

Growth of Women's Education in Higher Education of West Bengal

Amit Kumar Bhunia

Research scholar, Department of Education, RKDF University, Ranchi, Jharkhand
(State Aided College Teacher, Department of Education, Sukumar Sengupta Mahavidyalaya, Paschim
Madinipue, West Bengal)

ABSTRACT: Education of women is most important for development of our country in a holistic way. Education helps the women in improving their health, nutrition and economic development. This paper aims to study the progress of women in higher education in India. The paper provides an overview of growth of Higher Education, importance of women education, position of women in Higher education, influencing factors, etc. In this research, secondary data has been gathered and descriptive approaches are being used. Data and material for this study were gathered from a variety of sources, including books, research articles, magazines, research journals, e-journals, reports from the UGC and the higher education departments of West Bengal and India. Finally, the researcher concludes that in the field of higher education, women have made remarkable improvements.

Introduction: "Women education today aims at the development of a secular outlook, social awareness, cooperation and tolerance" The National Policy of Education (1986)

Women's education is a field that has gained popularity internationally in West Bengal during the last several decades. Women make up about half of the population of the country, making them a significant human resource who are essential to the growth of local economies and the economy as a whole. The constitution's provisions, the adoption of several international agreements, and a number of legislative measures have all been enacted to support women's education. Also, the W.B. administration has been concerned with women's empowerment from the commencement of Indian planning. Due to tendencies in globalisation, the rate of social change in West Bengal has quickened recently. But, a new aspect of West Bengal's gender imbalance issue has emerged. The State has been unable to put together a movement for the advancement of women as a class despite the existence of several political, social, economic, and cultural movements in the country. the extent of gender discrimination in West Bengal, which was previously enlightened. Education gives people the information and skills they need to function well in society and to make a positive contribution to its smooth operation. The goal of the educational process of adjustment is to increase learning capacity.

Women's education is the providing of all educational resources and opportunities to women. Any kind of education with the goal of enhancing the knowledge and abilities of women and girls is referred to as women's education. It encompasses general education in schools and universities, technical and vocational training, career and health education, etc. Access to education and gender equality are included. Higher education is defined as learning that occurs beyond 10+2 years of formal education. One of the biggest higher education systems in the world is found in India. It is often believed that higher education is only available in

colleges and universities. Professional colleges in the fields of law, theology, engineering, medicine, business, music, and the arts are among the institutions of higher learning. Other institutions including teacher training colleges and technological institutes are also included. Hence, the phrase "higher education" often refers to education that is at the graduate level and beyond. People have the chance to think on the important social, cultural, moral, and spiritual issues that mankind is facing via higher education.

Background of the Study: Women are often denied access to education in the majority of the world's developing nations, including India. Despite the fact that women make up 48% of the population overall in India, women have a lower literacy rate in urban areas—79.11% compared to 88.76% for men—and even lower literacy rates in rural areas—57.93% compared to 77.15% for men. According to All India Survey on Higher Education (2015-16) in every higher education level except M. Phil, the rate is higher for male than female. In India the enrollment ratio is 54% male and 46% female and particularly in West Bengal is 53.68% male and 43.62% female and in 2016-7 the ratio is 52.7 and 47.3. Unless the gap between male and female literacy is abridged, it is very difficult to steer and propel national development.

Rationale of the Study Men and women are two wheels of a chariot. They are the two sides of same coin. Progress of a society or a nation or a civilization fully depends on progress of both of them. But unfortunately, different studies revealed that till date women are lag behind the men in different sections including participation in higher education. All of us are responsible for that. Research shows that investing in women, and particularly in their education, has many good benefits on not just the women themselves but also on their families and children. These results not only enhance the lives of women and families but also fight poverty and promote economic development. The education of girls and women, as well as the elimination of obstacles to education and possibilities for their growth, are key components of attaining gender equality.

