

PalArch's Journal of Archaeology  
of Egypt / Egyptology

**"PROBLEMS OF WOMEN IN ACHIEVING THE GOAL OF HIGHER  
EDUCATION- A STUDY"**

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**Dr. Rumpa Das, PROBLEMS OF WOMEN IN ACHIEVING THE GOAL OF  
HIGHER EDUCATION- A STUDY, -- Palarch's Journal Of Archaeology Of  
Egypt/Egyptology 17(9). ISSN 1567-214x**

**Keywords: Women, Higher education, awareness, problems.**

**ABSTRACT**

“Education of boys is education of one person, but education of a girl is the education of the entire family.” -said Jawaharlal Nehru.

Education is a measure of the stage of development of the nation in general and its social development in particular. Higher education plays a very vital role to develop the critical thinking among the students. Women's higher education helps in moving the family and society in higher strata and developed the nation in better ways .The purpose of this study is (i) To analyze the awareness of women regarding higher education (ii) To study the problems of women studying in higher education.

**Introduction**

Education enables women to acquire basic skills, abilities and to foster a value system which is conducive to raise their status in society. They also represent valuable human resources and play an important role in the development of the community and national economy.

Education is the backbone of social development Education has a great role to play in decreasing social disparities and promoting social mobility. Women constitute almost the half of the total world population. They play a vital role in the development of society and economy. Education enables women to gain more knowledge about the world outside of her home, helps her to get status, positive self image, and self confidence. Education is about access to new knowledge, information and ideas as well as the capacity to use these effectively (Kabeer, 2003). These are enhancements of the capabilities that individuals bring to their goals in many areas of life; aside from the labour market education is also about jobs. They explain some aspects of the correlation between women's education and various

human development outcomes.

Higher education makes a vital contribution to sustainable development through the generation and dissemination of knowledge. The effective management of this domain merits top priority at a time when universities worldwide face critical challenges due to the unprecedented expansion yet drastically reduced resources of higher education. The numerous and complex issues facing society moreover demand that social investment in institutions of higher education is fully justified in terms of its return to the community.

As the 21<sup>st</sup> century approaches, women graduates face exciting perspectives. Increasingly, they will be strongly urged to assume their rightful place in the decision-making process - both in the systems and institutions of higher education and also in the various professions for which they have studied. As this dual role is of the greatest importance for society, women merit strong encouragement in these endeavors. In spite of advances, women have made in many areas of public life in the past two decades, in the area of higher education management they are still a long way from participating on the same footing as men. With hardly an exception the global picture is one of men outnumbering women at about five to one at middle management level and at about twenty or more to one at senior management level. Women deans and professors are a minority group and women vice-chancellors and presidents are still a rarity. 'The position of women in higher education management cannot be treated in isolation from the general status of women in society, and from the general aims of economic and social development'- writes Rafica Hammoud. Access to education' is a telling indicator of women's status in a given society. Cultural perceptions of the roles which women are expected to fill are reflected in the extent to which women participate in formal education and the type of education to which they have access. In seeking to explain the under-representation of women in higher education management we turn first to consider the equity in participation of girls or women in education, to reflect on the reasons for this phenomenon and to highlight its adverse consequences. Primary level education is now widely available in all of the countries studied and opportunities for secondary and higher education are increasing.

**Statement of the Problem:**

The statement of the problem is entitled as "Problems of women in achieving the goal of higher education-a study"

**Operational term:**

**Women Education:** Women education refers to the education imparted to women. In the proposed study, women pursuing postgraduate are included. Here the term 'girls', 'women' and 'female' will be used synonymously.

**Higher Education:** Higher Education means general education provided at post-graduates levels.

**Delimitation:**

1. The study is delimited to Kamrup district of Assam.
2. The study is delimited to Higher Educational institution (Cotton University) Guwahati, Assam.

