

Women's Access To Higher Education: A Case Study In West Bengal

Dr. Asis Kumar Dandapat

Associate Professor,
Vidyasagar Teachers' Training College, Midnapur

Mr. Arun Maity

Lecturer-in-Charge,
Kharagpur Vision Academy

Mr. Pabitra Kumar Hazra

Lecturer,
Kharagpur Tribal B.Ed. College,
Kharagpur, West Bengal

Abstract: This paper examines access to higher education across gender and social groups in a rural college in West Bengal during the period 2006 to 2014. To be more specific, it examines the expansion and growth of access to higher education in terms of enrolment and subject choices.

I. INTRODUCTION

Woman, the first school of the child, constitutes roughly one half of the world population. But their social, economic and political status is lower than that of men in almost all the countries of the world (Wahab, 2004). Of course women do enjoy better position in some societies than in others, but their overall position everywhere is lower than that of their male counterparts. Woman can make meaningful contribution to the society if they are educated and have access to higher education, which serves as entry point to gainful employment. Gaia Wisker (1996) quotes in her book Empowering Women in Higher Education.

"There is a need ...into Higher education more generally if we are to move into Next century with full awareness of, the flexibility, Creativity and imaginative emotional responses which Woman staff students have to offer higher education and Employment."

Education of women is in a state of crisis in India and women as compared to men have limited chance and access to education. The eighth five year plan of India (1992- 97) states that it is now widely accepted that women make a very important contribution to the economy through their participation in agriculture, manufacturing and service sectors women in employment and to enable them to catch up, special

efforts are being made to improve their education skills and employment. This includes creation of education and training facilities for women and special quota for women in public sector jobs particularly in professions more suitable for women.

Constitution of India not only guarantee equal rights for women and prohibit discrimination against them on the basis of sex but also provide for the fuller participation of women in all spheres of national life. According to the constitution, the issue of women development is an integral part of overall development planning

OBJECTIVES

- The purpose of this study is to find out
- ✓ Women's access to higher education as compared to men.
- ✓ Women's opinion about the primordial and institutional practices that discourage female higher education.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is related to one degree college of West Bengal. The college named Sabang Sajanikanta Mahavidyalaya is located in rural area of the district of Paschim Medinipur in

West Bengal. The nature of data is quantitative. Secondary data (2006-2014) has been collected through office records. The collected secondary data is analyzed in terms of percentage, average and statistical moving average.

III. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The period covered for the study is 2006 – 07 to 2014 – 15. In this study the enrolment statistics is used to indicate trends and shifts.

2006-07		2007-08		2008-09		2009-10		2010-11		2011-12		2012-13		2013-14		2014-15	
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
74.14	25.86	70.64	29.36	66.92	33.08	66.87	33.13	61.97	38.03	53.42	46.58	57.74	42.26	54.08	45.92	51	49

Table 1: Percentage of male and female students in a college during the period 2006 to 2014

Starting from 2006 – 07 of when the percentage of women was 25.86 percent, it raised to 49 percentage in 2014 – 15. The increase has been significant. In other words there were, 34.88 women per 100 men in 2006 – 07 which increased to 96.08 in 2014 – 15. There have also been shifts in women’s choice of disciplines in higher education.

YEAR	ARTS		SCIENCE		COMMERCE	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2006-07	70.30	29.70	87.96	12.04	97.87	2.13
2007-08	66.72	33.28	88.25	11.75	100	00
2008-09	64.40	35.60	81.88	18.12	88.24	11.76
2009-10	62.70	37.30	85.68	14.32	95.65	04.35
2010-11	58.90	41.10	75.10	24.10	81	19
2011-12	55.45	44.55	76.78	23.22	78	22
2012-13	53.21	46.79	77.16	22.82	72.10	27.90
2013-14	50.76	49.24	68.74	31.26	88.46	11.54
2014-15	48	52	60.15	39.85	61.23	38.77

Table 2: Percentage of male and female students in different faculties of a college during the period 2006 to 2014

The proportion of women in 2006 – 07 in arts was 29.07 and it has been increased to 52 percent in 2014 – 15. The proportion of men, on the other hand, has decreased gradually during the same period of men which was 87.96 percent, has come down to 60.15 percent in 2014 – 15. On the other hand, women have increased 12.04 percent to 39.85 percent.

