



## **OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Higher education for young women is taken for granted nowadays among the upper and middle strata in the cities but it is still not viewed as an immediate investment in their careers. Social role expectations affect the aspirations of women both in the educated and uneducated families. Indian higher education system is one of the largest in the world. It consists of colleges, universities, institutions of national importance and autonomous institutions with the status of deemed universities. In this paper an attempt is made to analyze the gender disparity in higher education evident across the socio-economic spectrum in India and to study opportunities and challenges faced by them with regard to their education.*

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

In India, the increase in the educational facilities and opportunities for women and the removal of traditional bars on entry of women to particular branches and levels of education came to be supported by all champions of women's emancipation. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century society wanted to educate women to perform their role as good wives and mothers and not to make them as direct active participants in the process of national development of the country. The colonial authorities generally supported this limited view-point of women's education. The expansion of education and health services in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, precipitated a need for women teachers and doctors which resulted in the incorporation of these two vocations in the programme of women's education.

#### **NEED FOR THE STUDY:**

The Constitutional guarantee of equality, changes the conceptual thinking of educational development of women and gave a call to women to play multiple roles in the polity, the economy and the society and the educational development of women began in that broad direction. The Secondary Education Commission (1953) stated that "In a democratic society



where all citizens have to discharge their civic and social obligations, differences which may lead to variations in the standard of intellectual development achieved by boys and girls can be envisaged.”

### **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY & METHDOLOGY:**

At this juncture the present study has tried to focus on the Indian higher education on the basis of Secondary sources. The main argument of the paper is that the policies which were implemented by the state have shown an impact on the women’s higher education but the same encouragement is not seen in practicality in employment as well as career orientation. This lacuna has given scope for this study. The main objective of the paper is to analyze the schemes introduced for the upliftment of women in higher education and enrollment ratio at various levels.

### **GIRLS EDUCATION:**

SSA promotes girls education to equalize educational opportunities and eliminate gender disparities. SSA has made efforts to mainstream gender concerns in all activities under the Programme. A two pronged strategy is adopted for the promotion of girls education, namely, to make the education system responsive to the needs of girls, and simultaneously, to generate a community demand for girls education. A strategic shift has been made in education planning to target low female literacy pockets and reduce gender disparity. Special effort is also made to bring out-of-school girls, specially the girls from the disadvantaged sections, to school. Girls education has received primacy through two special interventions subsumed under SSA, namely, the National Programme for Girls Education at Elementary Level (NPGEEL) and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya(KGBV).

### **Different schemes offered by Government for encouraging women education:**

1. National Programme for Girls Education at Elementary Level (NPGEEL),
2. Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya.
3. Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan.
4. Scheme for construction and running of Girls Hostel for students of Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools.
5. Incentive to Girls for Secondary Education.
6. University Grants Commission.
7. Day care centers in Universities and colleges.
8. Indira Gandhi Scholarship for Single Girl.
9. Construction of Women’s Hostels for Colleges.
10. Development of women’s studies in Universities and Colleges.
11. Women Managers in Higher Education.

- 12. Colleges for the development of Programme.
- 13. Post-Doctoral fellowships for Women.

**Higher education institutions in India**

Table – I analyses the existing higher education institutions in our Country. Analyzing this is important for the study as it depicts the various organizations offering higher education.

**TABLE-1**

**Higher Education Institutions In India**

Nature of Institutions	No. of institutions	Proportion
Universities	642	1.37
Colleges	34908	74.42
Stand alone institutions	11356	24.21
<b>Total</b>	<b>46906</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: All India Survey on Higher education 2013 MHRD Reports

Table- 1 illustrates that out of the 46,906 institutions offering higher education 74.72% are functioning as colleges , this includes private run, government administered and aided colleges, 24.21% of them are functioning as Stand Alone institutions like deemed institutions, the remaining 1.37 % are being run as Universities. This shows that there are less than 2% Universities, depicting the sorry state of research orientation in our country.

There are less than 2 % Universities, showing that research is not promising in this country, when the overall research is, neglected the research done by women is even more neglected. The reason for stating that research is weak in this country in spite of having 46,906 institutions is that it is noted that funding of research is done mostly by the Universities and as the number is minimal it can be concluded that research is not given the sufficient encouragement.

**Gender wise enrolment of students in higher education**

In Table-2 the gender wise enrolment of students in Higher education is taken into consideration as this the crux of this research.

**TABLE-2**

**Genderwise Enrolment Of Students In Higher Education Institutions**

Gender	No. of students	Proportion
Women	12.69M	44.43
Men	15.87M	55.57
<b>Total</b>	<b>28.56M</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: All India Survey on Higher education 2013 MHRD Reports

Table -2 depicts that out of the 28.56 M enrolments 55.57% are men and only 44.43% are women. This is a positive figure with regard to the number but steps should be taken to make it equal.

Though the gender wise enrolment is encouraging the orientation towards research is not equivalent.

