

Status of Higher Education and Women Empowerment in Karnataka

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Abstract : Education is the key factor for women empowerment, prosperity, development and welfare. Discrimination of women from womb to tomb is well known. There is continued inequality and vulnerability of women in all sectors and women oppressed in all spheres of life, they need to be empowered in all walk of life. In order to fight against the socially constructed gender biases, women have to swim against the system that requires more strength. Such strength comes from the process of empowerment and empowerment will come from the education. And rural development will come from women empowerment. This paper aim to create the awareness among the women's about different empowerment and identifying the impact of education in women overall empowerment in Karnataka. Conclusion of the study shows that educational qualification play significant role in women empowerment and it concludes that if women's empowerment is to be effected, it can be carried out only through the medium of education. Hence, it is of foremost importance to raise the level of education amongst women.

IndexTerms – Higher Education, Women Empowerment

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is the most important requirement and the fundamental right for any citizen. It help the individual to reduce inequality and play a central role in human development that impacts the overall social economic development. Higher level of literacy and education leads to better attainment of health, nutritional status, economic growth, population control, empowerment of the weaker sections and community as a whole. In context to this over the decades societies have been trying to develop without giving any rights to women. There has always been a gender discrimination toward the development of women. Men are empowered in the society and women are considered as their servant. Women do not have their rights and neither are considered independent to take any decision. In order to provide equal status in the society women need to be empowered. Empowerment is a process of acquiring knowledge and awareness which enable them to move towards life with greater dignity and self assurance. Women empowerment includes women awareness of their rights, self-confidence, to have a control over personal and professional lives and their ability to bring a change in the society. Empowerment has many elements i.e. economic, social, political and personal. Economic empowerment means to give woman her rights in the economy. Social empowerment means status of woman in the society should be equal to man by eliminating injustice and inequity. Political empowerment means women should have seats in provincial and national assemblies and giving one woman right of one vote. Personal empowerment means women should have freedom in their personal matters. Women contribute to their families, societies and countries financially. This brings development in the economy.

Women education in India has a major preoccupation of both the government and civil society as educated women can play a very important role in the development of the country. Education is milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to responds to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. So that we can't neglect the importance of education in reference to women empowerment and India poised to becoming superpower in recent years. Education of women is the most powerful tool to change the position in society. Women education in India has been a need of the hour, as education is a foundation stone for the empowerment of woman. . Education also brings a reduction in inequalities and functions as a means of improving their status within the family and develops the concept of participation.

II. Profile of Karnataka

The State of Karnataka, confined roughly within 11° 35' North and 18° 30' North latitudes and 74° 5' East and 78° 35' East longitudes, is situated on a table land where the Western and Eastern Ghats ranges converge into the Nilgiri Hill complex. Karnataka is a State in the Southern part of India. It was created on November 1st, 1956, with the passing of the States Reorganization Act. It was originally known as the State of Mysore, and was renamed as Karnataka in 1973. Karnataka is bordered by the Arabian Sea to the West, Goa to the North West, Maharashtra to the North, Andhra Pradesh to the East, Tamil Nadu to the South East, and Kerala to the South West. The State extends to about 750 km from the North to South and about 400 km from East to West.¹ The State covers an area of 74,122 Sq. Miles (191,791 Km²), 5.83 per cent of the total geographical area of India. It is the eight largest State by area, and the ninth largest by population and comprises 30 districts.

According to the 2011 census, the total population of the State is 6,11,30,704 out of which, the male constituted 3,10,57,742 and female 3,00,72,962. The literacy of the State is 55.98 per cent, and population density is 319 per km. sq. The sex ratio is 968 female to 1000 male.²

Demographic Features of Karnataka

Sl. No	Description	Total	Male	Female
1	Total State Population (2011)	611.0	309.7	301.3
2	Literacy Rate (2011)	75.4	82.5	66.0
3	Population in 18-23 age group (lakhs), (2011)	74.0 (12.1%)	38.1 (12.3%)	35.9 (11.9%)
4	Share of State 18-23, Population to all india population	5.3%	5.2%	5.4%
5	Sex Ratio	973	---	---
6	Gross Enrolment Ratio(2011)	25.5	25.5	25.5
7	Share of Graduates and above in total state polulation(2010)	7.9	10.3	5.4

