

“Women empowerment: Boaster of Economic Development”

(A study of working women in higher education)

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Abstract- Although teaching is most preferable area for women to be empowered, but women are grossly under-represented in higher education till yet. Women are not able to give over their time equally as men for improving their skill and knowledge according to latest development in higher education due to dual responsibilities. Through a study it is proved that participation of female teachers is lesser (39%) than male teachers (61%). This study highlights those factors that make the women immobilize to complete their education of higher level and making the advancement in career. By using primary and secondary data by the researcher, the range of factors is divided into three categories as barriers: Social, Psychological and Institutional which mould the behavior of women and which make irrelevant

workplace values So, further, it has been tried to examine how women can be empowered in higher education? What are the special initiatives that should be taken by the organization and the government? Govt. policies and plans of different authorities & commission regarding higher education can be implemented in such a way that women can contribute their immense participation in the development of Indian economy.

Index Terms- women empowerment, barriers, economic development.

I. INTRODUCTION

After globalization, in India, the status of women socially, economically, politically, and generally— is much higher than in early periods i.e. ancient and medieval. Now women experience greater freedom and voice, and participate more freely in public affairs. It has changed the scenario of working women’s status. In spite of becoming easy to get the equal chance to work as men, until women have economic liberty. Merely it is also true that they are still discriminated, harassed, humiliated, dominated and even exploited. The Indian youth population is the largest in the macrocosm. Women comprise 48.5% of the working population. A study focused, despite the fact that India has almost 250 million women in the working age group, but very few reach at the higher position in Indian organizations. This shows a kind of Glass ceiling. To get the fabulous economic development it is important to infringe the glass ceiling. It is needed to hold the intelligent and talented human beings for competing successfully in this globalized environment, irrespective of race, gender or customs.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Women empowerment is one of the most concerning area because the women are not parallel to men yet. They are empowered in the terms of salary, position, recruitment and many more, in spite of that women are not able or not free to take their own decisions regarding job, expenditure and so on. Many researches have been done earlier on the empowerment of women regarding different aspects. In this paper researcher tried to understand and focused on those reasons which makes the empowerment of those women who are working in colleges and universities poor. Women participation as professors is just 50% than male, while Government provides equal opportunities to all at every step. Question arises why has gender pay gap seen? Why is lesser no. of females seen at higher posts? National data collection agencies also accept the understate women's contribution as workers. A Commonwealth survey (1998) reveals that the ratio of women is decreased drastically at the top level of academic and professional steps. This survey showed only 16.7% female professors in Uganda and 12.2% and 11.8% women professors are in Sri Lanka and Canada respectively. Some country differences are discernible. According to Meyerson & Fletcher (2000), women at the highest levels of business are still rare. In India, 88% of women attract towards the science arts & commerce but as they go up in their career like engineering, only 1% women are seen in this field (world conference on higher education, UNESCO, 2002). World conference on higher education, UNESCO (2002) **also reported** that women are being appointed at the lecturer level but either they get stuck at this level or drop out from academic life due to unable to combine family and academic commitments. Women today comprise only 2 per cent of the total managerial strength in the Indian corporate sector (ILPC, 2010). Women rights are secured under the Constitution of India — mainly equality, dignity, and freedom from discrimination; and also, India have various statutes governing the rights of women (**Lalita Dhar Parihar.2011 ed & Mamta Rao. 3rd 2012, ed**). Women take up only 1 percent of boardroom seats in this country, compared to 13 percent in Australia,

8 percent in China and 5 percent in India (Bombuwela P. M., De Alwis A. Chamaru, 2013). Even though women represent more than half of the population in Sri Lanka, their labour force participation rate is less than men. Men's participation in labour force is twice as women's participation (Bombuwela P. M., De Alwis A. Chamaru, 2013). **Vinnicombe & O'Neil et al. (2014) stated that women are unable to have advancement on the highest ranks of leadership due to lack of confidence, ignorance and further they reported that the prevailing structures and systems make worse their work/life balance, life/career stage issues and put women at a disadvantageous stage continuously (O'Neil et al., 2015).** E. Mariana Setiadarma focused that Intrinsic and extrinsic factors affect the participation of women in higher education management. In order to pave the way for women's career advancement into the senior ranks of organizations, attention must be directed at the systemic norms and structures that drive the gendered nature of the workplace. The gender pay gap is the difference between male's and female's earnings. In 2008 the [OECD](#) found that the median earnings of the full-time female workers were 17% lower than the earnings of their male counterparts. A focus on individual level issues, i.e., women lacking confidence and women opting out, detracts from the work that must be done at the organizational level in order to dismantle the system of pervasive, structural disadvantage facing women seeking to advance to senior positions (Deborah A. O'Neil & Margaret M. Hopkins, 2015). India's higher education system is the third largest in the world, next to the United States and China. There (in India) are **723 Universities, 36634 colleges and 11664 Stand Alone Institutions (AISHE, 2015).** **All India survey on higher education** mentioned in its report that the main governing body at the tertiary level is the University Grants Commission (UGC), which enforces its standards, advises the government, and helps coordinate between the centre and the state. Development policies and programs tend not to view women as integral to the economic development process. As of **April 2016**, the wage gap in the United States was "79 cents for every dollar paid to men, amounting to an annual gender wage gap \$10,762". Women engage in productive work and earn incomes throughout in the developing world. **Suma Chitnis** also reported although the University Grants' Commission and the Association of Indian Universities snuff out the different aspects of education in India, but there is no clear figure of gender composition of different sectors. This is serious issue especially in the case of national commitment to increase the participation of female folk in development and enhancement. **This is the problem of not getting the absolute result of women empowerment programs.** From the review of literature it was identified that there is a need to be examine the discernible causes and effect of dropping out the career from the advancement and to leave the wish of achieving key positions.

