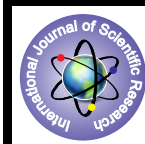


Women in Higher Education: A Sociological Study in Karnataka State



Social Science

KEYWORDS :

Hemlata. B.K

Research Scholar, Department of Sociology, Gulbarga University, GULBARGA: 585 106, Karnataka

Dr. Shinde. Jaganath. R

Professor & Chairman, Department of Sociology, Gulbarga University, GULBARGA: 585 106, Karnataka

ABSTRACT

There is gender disparity in higher education and to fill the gap women's universities were opened up in India at different parts. Still, there are obstacles are faced by women to take up higher education and these include lack of motivation from family members, poor knowledge in choice of career, etc. To address these issues, a survey of female students pursuing higher education was made in Karnataka state covering two universities. The paper addressed the career choices of women students at higher education.

Introduction:

Gender disparity in education is an age old phenomenon. Traditionally, girls have been at a disadvantage in most parts of the globe and they continue to be so even today¹. Eliminating differences in education between men and women have been a priority of development organizations and the international community for many years². The Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targeting to "eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015" is echoed by the United Nations and the World Bank³. Need for equality of educational opportunities between men and women on the basis of merit has also been acknowledged in the Universal Declaration of Human rights.

Women constitute a little more than 48% of the total population of India due to unfavorable sex ratio, which is a matter of concern. During the post-independence period, literacy rate of women rose from 7.93% in 1951 to 54.16% in 2001 and to estimated 67% in 2008 while that of men increased from about 25% to about 83% during the same period. Hence, it can be stated that the women's participation in education is lower compared to men.

Indian students are nurtured in a society where the lower status of women is normative. Continual exposure to strongly differentiated gender roles is likely to shape student's beliefs about how well males and females perform across a variety of domains. Gender roles are defined by behaviors, but gender stereotypes are beliefs and attitudes about masculinity and femininity⁴. Gender stereotypes are very influential; they affect conceptualizations of women and men and establish social categories for gender. These categories provide not only descriptions of how people think about women and men but also descriptions about what women and men should be, and even when beliefs vary from reality, the beliefs can be very powerful forces in judgments of self and others which mean that gender stereotyping places limits on what traits and behaviors are allowed. Therefore, the history, structure, and function of stereotypes are important topics in understanding the impact of gender on people's lives. Hence, to assess the women's perceptions towards higher education, the present study was made in one general university, that is Gulbarga University, Gulbarga and another women's University, that is Karnataka State Women's University.

Objectives of the Study:

The present study is made:

- To look into the choice of careers and courses by female students in higher education;
- To study the motivation of family members in higher edu-

cation; and

- To assess the favourite occupation or professions of the women students in higher education.

Methodology and Limitations:

The present study is a questionnaire based survey and the primary data was collected from total 250 female students studying in Gulbarga University, Gulbarga and 250 female students studying in Karnataka State Women's University, Bijapur of Karnataka State. Hence, the present study is limited to 500 women students in both the universities.

1. Criteria for Choice of Present Career/ Course:

While selecting their career or their future, at the higher education level, every student studies the different occupations and professions. Based on these criteria the students choose his or her career. The criteria while choice of career and future professions also include income, wealth, marriage prospects, knowledge, etc. The information was collected from the respondents on the criteria for choice of present career and course and presented in the following table.

Table No. 1. Criteria for Choice of Present Career/ Course

Particulars	Gulbarga Univ.		Karnataka State Women's Univ.		Total	
	No's	%	No's	%	No's	%
Good Employment & Income	112	44.8	108	43.2	220	44.0
Better Marriage Prospects	31	12.4	25	10.0	56	11.2
Get Knowledge	34	13.6	28	11.2	62	12.4
Get Degree, Name & Fame	12	4.8	13	5.2	25	5.0
Accidentally Chosen the Present Career	61	24.4	76	30.4	137	27.4
Any Other	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total	250	100	250	100	500	100

2. Factors Influence Career or Profession:

Earlier the occupations or professions were caste based, but in the modern period, due to industrialization, there are diversified occupations, which are based on education and not caste based. Now gender, education, family background, location (city or village), etc are influencing factors while choosing career or profession. In this regard the collected primary data is tabulated as under.

