

Gender Stratification in Higher Education: A Social Work Perspective

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Abstract

Gender stratification refers to the social ranking, where men typically inhabit higher statuses than women. Often the terms gender inequality and gender stratification are used interchangeably. There are a variety of approaches to the study of gender stratification. Most of the research in this area focuses on differences between men's and women's life circumstances, broadly defined. Scholarly debates focus on which dimensions of inequalities are most relevant and the level at which inequalities are generated and maintained. Researchers have been challenged to explore gender, race, and class inequalities from an intersectional perspective, rather than treating gender as independent of race and class. There is little acknowledgment of the heteronormativity that is present in gender stratification research. Perhaps that will change once data regarding sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression becomes more widely available. Gender stratification can be examined at the level of individual outcomes and interactions or with a macro perspective that compares indexes of gender inequalities across countries. Although welfare states research examines many aspects within and across societies, it provides important insights in how state policies can shape patterns of gender stratification. Gender inequality in the area of education, economic resources, and family are closely linked in individuals' lives, but distinct strands of research have emerged and will be discussed separately.

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Introduction:

Gender inequalities, and its social causes, impact India's sex ratio, women's health over their lifetimes, their educational attainment, and economic conditions. Gender inequality in India is a multifaceted issue that concerns men and women alike. Some argue that some gender equality measures, place men at a disadvantage. However, when India's population is examined as a whole, women are at a disadvantage in several important ways. Free and compulsory education to all children between the ages of 6 and 14 is a fundamental right of citizens under the 86th Amendment to the Constitution of India. Yet, the state of education of women in India is far from 'free' or as totalising and encompassing as the right appears to guarantee. Although the government, through its various initiatives such as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (aimed at providing primary education especially to girl children from disadvantaged rural areas), attempts to improve the education of women, the barrier

In India, the importance of conferring on women the right to equal opportunities for education of women was realized almost simultaneously with the dawn of independence. Accordingly the Constitution of India bestowed on women the right to equal opportunities for education. But the recognition of the right to equal opportunities did not in any way ensure the removal of those hurdles which had hindered and continue to hinder most women from making an effective use of the opportunities for education. Even today, the under representation of women at all levels of education (with the exception of school-level teacher training programmes), has been one of the most striking features of the gender biases that characterize India's development exercise.

The existence and extent of occupational gender segregation is well known. This is commonly taken as an indication of gender inequality, but this is incorrect. In general the more egalitarian countries, in terms of gender, tend to have higher levels of gender segregation. To understand this we must appreciate that occupational gender segregation is the resultant of two components, a vertical dimension which does measure gender inequality, and a horizontal component that measures difference without inequality.

Gender inequalities are bound to exist in every male dominated society. In India, practically all the indicators of progress exhibit negative trend. Within the family the girls are discriminated against boys for education and the decision to send the girl to school or keep her at home is determined by people's attitude especially

towards the relevance of education in the lives of women. A very low value is attached to her education as in a majority of cases, her world revolves around her household chores and unlike her male counterparts in the family her status is neither recognized nor respected in the society. As a result, the status gap arises between men and women and which lead women into low-skill, less paid and low-status occupations. In case of rural environment and girls born in the backward families (particularly SC/STs), there is still more curse to get education and employment.

General Overviews

Feminist scholars, such as Joan Acker, have criticized “traditional” stratification research, which has mostly ignored gender altogether (Acker 2006). Crompton 2003 writes that a mere cultural approach to gender inequalities ignoring class is also flawed. Blumberg 1984 argues that economic dimensions of inequality are paramount, as they precede inequalities in other domains. Keister and Southgate 2012 posits that gender is often seen as one dimension of stratification. However, Risman 2004 and McCall 2005 argue for an intersectional approach where gender is analyzed across all dimensions. In addition to questions about which dimensions of inequality are important for stratification, the level at which to examine gender stratification is also a key aspect of scholarly debate. Some scholars compare men and women within couples, others men and women within societies, and West and Zimmerman 1987 makes a compelling argument that gender and, by extension, gender inequality is created in everyday interactions. Nevertheless, Blau, et al. 2006 points out that understanding contextual factors and their interactions with gender within organizational contexts are essential for a holistic understanding of gender stratification.

