



Women's Higher Education in India: Challenges and Opportunities

Mrityunjay Ishore

Department of Education (M.A.), Coochbehar Panchanan Barma University, Coochbehar

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.70798/tgjct/010400015>

Abstract

Education plays an important role in the life and evolution of mankind. Education creates knowledge, awareness and attitudes among the human beings for the betterment of society. Education is the most important for women to develop their abilities as to develop the society and nation. The present study focuses on women higher education in India: challenges and opportunities. women's role in socio-economic development of a country is crucial. Education in general and higher education in particular, is a milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to respond to the challenges, to conform their traditional role and change their life. Higher education provided to women would mean independence in decision making and economic impediment. It would develop capabilities to discharge duties and responsibilities in the fields of social, economic, political and cultural arenas. The present study is qualitative. The data have been collected by using secondary sources. The secondary data were collected through book, newspaper, articles, research journal and different websites. Therefore, women participation in higher education is mandatory and it helps to improve their personal and professional development but also significant contribution to national development through social transformation.

Keywords: *Women Education, Challenges, Opportunities, Higher Education*

Introduction

Education is the most important tool for self and National Development. Man and woman both are equal part of society (Maity, 2021). 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 (Bhat, 2015). In terms of population, India is the second largest country of the world due to the low level women education. If a woman is uneducated, the future of country would also be uneducated. An educated woman has capability to handle her home and professional life. They can effectively contribute in controlling the population of India as they would like to marry at a later age in comparison to the uneducated women. Women education has been given a lot of priority in India just like men to bring some positive changes in the social and economic status of the country. They are like two sides of the coin so need equal opportunity to participate in the country development. One cannot exist without other because women are everything as they give birth to the future generation. If they would be well educated they would be given rise educated future generation and thus healthy social and economic condition in India (Mandal, 2021). Education is the most important for women's to develop their abilities as to develop the society and nation. The Government of India has initiated various programs and policies to ensure that a woman must not miss any opportunities of getting an education. The Indian education system is the biggest system in the world where primary, middle, secondary, higher secondary, college, and universities plays a vital role in shaping the personality of individuals (Babu, 2020). women's role in socio-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 challenges, to confront

their traditional role and change their life. Higher Education means that 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 economics, science, technology and culture of various types of higher schools are treated as higher educational institutions. A nations cultural, social and economic development is highly dependent on higher education of women (Kumar, 2018). 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. Studies have shown that women are much more creative than men, yet at the same time innovative and organised. Women by nature are economical and as a result of which do not cause a due 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.

Review of Related Literature

Review released literature is pre-requisite to actual planning of any scientific research. Literature review discusses work in a particular area of research. It helps to establish theoretical framework as well as methodological focus and bridges the gaps in the concerned area.

Sardar, S. S., & Paria, M. (2024) Was studied on the research paper, *"The Challenges and Opportunities of Women Education in the Context of NEP 2020"*. The NEP 2020 aims to overall India's education system with a focus on inclusivity, particularly for women, who face considerable socio-economic and cultural impediments to study. This study uses a descriptive research approach with secondary data analysis to look into the challenges and opportunities for women's education in the context of the National Education Policy 2020. Data is collected from these sources and divided into two categories: challenges (Social and economic impediments, cultural norms and infrastructure issues) and opportunities (Scholarships, vocational training and digital learning programs). The results show that, the effectiveness of NEP 2020 in addressing women's educational issues will be determined by effective implementation, continuous awareness efforts, and the establishment of a supportive atmosphere that encourages women to fully engage in and benefit from educational changes.

Mandal, P. (2021) Was studied on the research paper, *"A study on the Development of Women Education in India in the Light of Government Initiatives"*. This paper focuses on the development of women education in India in the light of Govt. initiatives. Even today's society, we see that girls are not getting equal opportunities. This study is a qualitative study. This paper is basically descriptive and analytical in nature. It has been done on the basis of the secondary sources of data like books, newspaper, articles, research journal, and different websites. Collected data was analysed qualitatively. Finally, I can say that in order to make the real development of women's education first, the thinking of the people has to change and the social awareness needs to be increased. Especially mothers need to be aware because we know that "a good mother is equal to hundred good teachers".