Table No. 2. Factors Influence Career or Profession

Particulars	Gulbarga Univ.		Karnataka State Women's Univ.		Total	
	No's	%	No's	%	No's	%
Religion/ Caste	84	33.6	63	25.2	147	29.4
Money/ Wealth	45	18.0	52	20.8	97	19.4
Parents' Suggestions	95	38.0	103	41.2	198	39.6
Intelligence/ Interests of Students	26	10.4	32	12.8	58	11.6
Any Other	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total	250	100	250	100	500	100

3. Choice of Career by Girls in Higher Education:

Science and technology subjects are difficult and masculine as observed by many of the students earlier. But due to increase in careers and disappearing social restrictions, many of the girls choose careers in science and technological subjects also. It is essentially to be studied in which career or course, the girls are interested in higher education. Hence, information was collected from the respondents on the choice of the careers by girl students in higher education and presented in the following table.

Table No. 3. Choice of Career by Girls in Higher Education

Particulars	Gulbarga Univ.		Karnataka State Women's Univ.		Total	
	No's	%	No's	%	No's	%
Science & Technology	47	18.8	56	22.4	103	20.6
Humanities & Education	76	30.4	82	32.8	158	31.6
Social Sciences	127	50.8	112	44.8	239	47.8
Any Other	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total	250	100	250	100	500	100

4. Opinion on Girls' Education in Family:

As discussed already, in many families girls' education is not preferred even now. There is gender discrimination in education in family as the male children are preferred over female in education. As such, information was collected on the girls' education in their families and presented in the following table.

Table No. 4. Opinion on Girls' Education in Family

Particulars	Gulbarga Univ.		Karnataka State Women's Univ.		Total	
	No's	%	No's	%	No's	%
Girls' Education is Preferred Over Boys	32	12.8	43	17.2	75	15.0
Boys' Education is Preferred over Girls'	125	50.0	103	41.2	228	45.6
Education of All Children Treated Equal	93	37.2	104	41.6	197	39.4
Total	250	100	250	100	500	100

5. Motivation to Choose Present Course/ Career:

Many of the persons motivate and influences the children to

take up a particular career or course. As such, the children take up the similar career or profession. In this regard, it was asked to the respondents that who is motivating them in choice of their career and present course and the collected information is tabulated as under.

Table No. 5. Motivation to Choose Present Course/ Career

Particulars	Gulbarga Univ.		Karnataka State Women's Univ.		Total	
	No's	%	No's	%	No's	%
Parents	136	54.4	122	48.8	258	51.6
Brothers/ Sisters	31	12.4	28	11.2	59	11.8
Self	38	15.2	32	12.8	70	14.0
Any Other	45	18.0	68	27.2	113	22.6
Total	250	100	250	100	500	100

6. Favourite Occupation/ Profession:

The information on the favourite occupation or profession of the respondents is collected and presented in the following table.

Table No. 6. Favourite Occupation/ Profession

Particulars	Gulbarga Univ.		Karnataka State Women's Univ.		Total	
	No's	%	No's	%	No's	%
Teacher/ Professor	68	27.2	56	22.4	124	24.8
Professional Practice	23	9.2	25	10.0	48	9.6
Any Government Job	104	41.6	101	40.4	205	41.0
Administrative Officer (IAS, KAS, etc)	47	18.8	63	25.2	110	22.0
Any Other	08	3.2	05	2.0	13	2.6
Total	250	100	250	100	500	100

Suggestions from the Study:

Following are the suggestions from the present study.

- 1) The women students should look into the other aims of higher education such as knowledge, awareness, life style, etc rather employment alone.
- 2) The family members of the female children should motivate and encourage their girl children to take up higher education.
- 3) Women are suggested to find out careers in Science and technology subjects and go for higher education in these subjects.

Conclusion:

To conclude, women must come forward to participate in higher education increasingly, so as to reduce gender gap in higher education. It is essentially needed that the family members of girl children must not suppress their children against higher education. As observed, child marriage, blind faiths such as women are for household work only, women's education is economic burden to family; etc should be restricted and controlled by family members. Women have to build up self-confidence and participate in scientific and technical education.

REFERENCE

1. Jha, J and Kelleher, F (2006): Boys' Underachievement in Education: An Exploration in Commonwealth Countries. London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 2006.
2. Ganguli, I, et al (2011): The Closing of the Gender Gap in Education: Does it Foretell the Closing of the Employment, Marriage, and Motherhood Gaps? <http://web.hks.harvard.edu/publications/getFile.aspx?id=683>
3. Ganguli, et al, Ibid.
4. Brannon, L. (2004): Gender: Psychological Perspectives. Allyn and Bacon, 2004.