

OBSTACLES TO RURAL WOMEN OBTAINING HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract—India is home to 30% of the world's illiterate population, with women accounting for 70% of the total. According to the 2011 Census, women make up 48% of India's overall population, with a literacy rate of 53.7 percent compared to 75.3 percent for men. Rural women had a literacy rate of 46.1 percent compared to 72.9 percent for urban women, which is still lower than rural and urban men's literacy rates of 70.7 percent and 86.3 percent, respectively. The goal of this study was to find out what obstacles women encounter when it comes to seeking higher education, with a focus on Karnataka's Mysuru District. It also aims to elucidate the consequences for developing an appropriate counselling programme for women to help them deal with the issues, as well as ensuring that women receive suitable education.

Keywords—Illiterate population; rural women; Perception; Constraints and Educational Infrastructure.

INTRODUCTION

In a country like India, women make up half of the workforce. However, it is regrettable to state that there has been a strong bias against women for many years, and as a result, there has been a tendency to deny them equal socioeconomic opportunities. In many ways, notably in the realm of education, this dismissive attitude toward women is evident. Nobody can deny that education is the most important factor in a country's socioeconomic progress. However, women's access to education has not been treated equally. On the issue of women's participation in higher education, there are two perspectives: conventional and modern. The traditional viewpoint advocates for women's education in order to better equip them to be better spouses and mothers. This viewpoint states that women's current education has no bearing on their life [1]. It is a waste of time, and it does not assist them in resolving their daily difficulties. According to this viewpoint, modern educated women are not happy nor content, nor are they socially productive. She is an outcast in life and requires outlets for self-expression. Education, on the other hand, is now seen as a tool for women's equality and development [2]. The necessity for higher education is theoretically the same for both men and women. However, it is possible to argue that female education is more significant than male education [3]. "There cannot be educated people without educated women," says Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, philosopher-president and famous educationist. If general education must be restricted to males or women, women should be given priority. It would almost certainly be passed down to the following generation from them."

Women's education has two components: individual and social. Education improves women's capacity to deal with challenges in their lives, families, societies, and countries. A woman's confidence grows as a result of her education. The disadvantages of early marriage and a large birth rate are easily understood by an educated woman. They instil gender equality in their children's health care, nutrition, education, and even career choices. Education benefits not only the woman concerned, but it also benefits her family later in life. In other words, a society's overall development is determined by the development of its entire population. However, if half of its members are behind, development will inevitably be hampered [4].

WOMEN'S EDUCATION'S IMPORTANCE

Napoleon was once asked what France's greatest need was. "National progress is impossible without trained and educated mothers," he responded. If my country's women are not educated, roughly half of the population will be

uneducated." In her lifetime, a woman must fulfil three duties. Each of these roles demands her to fulfil certain responsibilities. She would only be able to do them successfully with the aid of knowledge. A woman's first responsibility is to be a decent daughter. The second and third responsibilities are to be a decent wife and mother. A woman's education tells her what she should be. It also teaches her how to be a good daughter, wife, and mother by demonstrating what she should do. Many guys spend their free time in clubs and groups in the evenings. A gentleman with an educated wife, on the other hand, will not feel the need to join a club or society. He is free to express himself to her. He'll be in big danger if she gives him advice. He can spend his free time with her and enjoy her company. A well-educated woman makes a nice friend, a capable nurse, and a valuable advisor to her spouse. As a result, she is a great team player. She has the ability to gain her husband's devotion and respect. A well-educated woman can always share his sorrows [5]. "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world," says an English proverb. The implication is that the mother has a significant influence on her children's lives. She has the ability to shape their thoughts and personalities. If she is educated, she will leave a lasting effect on her children's minds, allowing them to grow into wonderful men later in life [6]. Women will be able to make their parents, husbands, and children truly happy with education. As a result, women must be educated. A well-educated girl is more valuable than a well-educated boy [7]. In India, women's education plays a critical role in the country's overall growth. It not only contributes to the development of half of the world's human resources, but also to the improvement of quality of life at home and abroad. Educated women are more likely to promote their female children's education as well as provide greater direction to all of their children. Furthermore, educated women can aid in the lowering of newborn mortality and population increase [8].

