, the number of new women literates (110.07 million) exceeded that of men (107.63 million). The higher rate of increase in the literacy of women has been noted in both rural and urban areas. The increase in female literacy rate (between 2001 and 2011) has been 11.8 percentage points in rural areas and 6.2 points in urban areas. As far as the figures for male literacy are concerned, the increase has been 6.5 percentage points in rural areas and 2.5 points in urban areas. In spite of these encouraging facts, gender gap in education is still very much a cause of concern. Although the gap between male and female literacy rates has come down from 21.6 in 2001 to 16.3 in 2011, it is still quite pronounced. It is worth mentioning that the gap is more prominent in rural areas where it is 19.3% in 2011.

IV. Enrolment in Higher Education

There has been a phenomenal growth in female enrolment in higher education since 2000-01 as may be seen from the table. However, the point that must be mentioned is percentage of female enrolment has always been lower than male enrolment.

Table 5: State-wise enrolment of women in higher education

State	% of Women Enrolment		
	All	SC	ST
Andhra Pradesh	42.16	44.06	40.66
Arunachal Pradesh	40.22	23.21	40.99
Assam	50.36	48.11	49.59
Bihar	39.55	34.95	41.51
Chhattisgarh	44.67	42.26	46.14
Delhi	43.67	40.62	40.83
Goa	49.35	48.86	48.28
Gujarat	41.70	42.39	47.46
Haryana	44.72	42.78	32.28
Himachal Pradesh	47.38	46.73	48.90
Jammu & Kashmir	50.65	48.49	42.85
Jharkhand	43.95	37.74	51.54
Karnataka	45.94	43.57	42.16
Kerala	58.47	64.96	55.41
Madhya Pradesh	39.19	43.63	45.0
Maharashtra	42.38	42.97	36.07
Manipur	52.35	48.94	45.15
Meghalaya	56.84	30.49	62.26
Mizoram	47.82	42.63	48.20
Nagaland	37.57	29.60	38.13
Odisha	43.91	44.56	46.22
Punjab	39.10	39.55	23.90
Rajasthan	39.07	34.48	35.80

Sikkim	42.24	42.85	51.49
Tamil Nadu	46.17	47.73	46.24
Tripura	40.15	38.48	37.85
Uttar Pradesh	49.61	49.36	43.64
Uttarakhand	50.17	49.32	54.68
West Bengal	60.94	40,75	40.02
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	53.67	-	62.66
Chandigarh	43.24	45.0	51.93
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	39.74	36.0	39.71
Daman & Diu	47.62	64.57	33.69
Lakshadweep	-	-	-
Puducherry	48.97	47.32	31.89
All India	44.42	44.31	43.05

Source: AISHE 2011-12 (P)

Amratya Sen in his work on 'theory of the household' explains the seven types of inequalities faced by women. Disparity between men and women is not everywhere the same.

Sen's 'Many faces of Gender Disparity' as illustrated that mortality inequality, natality inequality, basic facility inequality, special opportunity inequality, professional inequality, ownership inequality and household inequality is facing women in many different gender disparity in the present situation (Sen, Amartya 2001a). According to the census report of India, there is constantly declining of sex ratio, lower literacy rate of females than males and lower participation of women than men in the work force. With respect to Karnataka shows the inequalities between male and female in many indices. Gender disparities in sex ratio, wage differentials, health, education and various dimensions are still prevalent in the State.

Table 6: Gender Inequality at a Glance in Karnataka

Indicators	Karnataka		
	Male	Female	Gap Between Male and Female
Sex ratio (Census2011)	1000	968	32
Literacy Rate	82.85%	68.13%	14.32%
Rural Literacy Rate	77.92%	59.6%	18.32%
Urban Literacy Rate	90.54%	81.71%	8.83%
Total Labour participation rate(2010)	61.4%	30.4%	31%
Unemployment rate rural(2010)	3.9%	4.1%	-0.2%
Unemployment rate Urban(2010)	4.4%	6%	-1.6%
Average Wage Regular workers (2010) in Rs.	361.56	231.25	130.31
Average Wage casual Regular workers (2010) in Rs	96.91	62.88	55.15
Average Wage casual Urban labourers (2010) in Rs	123.03	67.88	55.15

Sources: Census of India & Govt. of Karnataka various re-ports 2008 to2011.