### Enrolment of student's gender wise at various levels

The enrolments of students gender wise at various levels is taken for study in Table -3, this is undertaken to find out the percentage of students in various courses

**TABLE-3**  
**ENROLMENT OF STUDENTS GENDER WISE AT VARIOUS LEVELS**

Education levels	Men		Women		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Undergraduate	12257778	54.35	10297064	45.65	22554842	100
Post Graduate	1841695	54.47	1639304	45.53	3380999	100
M.Phil	15113	45.97	17763	54.03	32876	100
Ph.D	51362	59.60	33143	40.40	84505	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,41,65,948</b>	<b>54.37</b>	<b>1,19,87,274</b>	<b>45.62</b>	<b>2,60,53,222</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: All India Survey on Higher education 2013 MHRD Reports

Table - 3 reveals that 54.35% of the Undergraduates are men and 45.65% are women. Of the 33,80,999 enrolments 64.47% are men and 45.53% are women. In the M.Phil enrolment 54.03 are women and 45.97 are men. In the PhD enrolment 59.605% are men and 40.40 % are women.

This shows that in the Undergraduate and Post Graduate level the percentage of enrolments is almost equal but at the PhD level it has decreased. It is interesting to note that at the M.Phil level the enrolments are higher in the women than the men. This can be attributed the good performance of women in the entrance examinations and bagging the limited seats. These women are able to enroll in the M.Phil course but are not able to complete it.

### Enrolment to certificate & integrated courses

The enrolment to certificate and integrated courses are tabulated in Table – 4

**TABLE-4**

**Enrolment To Certificate & Integrated Courses**

Education levels	Men		Women		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Certificate course	96019	46.98	108373	53.02	204392	100
Integrated course	43174	61.80	26689	38.20	69863	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>139190</b>	<b>50.75</b>	<b>135062</b>	<b>49.25</b>	<b>274255</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: All India Survey on Higher education 2013 MHRD Reports

The data in Table – 4 shows that in the enrolment of certificate and integrated courses, the enrolment of women in certificate courses is higher (53.02%) than the men (46.98%). In the integrated course enrolment 61.80 % are men and 38.20 % are women.

The enrolment of women in certificate courses is higher than men because these courses are of shorter duration and not very expensive, encouraging house wives and other women to enroll into these courses.

**Enrolment to PG Diploma and Diploma courses**

The enrolment of men and women in the various PG Diploma and Diploma courses is analyzed in Table -5

**TABLE-5**

**Enrolment To Pg Diploma And Diploma Courses**

Education levels	Men		Women		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
PG Diploma	134477	77.09	39968	22.91	174445	100
Diploma	1435182	69.64	625589	30.36	2060771	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>1569659</b>	<b>70.20</b>	<b>665557</b>	<b>29.80</b>	<b>22,35,216</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: All India Survey on Higher education 2013 MHRD Reports

The data in Table – 5 shows that out of the 1,74,445 PG Diploma enrolments 77.09% are men and 22.91% are women. 69.64% of the Diploma enrolments are men and 30.36% are women.

The enrolment of women in Diploma and Post Graduate diploma courses is comparatively very low, this could be due to the reason that these courses are mostly employment oriented and men prefer these courses than the women. Women are more inclined towards the Traditional courses and pursuing their education for just the sake of studying something. Most of the women are not job oriented even after pursuing higher levels of education.

**Level-wise enrolment of students**

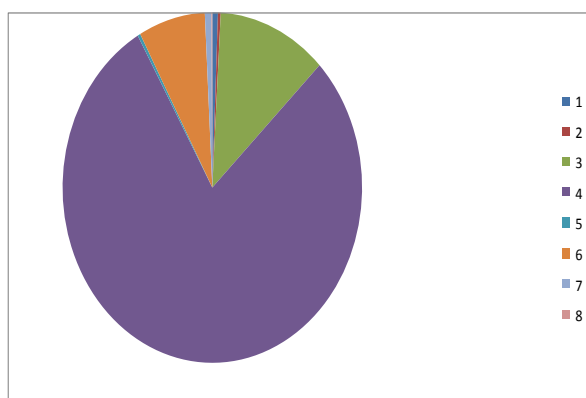
The level wise enrolment of students across the country is mentioned in Table – 6 in 8 different classifications

**TABLE - 6**  
**Level-Wise Enrolment of Students**

S.No	COURSE	PERCENTAGE
1	Ph.D	0.6
2	M.Phil	0.3
3	Post Graduate	11.8
4	Under Graduate	79.0
5	PG Diploma	0.3
6	Diploma	7.2
7	Certificate	0.7
8	Integrated Courses	0.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: All India Survey on Higher education 2013 MHRD Reports

**Figure-I**  
**LEVEL-WISE ENROLMENT OF STUDENTS**



Total Student enrolment has been classified in Figure-I. The courses have been categorized into 8 levels across all the States of India viz – Ph.D., M.Phil. Post Graduate, Under Graduate, PG Diploma, Diploma, Certificate and Integrated Course.



Percentage share of student enrolment in these levels is depicted in this Figure. The enrolment of students is diminishing form the undergraduate level to the Ph.D level in a drastic manner

**CONCLUSION:**

Education is one of the most important means of empowering women with the knowledge, skill and self confidence necessary to participate fully in the development process of our country. Investing in women education is one of the most effective ways to reduce poverty. Now a day's women are showing their interest in research in various faculties. University Grants Commission is providing special centers for women at University level for their easy access in hither education. In the villages especially the uneducated parents are to be motivated to educate their girl children towards higher education, this can be the only way for the overall development in the society.

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