The proportion of women in commerce was 2.13 percent in 2006 – 07. There after it has been going up steadily. It is now stands at 38.77 percent in 2014 – 15. The same period of men is from 97.87 percent to 61.23 percent.

The parents are giving the best education to their daughters and follow careers. This can be better understood to look at their percentage distribution in different disciplines.

There are two simultaneous trends of clustering in the participation of men and women in higher education. In the next table (Table 3), we can observe that during the 3-years moving average while women trends highly increase and men has decreased gradually the same period. For example, women during the session 2006 – 08 were 29.49 percent to 45.72 percent in 2012 – 14. The same period of male was from 70.57 percent to 54.27 percent.

YEAR	MALE	3-YEARS MOVING AVERAGE	FEMALE	3-YEARS MOVING AVERAGE
2006-07	74.14	70.57	25.86	29.49
2007-08	70.64		29.36	
2008-09	66.92	65.25	33.08	31.85
2009-10	66.87	60.75	33.13	34.74
2010-11	61.97	57.71	38.03	37.25
2011-12	53.42	55.08	40.58	40.29
2012-13	57.74	54.27	42.26	42.92
013-14	54.08		45.92	45.72
2014-15	51		49	

Table3: Moving Average

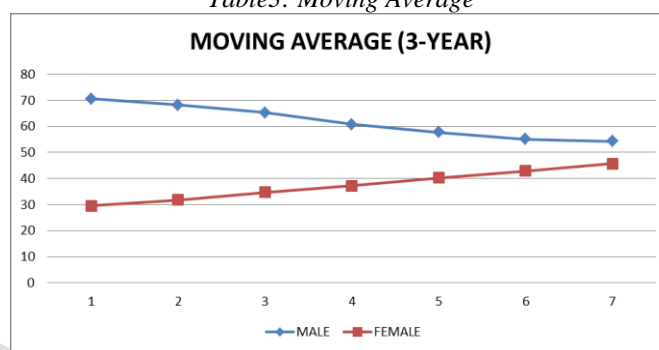


Figure 1

YEAR	Gen		SC		ST		OBC		3-YEARS MOVING AVERAGE	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2006-07	61.03	22.42	06.40	0.03	05.11	0.09	01.55	0.25	Na	Na
2007-08	61.66	26.14	4.73	1.84	03.50	0.02	0.73	0.13	Na	Na
2008-09	58.42	29.31	4.40	2.29	3.77	1.51	0.33	0.17	Na	Na
2009-10	54.51	27.23	005.42	2.82	3.65	1.84	2.55	0.78	0.94	0.46
2010-11	44.80	30.10	7.62	4.49	5.67	2.03	3.21	0.77	1.03	0.63
2011-12	44.52	33.13	7.08	4.21	5.08	1.50	2.40	1.17	0.33	0.57
2012-13	42.06	32.98	7.39	4.82	4.69	1.09	2.05	01.52	1.55	0.99
013-14	39.05	35.61	6.87	4.64	4.73	2.70	2.14	1.80	1.29	1.15
2014-15	38.54	38.18	5.06	4.84	4.17	2.80	02.10	2.04	1.13	1.13

Table 4: Social Groups

In the table 4 it is seen that in 2006 – 07, the proportions of SC / ST / OBC students were as follows: Scheduled Cast male students were 06.40 percent and female were 0.03 percent. The ST male students were 05.11 percent and female students were 0.90 percent, OBC male students were 01.58 and female students were 0.25 percent. On the other hand Muslims minorities proportion of male were 0.94 percent and female were 0.43 percent in 2009 – 10.

The representation of SC / ST / OBC students is not adequate and the proportion of female is negligible. For the

example : In 2004 – 15 the proportion of SC / ST / OBC / minorities students were as follows: – SC male was 5.06 percent and female was 4.84 percent, The ST male were students 4.17 percent and female students were 2.80 percent. OBC male students were 2.10 and women 2.04 percent.

The case of SC / ST / OBC students whose representation remains marginal in higher education. The social and economic disparities are reflected not only vis-à-vis cast and tribe but also at the regional level.