Objectives:

- To access the status of female student's enrolment in higher education in India.
- To study evolution of women's position in Higher Education in India and West Bengal
- To review year wise, gender comparison of various streams in higher education in West Bengal.

Methodology: Here, in this research descriptive procedures are followed and secondary data has been acquired. Data and material for this study were gathered from a variety of sources, including books, research articles, magazines, research journals, e-journals, reports from the UGC and the higher education departments of West Bengal and India.

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

Early colonial control restricted women's education to elementary school levels, and only the most affluent members of society had access to it. Since it only applied to a limited portion of society, women's literacy rates climbed from 0.2% in 1882 to 6% in 1947.

Since gaining their freedom, women's educational options in higher education, both general and technical, have grown dramatically. In order to adapt to the demands of social and economic development, women's education has been varied at both the university and college levels.

The inclusion of women might bring about a dramatic transformation in the higher education system in India. We discover that there are more female students than male students at certain prestigious universities, and this tendency is expected to continue. The image is shown in the following table.

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Table-1: Enrolment in Higher Education in India in 1950-51 to 2019-20 (In Million)

| Year | Male | Female | Total |
|---------|------|--------|-------|
| 1950-51 | 0.4 | 0 | 0.4 |
| 1960-61 | 0.8 | 0.2 | 1.0 |
| 1970-71 | 2.6 | 0.7 | 3.3 |
| 1980-81 | 3.5 | 1.3 | 4.8 |
| 2000-01 | 5.4 | 3.2 | 8.6 |
| 2005-06 | 8.8 | 5.5 | 14.3 |
| 2010-11 | 15.5 | 12.0 | 27.5 |
| 2015-16 | 18.6 | 16.0 | 34.6 |
| 2019-20 | 19.6 | 18.9 | 38.5 |

Source-

1. AISHE report 2019-20, Department of Higher education, Ministry of Education, Govt. of India.
2. Educational Statistics at a Glance – 2018, Ministry Human Resource Development, Department of School Education & Literacy, Govt. of India.

Table-2: Gender Distribution in Student Enrolment in Higher Education in India

| YEAR | TOTAL | MALE | % of Male | FEMALE | % of Female |
|---------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|-------------|
| 2011-12 | 29184331 | 16173473 | 55.42 | 13010858 | 44.58 |
| 2012-13 | 30152417 | 16617294 | 55.11 | 13535123 | 44.88 |
| 2013-14 | 32336234 | 17495394 | 54.10 | 14840840 | 45.90 |
| 2014-15 | 34211637 | 18488619 | 54.04 | 15723018 | 45.96 |
| 2015-16 | 34584781 | 18594723 | 53.77 | 15990058 | 46.23 |
| 2016-17 | 35705905 | 18980595 | 53.16 | 16725310 | 46.84 |
| 2017-18 | 36642378 | 19204675 | 52.41 | 17437703 | 47.59 |
| 2018-19 | 37399388 | 19209888 | 51.36 | 18189500 | 48.64 |
| 2019-20 | 38536359 | 19643747 | 51 | 18892612 | 49 |

Source- AISHE 2019-20, Department of Higher education, Ministry of Education, Govt. of India.

The enrolment of women in higher education has improved significantly compared to the past. In 2011-12, where the female enrolment rate was 44.58 %, there in 2019-20, the female enrolment rate is 49 %. In other hand, the male enrolment rate is 51 % in 2019-20. At this time, if we look at the gap between male and female enrolment rate, we will see that female enrolment rate only 2 % lagging behind the male enrolment in higher education.