III. OBJECTIVES

- 1- To determine the status of working women regarding enrollment and participation at different level in Higher Education of India.
- 2- To analyze those factors that become barriers for the working women in the advancement of the career or in reaching at higher positions in the higher education.
- 3- To analyze the women empowerment program in decelerating the barriers and to focus on suggestions which improve the participation of women in academic higher level.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Researcher tried to understand the barriers which are stopping stone in the advancement of career of working women in higher education by using descriptive and exploratory research design. Data were collected through questionnaire. Before applying research, pilot study was done and found feedback with new inputs. It helps the researcher to refine the questionnaire. Then questionnaire is given to (convenience sample) women. Apart from the demographic information, the attitude of females regarding barriers/discriminatory attitudes were measured. So researcher used questionnaire that is based on Likert scale This scale was made using the five point Likert Method and carried twenty five statements; the responses could vary from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. Both negative and positive statements were a part of the scale, and the scoring was given accordingly. Strongly agreeing to feeling of effecting with social, institutional and psychological barriers had a score of five and who had no feeling/ no effect at all, having the score of one. Apart from primary data, secondary data was also studied to examine the first and third objectives. Many research papers, reports and debate on the status of working women in higher education & management were reviewed & discussed with selected population and effect of women empowerment were also analyzed by the researcher

Sample Design:

To administer the questionnaire, population is taken from local area, Dehradun, Uttarakhand. Dehradun is an education hub. Many private/ management/ government colleges and universities are here. The survey was carried out on 50 females working in co-ed colleges including one private university situated in Dehradun. Sample of female teachers were randomly selected. The age groups of correspondents whose are selected as sample, ranging from 25 years to 60 years. They were research scholar or holding the post of assistant professor or associate professor or visiting/ contract faculty. Some of them (assistant professor) completed PhD, some qualified NET, and some having both the degrees.

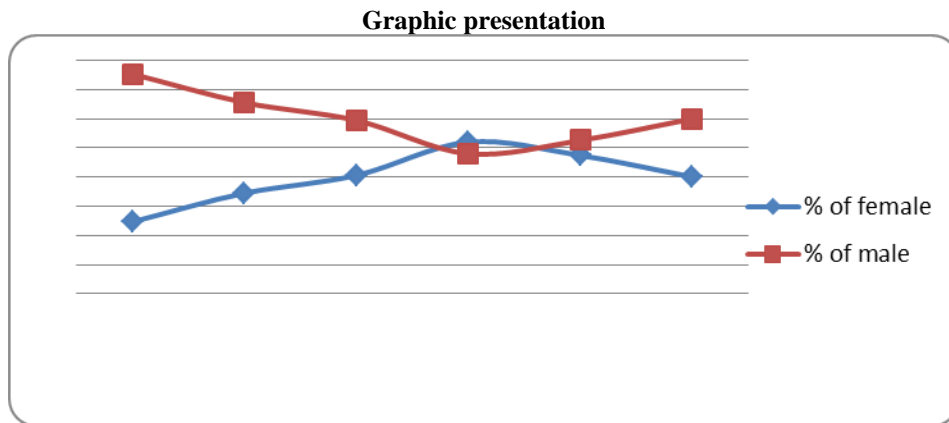
Results and findings of the study:

The researcher's study depicts that it is not only happening in India but in abroad as well that Women get fewer chances to upgrade their career who are working in universities and colleges. This table shows the post-wise participation of female in universities & colleges in India.

