

GENDER DISPARITIES IN ENROLMENT AT HIGHER EDUCATION LEVEL

***Dr. Shalini Singh**

Abstract:

Today, in the era of globalization we are stating that man and woman are equal in all respects of life. According to Right to education act every child under the age 7 to 14 years whether it is girl or boy has right to get free and compulsory primary education. But really the picture is actually different at all the three stages, Primary, Secondary & Higher. Over past six decades India has taken long strides in promoting higher education. Large-scale expansion of higher education has taken place at the aggregate level. (477) four hundreds seventy seven University- level institutions and 20,677 colleges were established. During the year 2006-07, the enrolment in higher education was estimated to be over 14 million. But still there were found gender disparities in higher education level and enrolment percentage of females is lesser than males in all respects. In this connection, yet another question arises; what is the position of women and girls coming from different social groups? As would be expected, gender differences in terms of enrolment ratios persist across economic -----caste-groups So, now-a-days the pertinent issue is that, is there any kind of gender bias higher education level? And what is the position of females in different population groups to make them at uniform or equal level? This study focuses upon gender disparities at higher education level and schemes for religious, caste regional and gender equality

The policies on higher education in India in the post independence period have been regularly reviewed in order to make it compatible with the aspirations of the people and to keep it in consonance with the changing needs of rapidly transforming economy, and young democracy. The independent India had inherited the structures of an educational system which were inadequate to create human resources required for the self reliant socio- economic development. The review of the system was essential in order to remove the infirmities of the inherited structures. This includes first attempt in the form of Radhakrishnan Commission Report (1948-49), which was followed by equally comprehensive Kothari Commission Report (1964-66). These two reports particularly, Kothari Commission Report form the base for New Education policy (1986) and Programme of action (1992). The 1986 New Education policy and 1992 Programme of action has governed our policy for the development of higher education and paved the way to new and bold initiatives in higher education in the forthcoming decades. Ex Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan, termed Eleventh year plan as “Education plan” and described it as “Second Wave” in the development of higher education. The second wave in development of higher education is reflected in setting the target 15% of enrolment rate, up from 10% by the end of tenth five year plan. It is an ambiguous target because we have achieved only 1% in 1950 to 10% in 2006 in enrolment rate and now, a half of that, i.e. 5% has to be achieved in only five year period of eleventh plan. India has taken long strides in expanding higher education over the preceding decades. Many regions and many segments of population appear to be left out, providing clinching evidence of disparities and imbalances which need to be corrected as soon as possible. Some prominent disparities are rural-urban, inter- state, inter -religious, inter- caste,

*Assistant Professor, Dept. of Education, V.M. L.G. College, Ghaziabad

occupational, poor-non poor and gender. This study is confined only three kinds of disparities inter- state, inter -religious, inter- caste to define gender disparities among these groups.

(1)Inter -religious group disparities:

India is a country which has so much diversity at religious level. Mainly there are four religious groups- Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Sikh. These inter- group differences further stand about when examined for gender disparity. In all the four religious groups, females are found trailing behind men. The research paper is confined only to gender bias in higher education. It is pertinent to note that the Gross enrolment ratio for girls is just 9.11% as compared to 12.42% for boys and it is very low for the females belonging to lower caste groups and some social groups particularly the muslims.