Panda, A., & Majee, A. (2021) Was studied on the research paper, *"Parental Attitude of Sarak Community Towards Girls Education at Higher Stage in West Bengal"*. The major purpose of the study was to investigate the attitude of Sarak community towards female education in West Bengal. Purposive sampling technique has been adopted for the study. This study is based upon primary data which has been collected from the sample of 200 parents from rural villages of Purulia district has been taken. Self-prepared questionnaire was used for collection of data by the investigators for identifying the parental attitude toward higher education of girl child. This study indicates some significant results shows that majority of Sarak girls were dropout and parents are not

interested to educate their girls at higher education level due to different problems. This also prompted the researcher to take up the study regarding attitude of parents towards education of girl children.

Samanta, S. (2021) Was studied on the research paper, "*Attitude Towards Girls Education and Socio-Economic Status of A Tribal Village in WB*". The present study wants to identify the present socio-economic status, parental practice on girls education of the tribal community in a village Bhudrubani of Jhargram Dist. At this point of view, researcher wants to find out the present day socio-economic study and female education of a village locating in the remote area of Jhargram District in West Bengal. The study is based on socio-economic survey and questionnaire on parents attitude of their girls education and the practice of girls education. The informations and results show that the village is connected with roads and railway well. There are some basic facilities available as good health facilities like primary health centre, hospitals, rural doctors etc; availability of drinking water with submersible pump, tube well; schools and college under accessible communication; with the agricultural baseland with 2-4 bigha average cultivable land per family.

Maity, M. (2021) Was studied on the research paper, "*Indian Status of women's Higher Education*". The study aimed to highlight on enrollment status of women in higher education in India. It also highlighted relevant areas like needs of women's participation in higher education, barriers of women's access to higher education in India. In this study researcher followed descriptive method. Secondary data about women's enrollment in higher education were collected from AISHE reports, UGC reports, and census reports(1951-2011) through internet. The results of the study, still in 21st century challenges are these, so government should take more relevant initiatives to improve enrollment of women in higher education rather than literacy rate because only literacy cannot help women to be a self dependable individual and in sustainable development.

Rationale of the Study

Education plays an important role in the life and evolution of mankind. Education creates Knowledge, awareness and attitudes among the human beings for the betterment of society. Education is considered as the most important tool for empowering in our society. The role of women in the education system can play a big part in the society. The factors like cultural, social, political and technological changes in the world have revolutionized the education and social life of women. As a human right, in the 21st century education directs an individual to creativity. The Indian education system is the biggest system in the world where primary, middle, secondary, higher secondary, college, and university plays a vital role in sharpening the personality of individuals. But there are many hurdles in our country education system, and a large number of students are continuously learning the system before completing higher education. In India, many girls rarely get the chance to receive proper higher education, and such institutions ensure that they get the best environment to study. Moreover, educated women are better positioned to advocate for their rights, support their families, and dire positive change within their communities. The broader social benefits of women's education include improved health outcomes, reduced child mortality rates, and enhanced overall development, as educated women are more likely to invest in the education and well-being of their children. Therefore, ensuring access to quality education for women is not only matter of justice and equality but also a strategic imperative for national progress and prosperity.

Objectives of the Study

1. To Identify the Challenges of women's Higher Education in India.
2. To Analyse the Opportunities Created for Women Higher Education in India.
3. To given Recommendations for Promoting women's Participation in Higher Education.

Research Questions

1. What are the Challenges of women's Higher Education in India?
2. What are the Opportunities Created for women's Higher Education in India?

3. What are the Recommendations for Promoting women's Participation in Higher Education?

Research Methodology

This study is a qualitative study. In this paper an attempt has been made to analyse women's Higher Education in India: Challenges and Opportunities. It has been done on the basis of the secondary sources of data like books, newspaper, articles, research journal, and different websites. Collected data was analysed qualitatively.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Data analysis the major process that is required to be effectively implemented. After the collection of data, the data was organized, Analyzed, and given proper interpretation on the basis of the objectives of the study. The data was analyzed and given proper Interpretation on the basis of the objectives of the study, which are given below:

What are the Challenges of women's Higher Education in India?