THE STUDY'S OBJECTIVES

The study's particular goals are,

1. To investigate the elements that influence women's decision to pursue higher education.
2. To investigate the barriers that women encounter in seeking higher education.
3. To make policy recommendations for improving the effectiveness of higher education in terms of women's empowerment.

THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study's goal was to look into the difficulties faced by rural women in pursuing higher education in Mysore District. As a result, the study's target group was limited to women who had obtained an undergraduate or postgraduate degree in any discipline at government colleges in and near the study area. This research is based on both primary and secondary sources of information. First, the researcher used a multi-stage sampling procedure to determine the sample size. For the aim of the study, a sample of 330 respondents was chosen. Second, the researcher used the snowball sampling technique to find women students enrolled in various government college programmes in order to acquire primary data. Because systematic information about female students was not available, this technique was deemed adequate for identifying the sample.

DATA INTERPRETATION

Women's problems in pursuing higher education in the study area can be divided into four categories: family challenges, social challenges, economic challenges, and institutional challenges. According to Table 1, 23.6 percent of the sample respondents rated the difficulty of 'making of meals' as high, while 60% rated it as low. For 33.3 percent of the respondents, obtaining water is a significant task. 34% said they had to deal with the stress of caring for a sibling on a daily basis. Only 3.3 percent of respondents said they had a high amount of difficulty getting to market, while 90.3 percent said they had a low level of difficulty. Agricultural employment presented a significant challenge to 86% of the respondents. 38.8% of respondents said they have a difficult time finding high-wage work. The issue of cattle maintenance was encountered by 81 percent at a very high level and by 5.5 percent at a low level. 74.2 percent of respondents said they had a high degree of cleaning and washing issues, while 9% said they had a low level of cleaning and washing challenges.

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Table 1. Respondents' problems with family

Sl. No.	Items	High	Medium	Low	Total
1.	Cooking of Meals	78	84	168	330
		(23.6)	(25.5)	(50.9)	(100.0)
2.	Fetching of Water	110	135	85	330
		(33.3)	(40.9)	(25.8)	(100.0)
3.	Caring for siblings	112	117	101	330
		(33.9)	(35.5)	(30.6)	(100.0)
4.	Going to Market	11	21	298	330
		(3.3)	(6.4)	(90.3)	(100.0)
5.	Agricultural works	284	27	19	330
		(86.1)	(8.2)	(5.8)	(100.0)
6.	Wage employment	100	102	128	330
		(30.3)	(30.9)	(38.8)	(100.0)
7.	Cattle Maintenances	268	44	18	330
		(81.2)	(13.3)	(5.5)	(100.0)
8.	Cleaning and Washing	245	55	30	330
		(74.2)	(16.7)	(9.1)	(100.0)

Table 2 shows that 80.3 percent of the total sample respondents believe gender prejudice is extremely high, 13% believe it is medium, and 7.6% believe it is low. 90.3 percent of respondents have a significant level of religious bias. 88.5 percent said they were subjected to severe community bias. Only 7.6% of respondents said they had experienced racial bias, while 80.3 percent said they had faced similar issues at a low level. Similarly, only 4.5 percent of respondents had to deal with the issue of early marriage, while 90 percent had to deal with it at a very low level. However, 81.2 percent of respondents said they had a high level of difficulty with the bride price, while 4.5 percent have a low level of difficulty. Eve-teasing was experienced by 89.4 percent at a very high level and by only 3.6 percent at a very low level. Harassment and sexual abuse are reported to be at a high level by 91.5 percent and 85.2 percent of respondents, respectively, whereas the same difficulties are reported to be at a low level by 4.2 percent and 3.0 percent of respondents.