V. Disparity in Population Growth

It is evident from Table-2 that the decade wise population growth of female percentages is slightly declined from 1901 to 2011 in Karnataka, but it is crossed 50 percent total population on 1971 as same in GDI over a period.

Table 7: Changes in Composition of Population (%) in India and Karnataka

Census Years	Karnataka			India		
	Male	Female	Gender Gap	Male	Female	Gender Gap
1901	50.42	49.58	0.84	50.71	49.29	1.42
1911	50.48	49.52	0.96	50.93	49.07	1.86
1921	50.78	49.22	1.56	51.24	48.92	2.32
1931	50.88	49.12	1.76	51.29	48.71	2.58
1941	51.02	48.98	2.04	51.4	48.57	2.83
1951	50.86	49.14	1.72	51.4	48.6	2.8
1961	51.05	48.95	2.1	51.53	48.47	3.06
1971	49.73	50.27	-0.54	51.81	48.18	3.63
1981	50.94	49.06	1.88	51.7	48.3	3.4
1991	51.03	48.97	2.06	51.9	48.1	3.8
2001	50.93	49.07	1.86	51.74	48.26	3.48
2011	50.81	49.19	1.62	51.54	48.46	3.08

Source: Census of India (2001-11), GOK (2007) & Radhakrishna. R. (2008)

On the other hand, the percentage of gender wise population in India is almost restrained from beginning 1901 to 2011 and comedown significantly. It shows that comparing to national level gender disparity much better in Karnataka.

VI. Disparity in Literacy Rate

Literacy is one of the key socio-economic indicators which helps map the development path of a country. According to the census of India 1951 to 2011 literacy rate both male and female Karnataka as well as India present in Table -3. It reveals that in 2011, 83 percent of the male and female 68 percent literacy rate recorded. It shown that there are marked gender disparities in literacy rates has been found from 1951 to 2011 both in Karnataka as well as India. Like-wise in sex ratio, it has been also proved that women ratio is still less than men, but comparing to India level statistics slightly better in Karnataka.

Table 8 : Literacy rate and Sex Ratio in Karnataka and India 1951-2011

Census Year	Karnataka					India				
	Persons	Male	Female	Gender Gap	Sex Ratio	Persons	Male	Female	Gender Gap	Sex ratio
1951	19.3	29.1	9.2	19.9	966	18.3	24.9	7.9	17	946
1961	29.8	36.1	142	21.9	959	28.3	34.4	12.9	21.5	941

1971	31.5	48.6	27.8	20.8	957	34.5	39.5	18.7	20.8	930
1981	46.2	58.7	33.2	25.5	963	43.6	56.4	29.8	26.6	933
1991	56	67.3	44.3	23	960	52.2	64.1	39.3	24.8	927
2001	66.6	76.1	56.9	19.2	965	64.8	75.3	53.7	21.6	933
2011	75.6	82.9	68.1	14.8	968	74	82.1	65.5	16.6	940

Source: Census of India various reports 1951-2011

Literacy is an important development indicator which reflects the status of an economy and society. A state which is successful in endowing its populations with strong literacy skills is considered to be in an advantageous position to meet the complex economic and social challenges operating in a globalized information economy. While strong literacy skills are linked to better health outcomes as well as to a wide range of performing skills for day to day living and for enhancing functional productivity, for women, literacy skills are even more important for effective participation in societal activities, for understanding important public issues and dealing with issues of governance in a highly diverse society. Therefore for any state, having more literate women will be an added asset for achieving progress in all spheres.