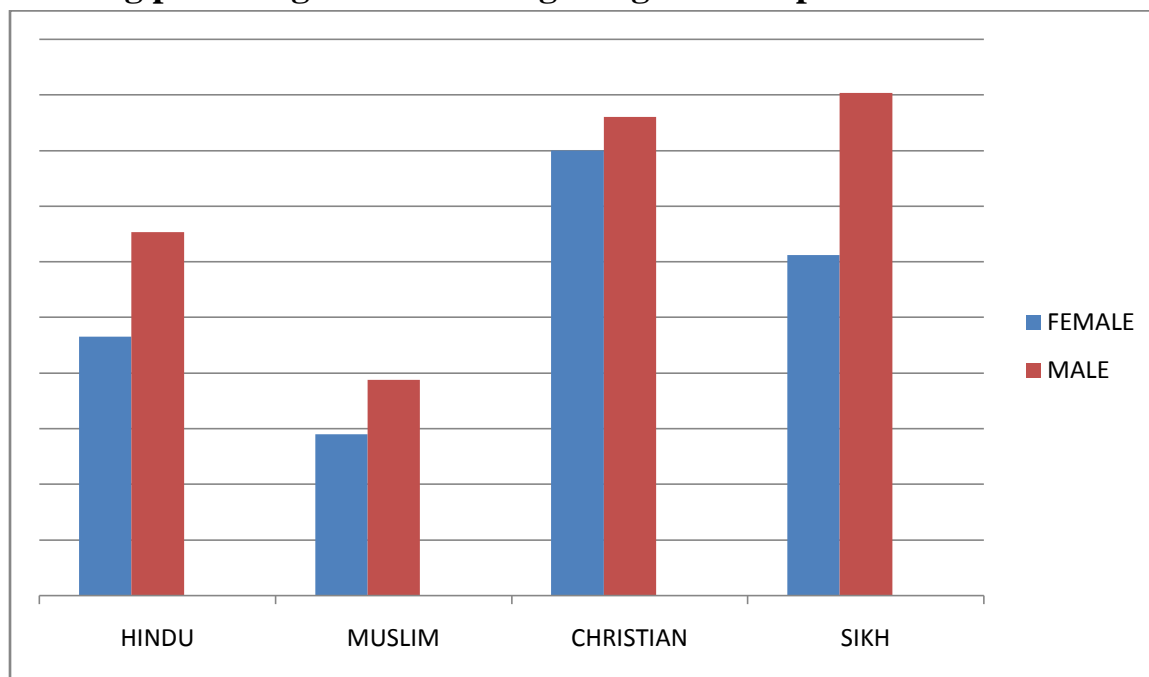
Table 1

Percentage of Inter –religious gender disparities in enrolment

S.NO.	RELIGIOUS GROUPS	FEMALE (%)	MALE (%)
1.	Hindu	9.32	13.07
2.	Muslim	5.81	7.77
3.	Christian	16.02	17.21
4.	Sikh	12.25	18.09

Figure 1

Showing percentage of Inter –religious gender disparities in enrolment



Interpretation

The table shows that in Hindu religion male and female enrolment percentage in higher education is 13.07 & 9.32, in Muslim religion male and female enrolment percentage in higher education is 7.07 & 5.81, in Christian religion male and female enrolment percentage in higher education is 17.21 & 16.02 and in Sikh religion male and female enrolment percentage in higher education is 18.09 & 12.25. The graph shows that except among Christians, male and female differences are highly pronounced. Thus it can be interpreted that perhaps in the household's education or schooling of girl-children is given a second priority. This kind of lower female representation is likely to be drag on the growth of higher education in the country.

(2) Inter-state Disparities

India is a vast country having about 28 states and 07 union territories as well. Each state has its own cultural heritage and difference in literacy ratio. There are about 8 states where the enrolment percentage of female is less than 40% in higher education. A list of such 8 states is as follows:

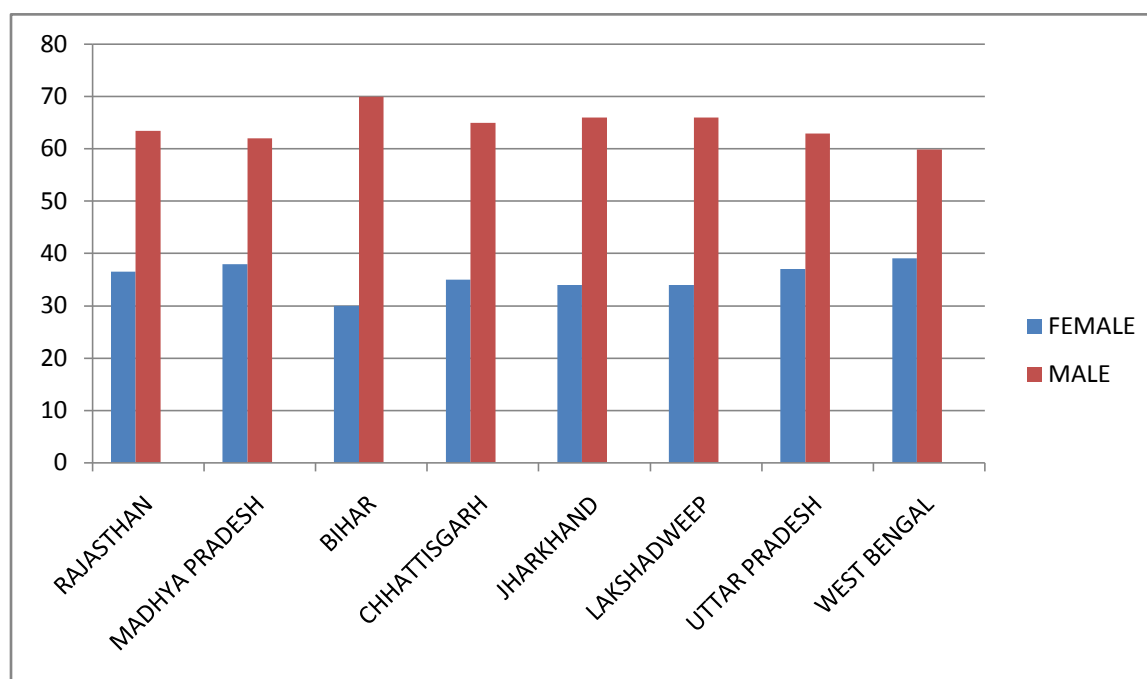
Table 2

State- wise Percentage of female and male enrolment

S. No.	STATES	FEMALE ENROLMENT (%)	MALE ENROLMENT (%)
1.	Rajasthan	36.5	63.5
2.	Madhya Pradesh	38	62
3.	Bihar	30	70
4.	Chhattisgarh	35	65
5.	Jharkhand	34	66
6.	Lakshadweep	34	66
7.	Uttar Pradesh	37	63
8.	West Bengal	39.1	59.9

Figure2

Showing the Enrolment Percentage of Male and Female among Eight States.



Interpretation

The table shows the enrolment percentage of female and male in Rajasthan 36.5 & 63.5, Madhya Pradesh 38&62, Bihar 30&70, Chhattisgarh 35&65 Lakshadweep 34 & 66, Uttar Pradesh 37&63, Jharkhand 34&66 and West Bengal is 39.1& 59.9 respectively. The graph shows that the gender disparity is spread all the above mentioned states. The highest gender disparity and lowest female enrolment percentage is found in Bihar state and the lowest gender disparity and highest female enrolment percentage is found in West Bengal state.