Source : 1. Census 2011, Government of India
2. All India Survey of Higher Education, MHRD 2011

III. Higher Education and Its Structure in Karnataka

Higher Education is a critical mechanism for individual socio-economic advancement and an important driver of economic mobility moreover, a well-educated workforce is vital to any nation's future economic growth. The companies and businesses require a highly skilled workforce to meet the demands of today's increasingly competitive, global economy. Hence, the study likes to understand the structure of higher education in Karnataka.

Karnataka as a State could not get the advantage of modern university education in the early days of the establishment of university centres like Madras and Bombay (1857) and suffered a great disadvantage in educational matters in the 19th century. Even important cities like Bangalore, Belgaum, Mysore and Dharwad had to wait for decades to get a university institution. The earliest college to come into existence in the State of Karnataka was the second grade college started by Madras Government in Mangalore in 1869, whose nomenclature was changed to 'Government College' in the year 1879. The Bangalore High School at that time was upgraded into a college in the year 1875 and was named as 'Central College'. In the 1880's Christian organizations entered into the field of higher education in Karnataka. The Jesuit Fathers found Mangalore quite congenial for their educational activity and they started St. Aloysius College, Mangalore in the year 1879. Similarly, the Protestant and Catholic organizations started Bishop Cotton College and St. Joseph's College in Bangalore in 1882. The region Belgaum and Gulbarga did not have any higher education institution of any kind even at the end of the 19th century. The Table-5.2 shows the number of colleges in Karnataka at the time of independence and reorganization of the State.

There were only 41 colleges in the State at the time of independence out of which 68 per cent (28) of the colleges were in Mysore area, 17 per cent (7) colleges in Belgaum, 12 per cent (5) colleges in Madras Karnataka, 2.4 per cent (1) college in Gulbarga whereas the region Kodagu did not have any college. The number of colleges increased to 70 at the time of reorganization of the State and the colleges were distributed viz. 60 per cent (42) colleges in Mysore, 21.4 per cent (15) colleges in Belgaum, 17.07 per cent (7) colleges in Madras Karnataka, 7.14 per cent (5) colleges in Gulbarga and 1.42 per cent (1) college in Kodagu.

The comparative data shows that the share of Belgaum region increased from 17 per cent to 21.4 per cent, followed by Madras Karnataka from 12.1 per cent to 17.07 per cent, Gulbarga region from 2.4 per cent to 7.14 per cent and the region Kodagu got the first degree college in the year 1956.

Number of Colleges in Karnataka at the Time of Independence of the Country and Reorganization of the State

Sl. No	Area	At the Time of Independence (1947)				At the Time of Reorganization of the State (1956)			
		First Grade College	Second Grade College	Professional College	Total	First Grade College	Second Grade College	Professional College	Total
1	Mysore	8	14	6	28	14	14	14	42
2	Belgaum	5	1	1	7	10	0	5	15
3	Madras Karnataka	2	2	1	5	4	0	3	7
4	Gulbarga	0	1	0	1	4	0	1	5
5	Kodagu	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Total	15	18	8	41	33	14	23	70

Source: 1983, Karnataka State Gazetteer, Volume 2, p.596, Government of Karnataka

A) Status of Higher Education after Reorganization of the State: Prior to reorganization, the colleges in different areas were affiliated to the university in that area, such as the colleges in Mysore area were affiliated to the Mysore University, the colleges in Dakshina Kannada and Kodagu to the Madras University, the colleges in Belgaum area to the Karnataka University and the colleges in Gulbarga area to the Osmania University, Hyderabad. The administrative control of colleges were however different. To bring uniformity in the administration of the colleges of general education, the Directorate of Collegiate Education was established in 1960, with the formation of the Directorate of Collegiate Education, all the colleges of general education in the State came under the administrative control of one department from the year 1961-62 except the colleges of education which remained under the control of the Department of Public Instruction and the university colleges which remained under the control of the concerned universities. At the time of the formation of the department, there were 42 colleges in all, of which 17 were government and 25 private with a student strength of 27,338, which raised to 136 by the end of 1968-69, an increase of 324 per cent, with 99,630 students including the students in university colleges also.³