Table-3: Gross Enrolment Ratio in Higher Education

| HIGHER EDUCATION | | | |
|------------------|-------|------|--------|
| YEAR | TOTAL | MALE | FEMALE |
| 2001-02 | 8.1 | 9.3 | 6.7 |
| 2002-03 | 9.0 | 10.3 | 7.5 |
| 2003-04 | 9.2 | 10.6 | 7.7 |
| 2004-05 | 10.0 | 11.6 | 8.2 |
| 2005-06 | 11.6 | 13.5 | 9.4 |
| 2006-07 | 12.4 | 14.5 | 10.0 |
| 2007-08 | 13.1 | 15.2 | 10.7 |

| | | | |
|---------|------|------|------|
| 2008-09 | 13.7 | 15.8 | 11.4 |
| 2009-10 | 15.0 | 17.1 | 12.7 |
| 2010-11 | 19.4 | 20.8 | 17.9 |
| 2011-12 | 20.8 | 22.1 | 19.4 |
| 2012-13 | 21.5 | 22.7 | 20.1 |
| 2013-14 | 23.0 | 23.9 | 22.0 |
| 2014-15 | 24.3 | 25.3 | 23.2 |
| 2015-16 | 24.5 | 25.4 | 23.5 |
| 2016-17 | 25.2 | 26.0 | 24.5 |
| 2017-18 | 25.8 | 26.3 | 25.4 |
| 2018-19 | 26.3 | 26.3 | 26.4 |
| 2019-20 | 27.1 | 26.9 | 27.3 |

If we look at the women's position in higher education based on the gross enrolment ratio (Table-3), we will see that at present, women are far ahead from men. In 2001-02, where male students' gross enrolment ratio was 9.3, there female students' gross enrolment ratio was 6.7. The male students were ahead in the basis of gross enrolment ratio during 2001-02 to 2017-18, but later time women go ahead. In 2018-19 and 2019-20, male students' gross enrolment ratio are 26.3 and 26.9 respectively. In other hand, female student's gross enrolment ratios are 26.4 and 27.3 respectively in 2018-19 and 2019-20. In other words, at present time women are ahead of men in basis of gross enrolment ratio.

Table-4: Enrolment in Various Level of Higher Education (in %)

| Year | Ph.D. | | M.Phil. | | Post-Graduation | | Graduation | |
|---------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| | % of MALE | % of Female | % of MALE | % of Female | % of MALE | % of Female | % of MALE | % of Female |
| 2011-12 | 60.54 | 39.46 | 46.59 | 53.41 | 52.54 | 47.46 | 54.42 | 45.58 |
| 2012-13 | 58.32 | 41.68 | 43.65 | 56.35 | 51.31 | 48.69 | 54.08 | 45.92 |
| 2013-14 | 60.04 | 39.96 | 43.44 | 56.56 | 49.41 | 50.59 | 53.23 | 46.77 |
| 2014-15 | 59.32 | 40.68 | 42.27 | 57.73 | 48.45 | 51.55 | 53.24 | 46.76 |
| 2015-16 | 58.95 | 46.05 | 41.09 | 58.91 | 46.42 | 53.58 | 53.29 | 46.71 |
| 2016-17 | 58.00 | 42.00 | 38.05 | 61.95 | 45.43 | 54.57 | 52.68 | 47.32 |
| 2017-18 | 57.35 | 46.65 | 36.02 | 63.98 | 45.96 | 54.04 | 51.88 | 48.12 |
| 2018-19 | 56.18 | 43.82 | 37.87 | 62.13 | 43.57 | 56.43 | 50.97 | 49.03 |
| 2019-20 | 55.02 | 44.98 | 37.78 | 62.22 | 43.13 | 58.87 | 50.78 | 49.22 |

Source – AISHE 2018-19 & 2019-20, Department of Higher education, Ministry of Education, Govt. of India

In the analysis of the enrolment of women in various levels of higher education (Table-6), in 2011-12, where women enrolment was 39.46 % in Ph.D, there after a decade in 2019-20, women enrolment is 44.98 % and increased about 5.52 %. In 2011- 12, enrolment rate of women at M.Phil and Post-Graduation level was 53.41 % and 47.46 % respectively. In 2019-20, it has increased to 62.22 % and 58.87 % respectively, while male enrolment rate is 37.78 % and 43.13 % respectively.