TABLE: 1
All India Post Wise No. of teachers in Universities & colleges

Posts	male	% of male	female	% of female	Total
Professor & equivalent	87007	75.25	28623	24.75	115630
Reader & associate Professor	11853511	65.50	62422	34.50	180957
Lecturers/Assistant Professor	482853	59.40	330062	40.60	812915
Demonstrator/Tutor	20105	48.01	21775	51.99	41880
Temporary teachers	43253	52.58	39009	47.42	82262
Visiting teachers	9369	59.93	6265	40.07	15634

Source: Report of All India survey of higher education 2013-2014 (AISHE, 2015).



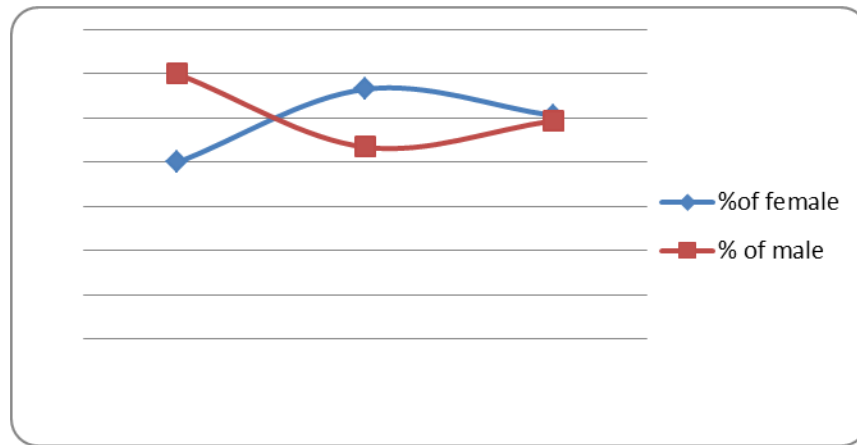
This table: 1 & graph confirms that woman participation in colleges and universities is going to decrease by third higher level. However, at demonstrator/ tutor level, female participation is higher (51.99%) than male (48.01%), **but as females move towards higher designation, the percentage of their participation decrease**. A report reveals that in India, Only 2.2% Colleges run Ph.D. and 35% Colleges run Post Graduate Level programs. Women are still insignificantly biased. Till date, it has seen that many male professors are there who believe that women are less qualified than men for academic careers. Another psychological barrier from the side of female is found- sexual harassment that may be faced during the completion of doctoral degree. Sandra featherman, USA/Canada (2002) indicated in his study that such activities are significantly under reports, especially since many women fear that they will not be believed, that nothing will happen to the harasser that they themselves will face retribution if they bring charges against their professors, and that it will interfere with their careers. Marriage, child birth **and gender inequalities are very prominent to compel women to leave or stuck off from achieving higher academic degree**. So there are several reasons for that women might not enroll for these advanced degrees in proportions to men (this is discussed further). This table shows female enrolment in different higher education program, in India.

TABLE: 2

Enrolment at various levels in India

Level/Program	Male	%	female	%	Total
PhD	64772	60.04	43118	39.96	107890
M.Phil	13632	43.44	17748	56.56	31380
Post graduate	1888637	49.41	1933582	50.59	3822219

Source: Report of All India survey of higher education 2013-2014 (AISHE, 2015)



Above table & graph explains that in the PG, and M.Phil. Programs, there are 50.59% and 56.56% female enrolled respectively. This shows greater percentage of females’ enrolment than male (49.41and 43.44% respectively).But as we observe higher ladder, in Ph.D. program, the percentage of female’s enrolment (39.96%) goes lesser as compared to male candidates(60.04%). This might be due to special difficulties faced by female Ph.D. students like: lack of support, finance, grants and a high share of domestic chores. And another most prominent is the social and family values- that bothers that a woman has to keep her husband’s career at the first place, it forces women to leave academic programs, if a partner took a promotion, or was transferred to a job, in a distant location.

Factors/barriers affecting the women to reach higher position

Teaching is the most preferable area of job for women, in spite of which women are facing many problems to reach higher levels even in completing CAS (Career Advancement Scheme) activities, who are selected at higher post in colleges and universities. So, there is a need to empower the women. In simple words, women empowerment is basically the concern of an environment where women can make independent decision on their personal development as well as shine as equal society. **According to Naila Kabeer**, empowerment is “the expansion in people’s ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them.” To understand the clear concept of empowerment it is important to demark certain overlapping concept. After above discussion, the conclusion was drawn that there are three factors that explain the continuing absence of women in senior positions. And which are the reasons of giving the poor result of women’s empowerment programmes. These factors are considered as the barriers by the researcher. As under:

Reasons related to social barriers	Reasons related to psychological, personal and attitudinal barriers	Reasons related to Institutional and structured barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Patriarchal effects ➤ Parental values ➤ Mindset of less preferable area of job for women ➤ Sole responsibility is of women only to look after the children and other family members ➤ Less support from the side of spouse as wife 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Having the attitude of persons centered ➤ Lack of confidence due to less exposure ➤ Lack of self esteem due to less networking ➤ Phobia of occurring mistakes due to adjustment of two-fold responsibilities ➤ Sacrificing & adjusting nature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Least networking ➤ Under estimation of women’s competence ➤ Lack of proper attention towards the women’s problem ➤ Absence of proper legislation ➤ Less participation of women in promotional activities ➤ ‘Round the table’- excessive male interference

To measure the real existence of these three factors of women’s attitude, twenty-five statements were prepared; seven questions related to social discrimination, seven pertaining to psychological barrier, eleven to whether females found equal opportunities to excel at their workplace i.e. institutional discrimination. **Questionnaire was conducted (as explained in research methodology)**. Table 3 clearly indicates the presence of barriers through mean value as shown below:

Table: 3

Analysis of barriers				
Factors/barriers	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	CV
Social	50	4.128	0.6334	15.34
Psychological	50	3.577	0.6852	19.15
Institutional	50	3.284	0.6615	20.14

Source: Primary data

Table: 3 show the existence of all these barriers in the development and career advancement of females. The mean value of these factors shows that the social factors are most prominent among them and the lowest influence factor being the institutional factor. The Standard Deviation of social, psychological and institutional barriers are 0.6334, 0.6852 and 0.6615 respectively. The coefficient of variation is of that barriers are also low. This indicates that the data is quite consistent and there is very little variation around the mean. If we analyze the whole perception of working women about the situation, we get that 80% respondents disagree for being a victim of sexual harassment but they accept the gender discrimination. About 85% respondents gave their consent for that due to male- table authorities, remarkable/significant work are not allotted to females. Most of the respondents accept that they are benefitted with government’s women empowerment facilities like CCL/FIP etc. They agree that it has improved their working but still to attend FDP programs like OP/RC they have to manage a lot due other responsibilities. It shows the social barrier compelling the women to give priority to the family (as proved with the highest mean value of social factor). After scrutinizing all responses, we can say many changes are seen in the society. Parents are educating their female child up to higher level. But parents still feel that there are only limited sectors that are safe for a female to work. And for them family comes first on responsibility for the women. That was cleared by 80% respondents. Asking many questions regarding psychological barrier, the result depicts that 70% respondents feels unsafe to stay at new places and mobility of women is less than man. They feel that lack of confidence is due to inability of mobility. So in brief, results declare from the study that round table dominance in institutions, limitations of thinking about area of job for female, family responsibility and lack of confidence are the most prominent reasons.

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In spite of women’s hard work, women have been given second importance in their field of work. Question arises now, are the women empowered in true sense? This is the important area to be investigated. Not only Women’s monetary independence leads them to the way to empowerment but empowered by socially and psychologically also. It leads to greater openness, generosity and tolerance. This paper is also an attempt to prove the gender pay gap (which is the concerning component of economic development for every country), due to different barriers that compel to working women to leave their career in the mid way of academic life or making disable the women in the advancement of career while it is accepted teaching is the most compatible profession for women. Despite the empowerment given by the government to working women in higher education like CCL,ML, free education and many research grant are provided, for updating themselves, the Gross Enrollment Ratio of male is greater e.i.23.9 % in the comparison of female Gross enrollment Ratio(22.0%). Most competitive stream (science) does not attract the females as a students as well as being research scholar. Generally it is seen that female attracts towards the social sciences stream. It may be due to lack of their confidence, basic education, or due to less exposure or they want to scare themselves from the mess of two-fold tasks. One more thing is also found that publish work of women is very less as men. Through study it reveals due to social ill, they couldn’t devote much of their time as the demand of research work.

So, not only to empower the women by the government is sufficient, it should also be thought at the level of the institutions and women themselves. Institutions should frame the policies and provide such environment so that women can accommodate themselves easily at their workplace. Recruitment policies should not be gender biased. To boost their confidence and have their self esteem, workshop, training programme and other promotional activities must be organised with keeping the point of women’s mobility and feasibility. For exclusion of women’s activities and participation, strong network of seniors, experience academicians must be provided to the women. So that they can update themselves and can promote their career by publishing more research work, can enhance more their personality.

In nut shell, if we really want to empower the women or to mitigate and remove the gender pay gap, institutions, society as well as women themselves must change their attitude and their work culture. Being equal part of the country, equal support and lenience must be given to women to contribute in the economic development. Therefore, the corrective measure is to be taken in improving the participation of women in academic front, is to make systematic exposure of females and by increasing their level and positions in the area of higher education first.

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