Table 2. Respondents' social difficulties

Sl. No.	Items	High	Medium	Low	Total
1.	Gender bias	265	40	25	330
		(80.3)	(12.1)	(7.6)	(100.0)
2.	Religious bias	298	20	12	330
		(90.3)	(6.1)	(3.6)	(100.0)
3.	Community bias	292	28	10	330
		(88.5)	(8.5)	(3.0)	(100.0)
4.	Racial bias	25	40	265	330

		(7.6)	(12.1)	(80.3)	(100.0)
5.	Early marriage	15	18	297	330
		(4.5)	(5.5)	(90.0)	(100.0)
6.	Bride price	268	47	15	330
		(81.2)	(14.2)	(4.5)	(100.0)
7.	Eve teasing	295	23	12	330
		(89.4)	(7.0)	(3.6)	(100.0)
8.	Harassment	302	14	14	330
		(91.5)	(4.2)	(4.2)	(100.0)
9.	Sexual abuse	281	39	10	330
		(85.2)	(11.8)	(3.0)	(100.0)

Table 3 reveals that 35.8% of the total sample respondents said they spent a lot of money on the book. For 46% of respondents, uniform spending is high, whereas for 26.7 percent, uniform spending is very low. Tuition expenses are expensive, according to 48% of respondents. The expenditure on special fees is large for 44.8 percent of respondents, while the expenditure on special fees is modest for 25.5 percent. 90.3 percent said transportation costs are high, while only 4.2 percent said transportation costs are low. 81.2 percent and 83.3 percent of respondents said they spend a lot of money on hostel and test costs, respectively, while 4.5 percent and 6.7 percent said they spend very little.

Table 3. Respondents' economic difficulties

Sl. No.	Items	High	Medium	Low	Total
1.	Books	148	112	70	330
		(44.8)	(33.9)	(21.2)	(100.0)
2.	Uniforms	152	90	88	330
		(46.1)	(27.3)	(26.7)	(100.0)
3.	Tuition fees	158	100	72	330
		(47.9)	(30.3)	(21.8)	(100.0)
4.	Special fees	148	98	84	330
		(44.8)	(29.7)	(25.5)	(100.0)
5.	Transport cost	298	18	14	330
		(90.3)	(5.5)	(4.2)	(100.0)
6.	Hostel Fees	268	47	15	330
		(81.2)	(14.2)	(4.5)	(100.0)
7.	Exam Fees	275	33	22	330
		(83.3)	(10.0)	(6.7)	(100.0)

Table 4 shows that 50 percent of the total sample respondents said the syllabus level is extremely high, 18.2% said medium, and 31.8 percent said low. The class's strength is high, according to 78.2 percent of respondents. 92 percent of respondents said teaching personnel is unreliable, while 7.6 percent said it is extremely reliable. 86.4 percent of

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respondents believe innovative teaching is very low, while 7.6 percent believe it is very high. Electricity availability is low, according to 80.3 percent of respondents, while it is high for 7.6%. 44.8 percent of respondents said there is a lot of prejudice when it comes to giving out grades, while 25.8% said there isn't. Institutional security is rated low by 89.4% of respondents, while it is rated high by 3.6 percent. 91.5 percent of respondents said toilet facilities are very poor, while 4.8 percent and 3.6 percent said they are medium and low, respectively. 90.3 percent of respondents said drinking water facilities are very low, while 5.2 percent said they are very high. Waiting hall and canteen amenities are rated very low by 85.2 percent and 74.2 percent of respondents, respectively. Library and browsing facilities were rated low by 48 percent of respondents, while medium and high by 32.7 percent and 19.4 percent, respectively.

Table 4. Respondents' institutional challenges

No.	Items	High	Medium	Low	Total
1.	Level of Syllabus	165	60	105	330
		(50.0)	(18.2)	(31.8)	(100.0)
2.	Strength of class	258	32	40	330
		(78.2)	(9.7)	(12.1)	(100.0)
3.	Spacious of class rooms	49	98	183	330
		(14.8)	(29.7)	(55.5)	(100.0)
4.	Regularity of Teaching staff	12	15	303	330
		(3.6)	(4.5)	(91.8)	(100.0)
5.	Innovative teaching	25	20	285	330
		(7.6)	(6.1)	(86.4)	(100.0)
6.	Electricity facilities	25	40	265	330
		(7.6)	(12.1)	(80.3)	(100.0)
7.	Prejudice of marks giving	148	97	85	330
		(44.8)	(29.4)	(25.8)	(100.0)
8.	Security of Institution	12	23	295	330
		(3.6)	(7.0)	(89.4)	(100.0)
9.	Toilet facilities	12	16	302	330
		(3.6)	(4.8)	(91.5)	(100.0)
10.	Drinking water	17	15	298	330
		(5.2)	(4.5)	(90.3)	(100.0)
11.	Waiting Hall facilities	24	25	281	330
		(7.3)	(7.6)	(85.2)	(100.0)
12.	Canteen facilities	14	71	245	330
		(4.2)	(21.5)	(74.2)	(100.0)
13.	Library and Browsing	64	108	158	330
		(19.4)	(32.7)	(47.9)	(100.0)