**Objectives of the Study:**

**The main objectives of the present study are:-**

1. To analyze the awareness of women regarding higher education.

2. To study the problems faced by the women studying in higher education.

**Methodology:**

Descriptive survey method is adopted in the present study. In this study investigator has adopted the descriptive survey method of research to study the “Problems of women in achieving the goal of higher education” Descriptive research includes surveys and fact-finding enquiries of different kinds. The major purpose of descriptive research is description of the state of affairs as it exists at present. The main characteristics of this method is that the researcher has no control over the variables, he can only report what has happened or what is happening. The methods of research used in descriptive research are survey methods of all kinds, including comparative and correlational methods. Descriptive research is the most commonly used method in educational research.

**Population:** All items in any field of inquiry constitute a Universe or Population. A population is any group of individuals that has one or more characteristics in common and that are of interest to the researcher. The population of the present study comprises, the population included of all the women students studying in higher educational institutions (general, professional) which is residing in the areas of Assam.

**Sample:** A sample is a small proportion of a population selected for observation and analysis on the basis of which one can make certain inferences about the characteristics of the population. The population of the present study includes of all the students studying in higher educational institutions which is residing in the areas of Assam. Random sampling method is used to select the sample. 100 women students from the different departments of higher educational institutions (cotton university) studying in Post Graduate level.

**Tools of data collection:** A self-structured questionnaire was prepared to study the awareness and problems of higher education. This questionnaire comprises nine points for awareness and nine points for problems faced by the women students.

**Analysis and Interpretation of Data:**

Percentage technique was used for analysis of the data and interpretation of the data was made accordingly using graphical representation.

This step deals with the analysis and interpretation of the calculated data. The basic purpose of this chapter is to summarize the observations in order to draw some suitable results. This analysis section deals with the organization, presentation, analysis and interpretation of data which are the most important steps in any research. Organization of the data includes the various steps like editing, classifying and tabulating the collected information. During the data analysis procedure, the investigator actually studies the organized and tabulated information in order to determine its meaning.

In the present study, the data has been carefully analyzed and interpreted quantitatively. The analysis and interpretation is done on the basis of the objectives of the study. Objectives wise analysis of the collected data are presented below.

**Analysis Of The Data According To The Objectives**

1. Awareness of women regarding higher education

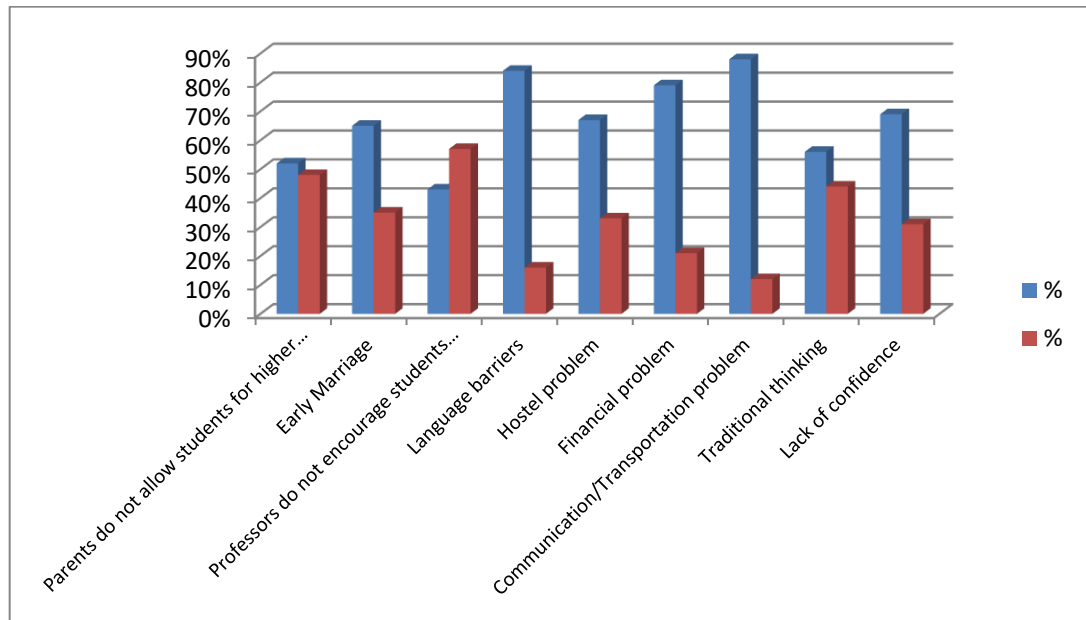
<b>Awareness</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>%</b>
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Higher education develop critical thinking of the women	95	95%	05	5%
Higher educated women play constructive role in the society	67	67%	33	33%
Free of charge for all meritorious students	42	42%	58	58%
Parents allow women students for higher education	55	55%	45	45%
Only meritorious students have right to pursue higher education	91	91%	09	9%
Women students who cannot afford higher education become home maker	34	34%	66	66%
Women's social status evaluated if they pursued higher education	57	57%	43	43%
Women students have right to choose course content in higher education	89	89%	11	11%
Pursuing higher studies would increase the level of mobility	72	72%	28	28%