During the year 1981-82, there were 37 Government colleges and 256 Private Colleges under the direct control of the Department of Collegiate Education. During 1994-95, there were a total of 679 degree colleges in the State. Among them were 136 Government Colleges, 267 Aided College and 276 Private colleges. The total number of students in them was 4,81,920 by 1992-93. The total number of degree colleges increased to 935 in 1999-2000. Out of which 151 were Government Colleges, 300 Aided Colleges and 484 Private Colleges. A total of 997 degree colleges were functioning in the State during 2003-04. Out of which 165 Government Colleges, 300 Aided colleges and 532 Private Colleges, this increased to 2495 colleges with 411 Government colleges, 320 aided colleges and 1764 private colleges by 2014-15. The Table-5.3 shows the number of colleges in Karnataka.

Number of Colleges in Karnataka

Year	Government	Aided	Private	Total
1947-1960	37	0	57	94
1990-1991	73	156	305	534
1994-1995	136	267	276	679

1995-1996	136	267	346	749
1996-1997	136	267	358	761
1997-1998	136	267	374	777
1998-1999	136	299	403	838
1999-2000	151	300	418	869
2000-2001	151	300	465	916
2001-2002	151	300	484	935
2002-2003	151	300	513	964
2003-2004	165	300	532	997
2004-2005	166	300	532	998
2005-2006	168	300	532	1000
2006-2007	182	300	568	1050
2007-2008	349	300	454	1103
2008-2009	350	300	508	1158
2009-2010	356	300	560	1216
2010-2011	356	300	710	1366
2011-2012	359	300	710	1369
2012-2013	360	314	710	1384
2013-2014	362	315	1764	2441
2014-2015	411	320	1764	2495

Source: Department of Collegiate Education, Annual Report, 2006-07, 2014-15

College and Institution Indicator-2015

Sl.No.	Indicator	Colleges	Stand-alone Institution
1	Total number of colleges/Institutions	3726	1922
2	Colleges per lakh population (18-23 years)	47	-
3	Average Enrolment per college/Institution	504	172
4	Total Estimated Enrollment (lakh)	18.79	3.31

Source: MHRD-2014-15, All India Survey of Higher Education 2014-15 (Provisional)

Karnataka with 3,726 colleges (including technical, medical, nursing, pharmacy, AYUSH, dental etc.) has a share of 9 per cent of the total colleges in India and ranks number four in terms of total colleges in any State in India. In terms of access, Karnataka has the 3rd highest concentration of 47 colleges per lakh population as compared to the All-India average of 27 colleges per lakh population. In terms of average enrolment per college, Karnataka 504 is lesser than All-India average of 764. Total enrolment of students at various levels in higher education institutes in Karnataka is around 18.79 lakhs. Out of the total colleges in the State, 90 per cent are affiliated to universities, and the remaining is constituent/university colleges, PG/off campus or reorganized centres by the universities. In terms of management, colleges in Karnataka are dominated by private colleges, forming 70.70 per cent of all colleges in the State, followed by 16.47 per cent Government colleges and 12.82 per cent are aided.

B) Student Enrolment at Various Levels : The student enrolment at various levels in Karnataka is 18.79 lakhs. The break up across various levels and split by gender is given in the figure Table 5.6 below. Out of the total enrolment in Karnataka the highest share of enrolment (74.67 per cent) is at Under-Graduate level, followed by Post-Graduate (12.19 per cent) and Diploma (11.51 per cent), with all other levels forming only 1.63 per cent. The private colleges in the State are having the maximum enrolment share (48.36 per cent) out of the total enrolment in the State.