Garrett's Ranking Technique was used to assess the respondent's attitude regarding the challenges of obtaining higher education. Table 5 shows the results of the ranking for the problems faced by women respondents when pursuing higher education. It shows that the score ranges between 17132 to 17985. The average score is used to rank each statement. The second statement has a mean score of 54.50, whereas the third statement has a mean score of 54.30. As a result, the second and third statements are ranked I and II, respectively. The average score for the fourth statement is 53.83, the fifth statement is 53.05, and the first statement is 51.92. As a result, the IV, V, and III ranks are assigned to the fourth, fifth, and first assertions, respectively. As a result, it is reasonable to conclude that the lack of financial resources is the most significant barrier to women seeking higher education in the research region.

Table 5. Problem-solving attitude score

Statement	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	Garrett Score	Average Score	Garrett Rank
Greater distance of educational institutions	6000	4560	2700	2480	1392	17132	51.92	V
Lack of Finance	6225	5400	3600	1800	960	17985	54.50	I
Prefer boys over girls in getting education	6750	4680	3000	2600	888	17918	54.30	II
Evil factors against women such as racking, teasing, Harassment etc.	6375	4200	3750	2600	840	17765	53.83	III
Environment of higher education institutions	6375	4800	2650	2480	1200	17505	53.05	IV

WOMEN'S ATTITUDES TOWARD HIGHER EDUCATION

Despite the fact that the policy framework considers women's education to be a core human right, the situation on the ground is not as hopeful. In terms of women pursuing higher education, the situation is also not promising. Women with degrees in many fields, on the other hand, have higher goals. Women in the study field demand more choice in deciding which subjects they wish to pursue. They continue to believe that getting higher education will improve their potential to advance, and that it may even lead to their obtaining advanced education and settling in a different career. The researcher used the Rensis Likert rating scale to investigate the perceptions of the sample women respondents on seeking higher education. Respondents were asked to record their comments on a five-point scale ranging from strongly agree to on the option,' with a weighted point of 5 to 1 respectively, on a five-point continuum of the scale.

The perspectives of female students in the research domain demonstrate that change is on the rise. According to the survey, if they obtain higher education, their financial contribution to their respective families would increase, and their social position will rise. Furthermore, nearly three-quarters of the female students (73.5%) in this poll strongly agree that they should have the flexibility to choose the subjects they want to study. As a result, it is clear that the current trend is almost totally reversing the historical process of women's exclusion from higher education, and that they have begun to obtain some or much more access to this level of study. When it came to parents permitting women students to have the same amount of exposure as their male counterparts and become competent in the labour market, nearly 43% of women students had no viewpoint to share, but roughly the same percentage strongly agreed. Their attitude toward higher education, which promotes critical thinking among women, echoes their belief that women can play a positive role in society.

CONCLUSION

The current study found that there has been tremendous progress in the performance of women's education, with the female literacy rate rising over time and the gap between male and female literacy rates shrinking. The data collected revealed that women experience significant hurdles during their studies, but that these challenges are not

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insurmountable. Government should take initiatives to make education easier and more affordable for women. Females should be encouraged and motivated to pursue higher education. Teachers and parents should work together to remove roadblocks in the way of females gaining information. Girls who are unable to complete their education due to financial constraints should receive proper assistance, counselling, and subsidies. Gender equity should be maintained by upgrading educational facilities and increasing enrolment rate retention in schools, as well as incorporating local NGOs and financing education for the underprivileged. Traditional and value systems in Orthodoxy should be updated [9]. The following resources, including as radio, television, computer-assisted learning, remote education, and others, can be utilized to instil optimism in learners' attitudes about resolving physical perspective problems. People's cooperation or the union council may be used to set up the facility at the local level. To provide females with skills and excellent education, various technical training programmes and vocational teaching centers should be established. More research is needed to determine the educational issues that girls face in higher education [10].

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