The following challenges associated with women's higher education in India are:

- **Equity and equal opportunities:** As Indian society is a closed society where there is no equity and equal opportunities to all individuals of society including women. The GER in higher education in India among male and female varies to a greater extent. There are regional variations too some states have high GER while as some is quite behind the national GER which reflect a significant imbalances within the higher education system.
- **Social and Economic Structure:** It is also noted that the gender inequality is related to social and economic structure, traditional attitude towards women, economic insecurity and negligence of men and lack of sincere efforts of all concerned.
- **Difference in Planning of Policies and Their Implementation:** government of India frame many policies for welfare of women but these polices and schemes seem to be fairly good on papers instead their adequate implementation. Good proportion of educational budget is proposed for women higher education enhancing schemes but it is not properly utilized for the purpose suited.
- **Child Marriages:** Early marriage of the girls by their parents in order to be escaped from dowry. It is highly practiced in the rural India.
- **Poverty and Economic Problem:** It is a mammoth challenge to encourage education of women at higher level. A large section of people of India is living below the poverty line and facing hardships related to earning for their livelihood in that case how can they think about achieving education.
- **Job Opportunities:** Large numbers of NET / PhD candidates are unemployed even there are lot of vacancies in higher education, these deserving candidates are then applying in other departments which is a biggest blow to the higher education system. Men are more likely than women to earn a higher salary and to hold a tenure track position.
- **Gender Disparity:** Even in the era of 21st century males are more preferred than female child leading to the female feticide. There is a big gender gap in Indian society not only in education sector at higher education but also the situation is similar in other fields. In future it will still be persisting challenge to deal efficiently.
- **Parental Attitude:** Negative parental attitude towards educating daughters is one of the important challenges to promote girl's education in India.
- **Lack of Female Teacher:** Lack of female teachers is another barrier to girls' education. Girls are more likely to attend school and have higher academic achievement, if they have female teachers. Currently, women account for only 47.70 % of teachers at the Elementary level.

What are the Opportunities Created for women's Higher Education in India?

Women education is very important for the country to fully develop. Women education is a big opportunity for India to be developed socially and economically. Let us mention the opportunities of women's education in India based on the views of the educationists, philosophers and political leaders.

- **Gender equality:** Women have the same rights to receive education as in the case of men. So, women cannot be discriminated on the basis of sex, as far as education is concerned. Women education is also important in accomplishing the world goal of gender equality. By empowering girls, this goal is achieved as they are better able to compete with their male counterparts in places such as government, learning institutions and even leadership positions.
- **Improved Health and Hygiene:** Educated girls and women are aware of the importance of health and hygiene. Through health education, they are empowered to lead a healthy life-style. Educated mothers can take better care of both herself and her baby.
- **Educated society:** Women education leads to increased levels of literacy in the world. This is the case when these girls gain education that can help them better their lives.
- **Integral Development:** An educated woman helps to develop national integration, world peace and international understanding. Today the developing as well as the underdeveloped countries strive for integral development; that is, they have realized that the true development of a nation can be achieved only when no one is left behind on the path to progress.
- **National Development:** Women are increasingly participating in the national development process. They are making the nation proud by their outstanding performances almost every sphere including medical science, social service, engineering, etc. This leads to more developed economies. This is because the women are able to work and acquire income which translates to higher levels of a country's GDP. By empowering women, we enable the nation.
- **Self Reliance:** Education makes a woman self reliant; that is, she does not depend on anyone for her own survival as well as the survival of her children. She knows that she is educated and could well be employed equally like men and fend for the needs of her family. A woman, who is financially independent, can raise her voice against injustice and exploitation.
- **Exploring the Hidden Potential:** Women education in developing countries is essential for their growth and stability. Who knows that the girl who is working as a domestic help has the potential to become a doctor, if only she is given the right guidance and an opportunity to do so. When it comes to brain and the use of it, women are no inferior to men; why not to help them achieve their aspirations. It would ultimately benefit the nation, as a woman is less likely to leave her roots and migrate to other nation.

What are the Recommendations for Promoting women's Participation in Higher Education?