Student Enrolment at Different Levels of Higher Education - 2015

Sl. No.	Level	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
1	Under Graduate	707903	695541	1403444	74.67
2	Post Graduate	116555	112585	229140	12.19
3	M.Phil	235	339	574	0.03
4	Ph.D.	6962	4108	11070	0.58
5	Diploma	135668	80746	216414	11.51
6	P.G. Diploma	4740	3078	7818	0.41
7	Certificate	2230	2144	4374	0.23
8	Integrated	3434	3041	6475	0.34
Grand Total		977727	910582	1879309	

Source: All India Survey of Higher Education 2014-15 (Provisional)

IV. University Education

Karnataka has made remarkable progress in the field of higher education during the last decade Bangalore has emerged as the silicon valley of India. The state has largest number of private medical and engineering colleges in the country and has become to be known as a centre for higher technical education. The following Table shows the number of higher education institutions in Karnataka for the year 2014, out of the total number of higher education institutions in India 2 per cent of Central Universities, 7 per cent of the State Universities, 4 per cent of the State Private Universities, 11 per cent of the Deemed Universities and 9 per cent of the Colleges are in Karnataka.

Higher Education Matrix

Sl. No.	Type of Institutions	Number of Institutions (2014)		
		India	Karnataka	Percentage
1	Central Universities	45	01	2
2	State Universities	315	24	7
3	State Private Universities	175	08	4
4	Deemed Universities	130	15	11
5	Institution of National Importance and Other Institutes	73	08	4
6	Institute established under State Legislature Acts	5	01	20
7	State Open University	15	01	6
	Total	758	52	6
8	Engineering Colleges	3384	210	6
9	Polytechnic Colleges	3436	297	8
10	Medical Colleges	395	46	11
11	AYUSH Colleges	516	76	14
12	Dental Colleges (BDS)	301	88	12
13	Pharmacy Colleges (B.Pharma)	705	61	8
14	Nursing Colleges	1413	304	21
15	Total Colleges	40,414	3674	9
	Grand Total	41172	3726	9

Source: Compiled from University Grants Commission, Annual Report and Economic Survey of Karnataka 2014

The twenty-four State Universities in Karnataka are categorized as Affiliating General Universities, Affiliating Professional Universities, Non-Affiliating Professional Universities and University for Distance Education and Specialized Universities.

V. Importance of Education

In any study that attempts to measure the level of social development in a backward region, an honest effort needs to be made to analyse the status of education. Education has been considered as the primary requirement of and major investment in social development, which will follow all other benefits. It has been the most valuable, potential and effective tool for overall development. In this regard, education not only improves the faculties and skills of the people, but it also dramatically contributes to their physical well being by making them aware of better health facilities and increase their willingness to seek and utilize medical and other facilities. Education increases not only equality but also creates opportunities in a welfare state. The Human Development Report, 1992 of UNDP underscores the fact that the poor countries get much higher rates of return than the rich countries from investing in education. It also says that for the poorest countries, the highest returns are from the primary education, thus, places significant importance on primary education as a driving force of an underdeveloped economy. Hence considerable emphasis has been placed on the importance of education over the years. Furthermore, many studies such as HOI by UNDP have found out productive benefits from education from some cross-country evidence and established direct connection between education and human development. In this regard, let us know the views of development experts on the importance of education.

Education is always empowers women. The only way a society or nation can move forward and aspire to economic growth and development is not just through education but especially education among the women citizens. There are several reasons for this.

1. Education liberates : education liberates the mind. Whether studying the science, history, literature, languages or social sciences, we are gaining the knowledge. We are educating our self about the world. About how nature, people and nations work. Books which educate open up our minds to places, people and possibilities we'd never have thought of otherwise. Therefore, an educated women will also be a liberated women.
2. Education breakdown barriers : education enables us to break down all barriers- Religious, linguistic, cultural, political, gender and geographical. An educated women will not discriminate others on the basis of these barriers. Women having right to chose a husband. And can bring families from different backgrounds together.
3. Education allows the privilege of choice : As education opens up new worlds to women, it will enable them to make their own choices, in everything- whether it be lifestyle, carrier, life- partner, sexuality, food etc. Education teach them to discriminate between wrong and right, and make the correct choice in life.
4. Education Mobilizes : Education will galvanize women into fighting against social evils which still plague Indian society. An intellectually enlightened women will actively fight against dowry, bride-burning, rape and marital rape, and sexual harassment of women. She will also fight misogyny and patriarchy.
5. Education Fosters independence : Most young educated women of today are coming to their own being. They know about their autonomy over their lives- they no longer bow down to moronic societal diktats. They live life on their own term.
6. Education helps choose a career and gets financial independence
7. Educated women contributes to economy