VII. Women's Literacy across Districts in Karnataka

Having examined women's literacy status at aggregate levels and across social categories in the state, an attempt has been made to capture women's literacy rates across districts in the state to track their progress. Table 9 provides male-female literacy data for the 29 districts from the 1991 to 2011 census periods.

Table 9 : Male-Female literacy data in Karnataka

Districts	1991			2002			2011		
	Male	Female	Gender Gap	Male	Female	Gender Gap	Male	Female	Gender Gap
Bagalkote	67.09	38.2	28.89	70.9	43.6	27.30	80.16	58.55	21.61
Bengaluru (Rural)	61.51	38.2	23.31	74	55.0	19.00	85.44	70.73	14.71
Bengaluru Urban	82.94	68.8	14.14	87.9	77.5	10.40	91.82	84.8	7.02
Belgaum	66.65	38.7	27.95	75.7	52.3	23.40	82.90	64.74	18.16
Bellary	59.11	32.2	26.91	69.2	45.3	23.90	77.24	58.28	18.96
Bidar	58.97	30.5	28.47	72.5	48.8	23.70	79.94	61.66	18.28
Bijapur	70.18	41.8	28.38	69.9	43.5	26.40	77.41	56.54	20.87
Chamrajnagar	47.31	28.6	18.71	59	42.5	16.50	67.88	54.32	13.56
Chickmagalur	70.56	51.3	19.26	80.3	64	16.30	85.66	72.88	12.78
Chitradurga	64.5	39.4	25.10	74.7	53.8	20.90	81.37	66.05	15.32
Chikkaballapur	-	-	-	-	-	-	78.36	61.55	16.81
Dakshina Kannada	84.08	68.8	15.28	89.7	77.2	12.50	93.31	84.04	9.27
Davangere	66.82	44.4	22.42	76.4	58	18.40	83.02	69.39	13.63
Dharwad	74.22	50.4	23.82	80.8	61.9	18.90	86.83	73.57	13.26
Gadag	71.63	39.7	31.93	79.3	52.5	26.80	84.89	65.29	19.6
Gulbarga	52.08	24.5	27.58	61.8	37.9	23.90	75.11	55.87	19.24
Hassan	68.87	44.9	23.97	78.4	59	19.40	83.55	68.3	15.25
Haveri	68.05	43.3	24.75	77.6	57.4	20.20	84.22	70.65	13.57
Kodagu	75.35	61.2	14.15	83.7	72.3	11.40	87.24	77.91	9.33
Kolar	62.69	37.8	24.89	73.2	52.2	21.00	81.94	66.56	15.38

Koppal	53.47	22.8	30.67	68.4	39.6	28.80	78.21	56.22	21.99
Mandya	59.18	36.7	22.48	70.5	51.5	19.00	78.14	62.1	16.04
Mysore	59.71	41.6	18.11	70.9	55.8	15.10	78.44	66.59	11.85
Raichur	46.75	21.7	25.05	61.5	35.9	25.60	71.35	49.56	21.79
Ramanagaram	-	-	-	-	-	-	76.92	61.3	15.62
Shimoga	73.12	54.3	18.82	82	66.9	15.10	86.11	74.89	11.22
Tumkur	66.49	41.9	24.59	76.8	56.9	19.90	82.05	66.45	15.6
Udupi	83.7	66.6	17.10	88.2	75.2	13.00	91.69	81.41	10.28
Uttar Kannada	76.39	56.8	19.59	84.5	68.5	16.00	89.72	78.21	11.51
Yadgir	-	-	-	-	-	-	63.33	41.31	22.02
Karnataka State	67.26	44.34	22.92	76.1	56.9	19.2	82.85	68.13	14.72

Source: Census of India-Karnataka, 1991, 2001& 2011

Overall female literacy in the state in 2011 is 68.1 per cent which is above the national average of 65.5 per cent. However, women's literacy performance in 13 districts falls below the national average and in 19 districts below the state average out of the total 30 districts in the state, thereby suggesting the rather low literacy status of women across the state. Women from the backward districts of North and North East Karnataka and also from the South Mysore districts reveal a persistent low literacy status over the decades.