The following recommendations associated with women's higher education in India are:

- **Policy initiatives:** under this section, National Education Policy (NEP-2020) extended support for gender inclusion, multidisciplinary learning and flexible pathways. For promoting female education through awareness, Kanya Vidya Dhan, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao and Rashtriya Uchcharitar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) providing access and infrastructure in higher education institutions. The NEP supports and created gender inclusion fund for female learners particularly, downtrodden disadvantaged sections.
- **Financial provisions:** The government providing scholarships for girls under various schemes such as CBSE, AICTE, Pragati, etc., many universities provide Fee waivers to the single-girl children. In addition

to that provides support for women pursuing research, doctoral fellowships and skill promotion programmes, along with sanction of soft loans and interest-free loans for the women community.

- **Opportunities of Lifelong Learning and Digital Learning:** Helps the women who could not attend the regular classes for avail online courses (SWAYAM, NPTEL). Open and Digital Learning (ODL) through IGNOU and state open universities support the rural women through digital literacy programmes.
- **Infrastructure development in the campus:** As a part of improving the facilities at university campus establish safe and affordable hostels with well-lit campuses and CCTV surveillance and effective grievance redressal cell, sanitary and health and recreation units, clean toilets, menstrual hygienic rooms and started women-friendly transport services with required career counseling centers.
- **Equal Access to Education:** There must be an equal access to both girls and boys in education so that there will be no variations between them and they can continue their education Plan supports community initiatives that promote positive attitudes towards equal access to education, and that raise awareness on its importance for both boys and girls. Plan also supports the creation of gender-sensitive learning environments to ensure both boys and girls enjoy their right to education.
- **Gender Equality:** Gender equality is good for everyone; boys and girls, women and men. Plan engages boys in solutions to achieve gender equality to help change social norms in entire communities. Mostly this gender equality is more familiar in villagers and they won't send their children for education especially girls.
- Introduce Attractive scholarships for both financially poor students and meritorious students to encourage women students in higher education.
- Provide counseling for both family and person concerned at the secondary stage of education.

Conclusion

Education is the most important for women to develop their abilities as to develop the society and nation. Education plays an important role in the life and evolution of mankind. Education creates knowledge, awareness and attitudes among the human beings for the betterment of society. 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.

Reference

- Babu, G. E. (2020). Girls Secondary Education in India: Status and Challenges. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts*, 8(2), 1966-1972. <https://share.google/YMFd3KvIVwP3FsIHT>
- Kumar, N. (2018). Higher Education and Woman Participation in India. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts*, 6(1), 1290-1292. <https://share.google/0YKb5O9rnW6gdRwDg>
- Maity, M. (2021). Indian Status of women's Higher Education. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts*, 9(1), 3189-3196. <https://ijcrt.org/papers/IJCRT2101392.pdf>
- Mandal, P. (2021). A on the Development of Women Education in India in the Light of Government Initiatives. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts*, 9(1), 2721-2735. <https://share.google/G19VMFAtUJK6Iplh0>
- Mir, A. H., & Swaroopa, P. K. (2024). Women Education in India: Issues and Challenges. *International journal of emerging knowledge studies*, 03(05), 210-215. <https://share.google/H1RH8cXxysCHc7Mn>
- Parimala, M. S.(2023). Education Challenges for women in India: A special reference to Andhrapradesh. *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research*, 10(8), 447-452. <https://www.jetir.org/papers/JETIR2308155.pdf>

The Global Journal of Contextual Thought

(A Double-Blind, Peer-Reviewed, Quarterly, Multidisciplinary Journal)

Volume: 1, Issue: 4 Feb'26 - Apl'26 Home Page: www.tgjct.org Email: editor@tgjct.org ISSN: 3107-7528 (Online)

- Patil, V. (2018). Women and Higher Education in India. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts*, 6(1), 222-225. <https://share.google/4G3EqwJ3e8cLyeBmu>
- Reddy, E. M. (2025). Enhancement of Higher Education Among Women in India. *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research*, 12 (11), 424-427. <https://www.jetir.org/papers/JETIR2511702.pdf>
- Samanta, S. (2021). Attitude Towards Girls Education and Socio-Economic Status of a Tribal Village in WB. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts*, 9(1), 2624-2631. <https://ijcrt.org/papers/IJCRT2101323.pdf>
- Sheetal. (2019). Contemporary Issues and Future Challenges for Women in Higher Education. *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research*, 6(6), 668-678. <https://www.jetir.org/papers/JETIR1907B20.pdf>

