

HIGHER EDUCATION AND WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN INDIA

Naveen Kumar*

*Research Scholar

Department of Commerce, M.D.U., Rohtak, Haryana India

Abstract: Women's role in social-economic development of a country is crucial. It constitutes almost half of the population in world. Education in general and higher education in particular, is a milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to respond to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. The role of education in development of the economy is well established. Since independence, the contribution of investments made by the government in higher education has been substantial however post 1980s there has been a decline in the same. Access, equity, women participation and empowerment have been an issue of deliberations all around the world. Higher education provided to women would mean independence in decision making and economic independence. It would develop capabilities to discharge duties and responsibilities in the fields of social, economic, political and cultural arenas. The objective of the study is to highlight the trend of women enrolment in different faculties of higher education and understand its contribution towards women empowerment. This study is based on secondary data available from Census of India, Selected Educational Statistics, UGC annual reports and research articles.

Introduction

Higher education means the education beyond the level of secondary education. It is often assumed that education imparted by the colleges or universities are higher education. But in fact higher educational institutions include Professional Schools in the field of Law, Theology, Medicine, Business, Music and Art. It also includes other institutions like Teachers' Training School and Technological Institutions. Moreover, institutions for training of highly skilled specialists in the field of eco-comics, science, technology and culture of various types of higher schools are treated as Higher Educational Institutions. A nation's cultural, social and economic development is highly dependent on higher education of women. As a result of which, one can say that spending money on educating women will not go a waste. In fact, it will provide for and improve the economy and development of nations. For example, if the nation is aiming at abolishing poverty, they must be at the helm and be involved in policy making and implementation. Because of their basic quality to be economical, they will not only drive the country towards economical self-sufficiency but also development. Further women understand the human need better and this leads to better resolution of conflicts and motivation of employees. Studies have shown that women are much more creative than men, yet at the same time innovative and organized. Women by nature are economical and as a result of which do not cause undue wastage of resources and unnecessary expenses. If women are provided with the right access backed by the right governmental policies, they can also impact the well-being of the environment and public health at national level.

Objectives of the Study

- To study importance of participation of women in Higher Education
- To give Suggestions for promoting women participation in Higher Education

Women in Higher Education Management

In the area of higher education, both in teaching and management, women are still along way from participating on the same footing as men. Women have made some

Progress in achieving parity in teaching but are grossly under-represented in higher Education management. In India the female education has its roots in the British Regime. In 1854 the East India Company acknowledged women's education and employment. Initially this education was limited only to primary school level education and only the richer section of the society enjoyed this facility. Thus as it was confined only for a small section of people in society so the literacy rate for women has increased from 0.2% in 1882 to 6% only in 1947. It is very unfortunate to say that for centuries higher education for women has been neglected. In this connection I may refer the suggestions given by the University Education Commission in 1947. The report of the said commission revealed that they were against female education. In their recommendation they wrote "women's pre-sent education is entirely irrelevant to the life they have to lead. It is not only a waste but often a definite disability" (Report of the University Education Commission, Government of India, 1948-49, Vol.(i), chapter XII) But in spite of this, it is fact that in post independence period the female literacy rate was 8.9%. Thus in 1958, the government of India appointed a national committee for the education of women. The committee submitted report in favour of women education. The government of India accepted most of the recommendations of

the committee. There are two different views on the question of women participation in higher education - traditional and modern. The traditional view supports women's education to equip them to become better wives and mother. This view believes that women's present education is entirely irrelevant in their lives. It is only 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 contended nor socially useful. She is 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 higher education for both males and females 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 a statement of philosopher-president and noted educationist Dr. S. Radhakrishnan (1948) 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 most surely be passed on to the next generation."

Suggestions for Promoting Women Participation in Higher Education

- Introduce attractive scholarships for both financially poor students and meritorious students to encourage women students in higher education.
- Provide counselling for both family and person concerned at the secondary stage of education.
- Make skill-oriented higher education.
- Establish non-traditional curricular for women and extend state support for this.
- Improve transport facilities for women students.
- Education policy has to be taken to facilitate women participation in higher education.
- Establish more female educational institutions.
- Provide Bank loan facilities for women students.
- Establish higher educational institutions in rural and tribal areas.
- Check sexual harassment within and outside institutions.
- Increase women teachers in co-educational institutions of higher education.
- Increase women representations in decision making bodies of higher educational institutions.
- Establish equal opportunity commissions for higher educational institutions

Conclusion

From above discussion it can be concluded that a nation's Cultural, social and economic development is highly dependent on higher education of women. As a result of which, one can say that spending money on educating women will not go a waste. In fact, it will provide for and improve the economy and development of nations. For example, if the nation is aiming at abolishing poverty, they must be at the helm and be involved in policy making and implementation. Because of their basic quality to be economical, they will not only drive the country towards economical self-sufficiency but also development. It must be admitted that women are in no way lesser than men. They have all the power and capacity as that of men. But they fail to manifest themselves for different reasons. In men dominated society they get rare chance to express their voice. In some cases father or husband create hindrance in their path. They even do not allow them to leave the home for higher studies or work. We should have to change our thinking, our attitude towards women. We should have to think that women are not just reproduction. They have feeling, thinking and all these as the men have. They have all the capacities as that of men and thereby they can do all these as men, if not more. So their power and capacities must be recognized. It is only then women participation in higher education will be enhanced.

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