YEAR	Gen		SC		ST		OBC		3-YEARS MOVING AVERAGE	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2006-2010	36.08	27.04	5.71	2.25	4.34	1.26	1.64	0.42	0.98	0.53
2010-14	41.78	34	6.80	4.6	4.86	2.19	2.38	1.46	1.07	0.89

Table 5: Social Groups In Two Periods

The analysis of social groups can be subdivided into two periods, namely, 2006 – 10, and 2010 – 2014 (Table 5). The enrolment trends of men and women are follows – In 2006 – 2010, the proportion of SC male was 5.71 percent and SC female was 2.25 percent. ST male was 4.34 percent and ST female was 1.26 percent. OBC male was 1.64 percent and OBC students were 0.42 percent. Muslim minorities male students was 0.98 and female students were 0.53 percent (author's calculation, not shown in the table)

On the other period 2010 – 14, the proportion SC male was 6.80 percent and female was 4.6 percent. The ST male was 4.86 percent and female was 2.19 percent and the OBC male was 2.38 percent and female was 1.46 percent. Muslim minorities' male was 1.07 percent and female was 0.89 percent.

This trend is not continuing in different social group like general caste. During Period of 2006 – 2010, the proportion of male students was 56.08 percent and female were 27.04 percent. On the other hand, in the next other period 2010 – 2014, the proportion of male was 41.78 and female was 34 percent.

Hence, during the whole period 2006 to 2014, the fall in representation of male students was totally responsible for fall in representation of General Caste students.

IV. CONCLUSION

The growth of women's higher education has contributed to the increasing graduate enrolment in higher education, mainly in Arts. The statistics display a trend which reflects the current interests of women. On the other hand, the increase of different social group enrolments was not equal. The representation of general caste male Undergraduate students was decreasing.

There has been expansion and the number of students has increased. It is very noticeable that in general, women seem to have been the beneficiaries on this expansion, though it is difficult to come to this conclusion with separate gender based

enrolment data for each and every discipline and academic programme separately. The policy implications of the current situation of women suggested the imperative of creating a college-based database of higher education which is gender sensitive. Information on students, namely, their enrolment and out turn by level, discipline is very necessary for any understanding of the system. Research on higher education deserves support so that a quantitative data base can be supported by qualitative inputs.

REFERENCES

- [1] Acker, Sandra. (1994). *Gendered Education: Sociological Reflections on Women, Teaching and Feminism, Modern Educational Thought Series*, Open University Press, Buckingham.
- [2] Anandkrishnan M., (2004). Private Investments in Technical Education. In K. B. Powar and K. L. Johar (eds.), *Private Initiatives in Higher Education*, Sneh Prakashan and Amity Foundation for Learning, pp.202-225.
- [3] Bal, Vineeta. (2004). Women Scientists in India: Nowhere Near the Glass Ceiling. In *Economic and Political Weekly*, 7 August, pp.3647-53.
- [4] Bhattacharya, Sutanu, (2004). Organisation of Higher Education: Moving Towards a System of unincorporated Universities. In K. B. Powar and K. L. Johar (eds.) *Private Initiatives in Higher Education*.
- [5] Chanana, K. (2003). Visibility, Gender and the Careers of Women Faculty in an Indian University. In *McGill Journal of Education*, vol. 38, no. 3, Fall 2003, pp. 381-90.
- [6] Chanana, K. (2000). Treading the hallowed halls: Women in higher education in India, *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.35, no.12, March 18, pp.1012-1022.
- [7] Dandapat, A. K. and Sengupta, D.(2012). Higher education of women: Does gender Stereotyping matter?, *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology* Vol. 4(8), pp. 238-248, October, DOI: 10.5897/IJSA12.027 ISSN 2006-988x
- [8] Harding J. (1986). *Perspectives on Gender and Science*, London: Falmer Press.
- [9] India Government of 1974. *Towards Equality: Report of the Committee on the Status of Women*, New Delhi: Ministry of Education and Social Welfare.
- [10] Kelly, A. (ed.) 1981. *The Missing Half: Girls and Science Education*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- [11] Parikh, P. P. and S. P. Sukhatme (1992): *Women Engineers in India: A Study on the Participation of Women in Engineering Courses and in the Engineering Profession*, Mumbai: Indian Institute of Technology.
- [12] Wahab, Z (2004): *Women's Access to Higher Education in an urban centre in Pakistan*. A Ph. D. Dissertation submitted to Hamdard University of Karachi.