Objectives of The Study:

- 1.To study on the problems and factors, which avoid the women students to offer for higher education;
- 2.To explore the different factors related to the family and society of the students which enables the gender stratification in higher education;
- 3.To study the socio-economic and educational conditions of the students studying in Bangalore University and Gulbarga University.

Aims of Higher Education:

Higher education plays an important role in every aspect of life. To say it increase individual knowledge, inculcate analytical thinking, and bring name and fame and it is the major means to get good employment. The conventional ideas that boys

are for education and outside employment and girls are for kitchen and housework was changed and girls are increasingly participating in higher education

Religion/ Community Determine The Career/ Occupational Choice:

In the historical times, the occupations or careers of the people are decided by the caste and religion of the people. But due to the increase in awareness and educational development, such conceptions were transformed and the career or occupational choices are not decided by religion, culture, community or castes to a greater extent now.

Male Members are Preferred for Higher Education And Research in Family:

As the Indian society is basically a male dominated society, there is preference to males in the family over the female members in the family as well as in the society. As such education is such an aspect, in which the male family members are preferred over the female family members. The orthodox and male dominated society emphasized the role of women to house work and kitchen only and men are allowed to work outside the family. As a result, the role of females in the family and society was lower. Now due to the increased awareness among people, majority of the people are treating their sons and daughters as equal and also giving equal educational opportunities to their children irrespective of gender.

Girls are Getting Lesser Opportunities in Education and Employment:

As discussed in the previous chapters, the status of women was low and at present the status is increasing due to the efforts of the governments and education among girls. As such there is need to know about whether the girls are getting lesser opportunities in education and employment compared to men in the family as well as in society.

Facing Discrimination:

Since the historical times, the girls are discriminated in many respects, social, economical, educational, political, religious and such other aspects. But the education is playing an important role in curbing the discrimination in all the respects. As the present study covered the higher education students, it was asked to them whether the girls are facing any kind of discrimination .

Adequate Freedom to Choose Employment and Job:

It is highlighted from many of the studies that the students are not given adequate freedom to choose their employment or job on their own. Many of the relatives such as parents, brothers, sisters and others influence on the Employment and job of their younger. Hence, information was collected from the respondents,

that whether they have adequate freedom to choose their career.

Gender Influence Career and Course:

As many people think, most of the courses are suitable only for the boys, but few courses are not suitable for the girls. That is for instance, Science and Technology is not suitable for the girls. Further, Nursing courses are suitable to a major extent to the girls rather than boys, depending on the nature of work they get in the future. But due to the globalization, such assumptions were transformed and today the girls and boys are not differentiated in choosing a particular course in education.

Gender Determines Type of Job in Future:

Many of people believe there are some jobs, which are gender-specific. For instance, nursing is meant for girls only. Further, driving, civil engineering, etc are only meant for boys. In this way in many cases, the gender determines the type of job in future for the students. But due to increase in participation of girls in education, these conceptions are changed now. Girls are competitive and confident to take up any kind of jobs.

Status of Women Improved in All Aspects:

It was asked to the respondents that whether they agree that the status of women is improved in all aspects, that is to say, socio-economic, educational, cultural, religious, political and such other aspects

Marriage is An Obstacle in Education, Career and Profession:

It is already discussed that many of the parents think that their daughters' marriage is a big responsibility in the family. As such, they will arrange their daughters' marriage at an early age. Indirectly it makes females to become deprived of higher education. Of course, many of the married women are also participate in higher education, but their rate is low

Conclusion:

The study revealed that the women are more actively participating in higher education, but it is emphasized that only urban women are getting more educational opportunities rather than rural women. There is need to establish more and more colleges in the rural areas. As the present study covered the responses from both backward and forward regions, it shows that in backward areas, still there is more male domination, orthodox conventions and traditional culture, which became restrictions to the women's higher education. Even though in developed areas, women are increasingly participating in higher education, they are also affected by male domination in the society. Parents and Family members to a greater extent are

responsible to suppress and restrict the higher education of the girls in backward regions. In developed regions, education and employment opportunities motivating women to take up and participate in higher education with more interest.

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