The gender gap in literacy reflects the extent of inequality between men and women in so far as attaining literacy is concerned. Thus looking at the data from table 9, it is noticed that in the census year 2011, the highest gender gap of literacy exists in districts such as Yadgir, a newly carved out district from Gulbarga, followed by Koppal, Raichur, Bagalkote and Bijapur districts. The gender gap is more than 20.0 per cent points in these districts, thereby indicating the very low literacy among women. Although during the decades 1991 and 2001, the reduction in literacy gap between men and women was very marginal across the districts, in the subsequent decade between 2001 and 2011, the reduction was 7-8 per cent points. In fact, Gadag is one district where women seem to have made headway in closing the gender inequality gap from more than 30.0 per cent points in 1991 to fewer than 20.0 per cent points in 2011.

VIII. Girls' Participation in Higher Education

When looking at the participation of girls in higher education at the degree level, from the table below, it is clear that girls have made significant progress. What is more interesting is that their share in Science degree education was found to be much higher than Arts or Commerce in 2004-05. This could, perhaps, be due to the fact that with an increased number of boys moving towards Engineering

& Technology and Management programmes, girls' participation might be on the upswing. Anyway this needs to be probed further. It is quite interesting to note that girls are not confined to Arts courses. Rather, they seem to be equally distributed across the three disciplines of Arts, Science and Commerce. The trend indicates that some kind of gender balancing is emerging in boys' and girls' representation in Arts, Science and Commerce education at the degree level. This however needs to be probed further with updated datasets to capture the current scenario.

IX. Equity Issues

With an increasing number of women in higher education, it would be interesting to examine how they are distributed across the six regions in the state and also across government and private colleges with respect to their social background. However, time series data at disaggregate levels are not readily available. Whatever little data are available for the previous decades are not presented in any uniform pattern thus making it difficult for comparison over a period of time. Nevertheless, an attempt has been made to examine SC/ ST girls' participation across regions as well as in government and Private Aided colleges for the year 2008-09. It is noted that the state has a share of 46.1 per cent private colleges at the degree level, which receive aid from the state government. Women as students in both government and aided colleges enjoy free education and certain benefits if they belong to socially and economically disadvantaged sections. In fact, the share of private- aided colleges is not uniformly

distributed across regions in the state. Both Mangalore University (which covers coastal and hilly districts) and Karnataka University (which covers a large number of backward districts in the north and north eastern regions) have more than half of colleges under the private aided sector. Bangalore has a 47% per cent share of private aided colleges and Gulbarga University also has more than a 40% share of private aided colleges. If one adds private unaided colleges, then the share will eventually increase across all the regions. Considering girls' participation in government and private colleges, it is noticed from the table below that there is an inequitable spread across regions. Bangalore, Mangalore and Shimoga regions, surprisingly, reveal that more than half of the students enrol in private colleges are girls. In the Gulbarga region, the girls' share is 40.0 per cent and less in private colleges. In the Mysore region, over 58.0 per cent of girls are found in government colleges. The higher rate of participation among girls in private colleges reflects a progressive trend and also their affiliation to certain economic class background as well as urban locations as most private colleges are located in urban areas.

X. Conclusion

In this Article the educational status of women has been examined using key indicators of participation and performance in comparison with men. For participation, data relating to enrolment, retention, dropout, out of school and attendance have been analysed over the time. One of the most significant transformations in education in India over the past several decades is the drastic increase in women's access to colleges and universities. Formulating and implementing stringent and powerful laws and policies have addressed the malice of gender discrimination of Higher Education. Most Indian women, with the possibility of economic independence, through respectable employment, have become an important earning member of the family. An educated woman has the skills, the self-confidence and the power to be a better citizen. Women have all the power and capacity as that of men and they are manifesting themselves amongst different opportunities provided through higher education.

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