VI. Gender Issues in Higher Education

There are always a number of components in the society which are underprivileged of their basic rights in every society, state and nation, but these components lack in the awareness of their rights. If we enlist such components from the society, then women would top this list. In fact, women are the most important factor of every society. Even though everybody is aware of this fact, yet nobody is ready to accept this fact. As a result, the importance which used to be given to women is declining in today's society. As a significance of this growing tendency of underestimating women such as to make them occupy a secondary position in society and to deny them of their basic rights, the need for empowering women was felt. Today we enjoy the benefits of being citizens of a free nation, but we really need to think whether each of the citizens of our country is really free or enjoying freedom, in the true sense of the term. If we consider our country, each Indian citizen is given certain basic rights. The Structure of our nation doesn't discriminate between men and women, but our society has destitute women of certain basic rights, which were bestowed upon them by our Constitution. Due to such current situation, it was needed to make women free from all the fetters and to empower them as well. This is nothing but empowerment of women.

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.

Universities and other institutions engaged in higher education are strategically placed to undertake multidisciplinary research - which is the engine that stimulates innovation. Unfortunately, many research studies, international conferences and consultations on higher education have not given adequate attention to gender equality issues. As a result, discourse and policy have been limited to the following four arenas:

- a) Greater access for women in different fields through affirmative action (more seats reserved for women) or through women-only universities and institutions;
- b) Greater participation of women in technical and science education;
- c) Nurturing and development of women's studies; and
- d) Women representation in managerial positions in higher education. Rigorous gender analysis of the higher education sector is thus called for. This advocacy brief is an attempt to kindle interest in this area.

VII. Role of Education in the Empowerment of Women

Empowerment can be viewed as means of creating a social environment in which one can make decisions and make choices either individually or collectively for social transformation. The empowerment strengthens the innate ability by way of acquiring knowledge, power and experience (Hashemi Schuler and Riley, 1996). Empowerment is the process of enabling or authorizing individual to think, take action and control work in an autonomous way. It is the process by which one can gain control over one's destiny and the circumstances of one's lives. There are always a number of elements in the society which are deprived of their basic rights in every society, state and nation, but these elements lack

in the awareness of their rights. If we enlist such elements from the society, then women would top this list. In fact, women are the most important factor of every society. Even though everybody is aware of this fact, but nobody is ready to accept this fact. As a result, the importance which used to be given to women is declining in today's society. As a consequence of this growing tendency of underestimating women such as to make them occupy a secondary position in society and to deprive them of their basic rights, the need for empowering women was felt. Empowering women has become the focus of considerable discussion and attention all over the world. Today we enjoy the benefits of being citizens of a free nation, but we really need to think whether each of the citizens of our country is really free or enjoying freedom, in the true sense of the term. The inequalities between men and women and discrimination against women are an age-old issue all over the world. Thus women quest for equality with man is a universal phenomenon. Women should equal with men in matters of education, employment, inheritance, marriage, and politics etc. Their quest for equality has given birth to the formation of many women's associations and launching of movements. The Constitution of our nation doesn't discriminate between men and women, but our society has deprived women of certain basic rights, which were bestowed upon them by our Constitution. Empowerment allows individuals to reach their full potential, to improve their political and social participation, and to believe in their own capabilities.

VIII. Conclusion

Women play an imperative role in making a nation progressive and guide it towards development. They are essential possessions of a lively humanity required for national improvement, so if we have to see a bright future of women in our country, giving education to them must be a pre-occupation. Empowerment means moving from a weak position to execute a power. The education of women is the most powerful tool to change the position of society. Education also brings a reduction in inequalities and functions as a means of improving their status within the family. To encourage the education of women at all levels and for dilution of gender bias in providing knowledge and education, established schools, colleges and universities even exclusively for women in the state. The education develops the idea of participation in government, panchayats, public matters etc for elimination of gender discrimination.

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