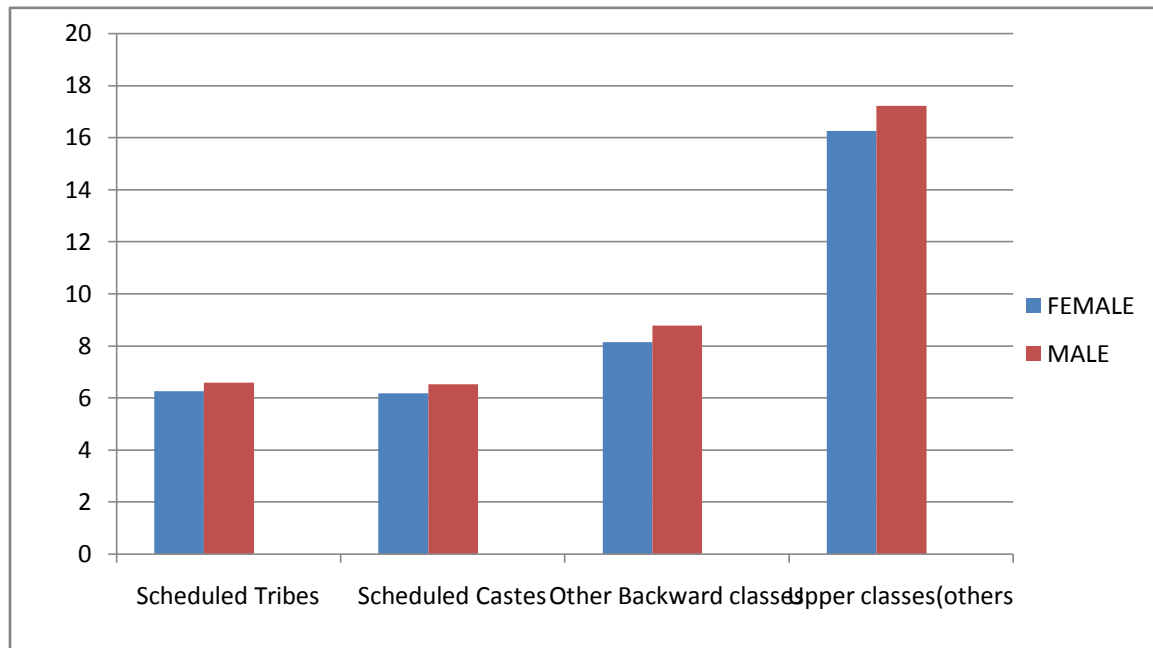
(3) Inter-caste Disparities

India is a country having diversity in castes, creeds and religions. Indian societies are divided mainly into two categories- general and reserved. Here in this research paper researcher has taken upper castes whether they are minorities or not as general category and Scheduled castes scheduled tribes, other backward classes as reserved categories declared in Indian constitution.

Table 3

Showing the enrolment percentage of male and female among different categories

S.No.	CATEGORIES	FEMALE (%)	MALE (%)
1.	Scheduled Tribes	6.26	6.57
2.	Scheduled Castes	6.17	6.52
3.	Other Backward classes	8.13	8.77
4.	Upper classes(others)	16.26	17.22

Figure3**Showing the Enrolment Percentage of Male and Female among Different Categories****Interpretation**

The table shows the enrolment percentage of female and male in scheduled tribes is 6.26 & 6.57, in scheduled castes is 6.17 & 6.52, in other backward classes is 8.13 & 8.77 and upper castes(others) is 16.26 & 17.22. The figure shows that in scheduled castes percentage of female enrolment is lowest although in scheduled tribes percentage of female enrolment is slightly higher than scheduled castes, in other backward classes percentage of female enrolment is lesser than upper castes. Although position of female and male enrolment of upper castes is not good yet it is better than reserved categories. Overall we can say that reserved categories are needed to enhance enrolment percentage by government schemes.

Conclusion

The evidences like table and figures thus recurrent that the share of the social groups occupying lower rungs of the caste –hierarchy. It is also lower in higher education, in spite of much –publicised policies and programmes meant to educationally bring them up. Ordinarily Hindu religious-group is associated with caste system, but other religious groups in India (e.g. Muslim, Christian, Sikh, etc.) have not remained insulated from the pervasive influence of caste system. This is particularly true with those who opted for conversion or change of religion. The clear picture of the status of female enrolment ratio at higher education level in eight states of India has been presented. Thus, it can be concluded that while the enrolment of women and girls in degree and higher programmes is distinctly lower across all caste-groups. It is disquietingly low among Scheduled Castes, followed by Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes. A closer look at graphical diagram shows that women and girls coming from OBC face, as compared with

men, somewhat larger exclusion. To eradicate gender bias or disparity the Government of India has started several Govt. Welfare scheme for gender biasness:-

Scheme for development of women's studies in Indian Universities and Colleges

Scheme for establishment of Scheduled tribes and Scheduled castes cells in Universities

Scheme for coaching for Scheduled tribes / Scheduled castes/OBC/Minorities

Equal opportunity cells EOC)

Scheme for Remedial Coaching Classes at UG/PG level for minority students

Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowships for SC/ST

Scheme for women hostels for Colleges

Scheme for capacity building of women Managers in higher education

Post doctoral fellowship for women

Post Graduate Indira Gandhi Scholarship Scheme for single girl child

Part time Research Associate-ship for Women

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