Table 5- Year wise distribution of colleges in India and West Bengal

| Year | Total Colleges in India | Total Women Colleges in India | % of Women Colleges in Respect of Total College in India | Women Colleges in West Bengal |
|---------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| 1970-71 | 3604 | 412 | 11.43 | 2 |
| 1980-81 | 4722 | 609 | 12.90 | 8 |

| | | | | |
|---------|-------|------|-------|---|
| 1990-91 | 7346 | 874 | 11.90 | 1 |
| 2000-01 | 12806 | 1578 | 12.32 | 4 |
| 2010-11 | 33023 | 3982 | 12.06 | 6 |
| 2011-12 | 35539 | 4266 | 12.00 | 0 |

Source: UGC Annual Report, Annual Report of Department Of Higher Education in West Bengal.

According to Table 5, 4266 women's colleges were founded during the 2011–12 academic year. The highest percentage of women-only institutions (12.90%) were founded during the 1980–1981 era. In West Bengal, eight women's colleges were founded between 1980 and 1981, a significant amount. My research revealed that 22 institutions were founded in West Bengal before to 1970. Just 21 of the 11,721 women's colleges in India that were founded between 1970–1971 and 2011–2012 were located in West Bengal.

Table 6 - stream wise male & female student enrolment in Higher Education in West Bengal

| Faculty | 2009-2010 | | | | 2010-2011 | | | |
|-------------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| | UG | | PG | | UG | | PG | |
| | Male % | Female % | Male % | Female % | Male % | Female % | Male % | Female % |
| Arts | 53.92 | 46.07 | 49.44 | 50.56 | 49.2 | 50.70 | 49.44 | 50.56 |
| Science | 65.33 | 34.67 | 62.57 | 37.43 | 87.85 | 12.15 | 62.57 | 37.43 |
| Commerce | 76.71 | 23.28 | 65.93 | 34.07 | 94.79 | 5.21 | 65.93 | 34.07 |
| Education | 56.74 | 43.25 | 52.19 | 47.81 | 80.21 | 19.79 | 52.19 | 47.80 |
| Law | 60.69 | 39.31 | 49.05 | 50.95 | 88.02 | 11.98 | 49.04 | 50.95 |
| Engineering | 79.77 | 20.23 | 70.10 | 29.89 | 95.28 | 4.71 | 70.10 | 29.89 |
| Management | 55.95 | 44.05 | 67.82 | 32.17 | 90.48 | 9.51 | 66.19 | 33.81 |
| Others | 60.00 | 39.99 | 46.20 | 53.79 | 86.76 | 13.24 | 46.20 | 53.79 |

Source: UGC Annual Report, Annual Report Higher Education Department of West Bengal 2009-10 and 2010-11.

Table No. 6 demonstrates that the enrollment of female students was greater than that of male students for the academic years 2009–2010 and 2010–2011. Male student enrollment at the PG level in the faculties of arts and law is greater than female student enrollment during the same session. Only at the faculty of the arts did women's enrollment at the UG level increase between the academic years 2010–11 and 2009–10; in all other instances, it has decreased since the previous session. And it is quite remarkable that the enrollment of women at the PG level in each of the sessions is about equal.

Findings:

In India few women opt for science & commerce streams.

In most of the cases it is shown that in both undergraduate & post graduate level women enrolment is lower than boys.

Conclusion: Both in our nation and in West Bengal, there is a gender imbalance in the enrollment of male students compared to female students. If this gap is not closed, not just India but the whole world will face serious issues since higher education for women is essential for helping them reach their full potential and prepare them for the difficulties of an ever-changing society. The government of India has implemented a number of strategies and policies to close the gender gap in higher education; however they are insufficient to address the issues of gender inequality. Plans and policy formation is not a final thing its execution is very much vital.

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