Source-Primary Data

**It is found from the table that**

- i. 95% are agree and 5% are disagree with the point that higher education develop critical thinking.
- ii. Higher educated women play constructive role in the society -this point is supported by 67% of women, on the other hand 33% are against of this point.
- iii. 58% are disagree but 42% are agree with this point, free of charge for all meritorious students.
- iv. Parents allow women students for higher education - with this point 55% of women are agree and 45% are disagree.
- v. 91% of women support and very less it means only 09% are gone against this point that only meritorious students have right to pursue higher education.
- vi. Women students who cannot afford higher education become homemaker, here in this point 34% of women support, on the otherhand 66% of women are against.
- vii. 57% of women are agree with the point that women social status evaluated if they pursued higher education but 43% are disagree.
- viii. Women students have right to choose course content in higher education on the basis of women it is seen in the table that 89% women support and only 11% are not agree.
- ix. 72% of women are agree and 28% are disagree with the point that pursuing higher studies would increase the level of mobility.



**Interpretation Of The Data Of The First Objective:**

**Awareness of women regarding higher education:** From the part of the analysis, it can be interpreted that an average percentage of women are aware regarding the importance of higher education. In the present study, majority of the women have given a positive response that higher education do play a significant role in improving their critical thinking and making them an equal counterparts as that of men in the society. It is also seen from the responses that the parents of the female students are not that aware of the importance of higher education as a result of which the women’s participation in higher education is less as compared to men. The women also do not support the fact that those who cannot pursue higher education are made for the household works only. They have further preferred that women should be given freedom in choosing their suitable course for higher studies; increase their mobility and thus making their studies free of charge so that the ones who are meritorious are not lacked behind. But also in some societies, the women who are highly educated are evaluated on the basis of their educational status and this calls for the increase of awareness about the importance of higher education in women’s life among the masses.

**2. Problems of women studying in higher education**

Obstacles/Problems	Agree	%	Disagree	%
Parents do not allow students for higher education	52	52%	48	48%
Early Marriage	65	65%	35	35%
Professors do not encourage students for higher education	43	43%	57	57%
Language barriers	84	84%	16	16%
Hostel problem	67	67%	33	33%
Financial problem	79	9%	21	21%
Communication/Transportation problem	8	88%	12	12%

Traditional thinking	56	56%	44	44%
Lack of confidence	69	69%	31	31%

Source: Primary data

**To be educated women have to face obstacles /problems. Some are given in the table. It is found from the table -**

i. Comparably women are less educated than men in our society for some obstacles. Parents do not allow students for higher education is one of these obstacles. And this point is accepted by 52% women and it is not supported by 48%.

ii. Early marriage generally some women cannot take higher education for their early marriage. They are married soon in life and have to pass time with their family. From the table it is shown that 65% women are agree with this point and 35% are not agree with this.

iii. Another problem is that professors donot encourage students for higher education. Actually professors or teachers never take part of men or women. They teach always equally. That is why the above written sentence is supported by 43% of women and 57% women are not agree with this.

iv. Language is also a big issue for women in achieving the goal of higher education. This is supported by 84% of women and not supported by 16%

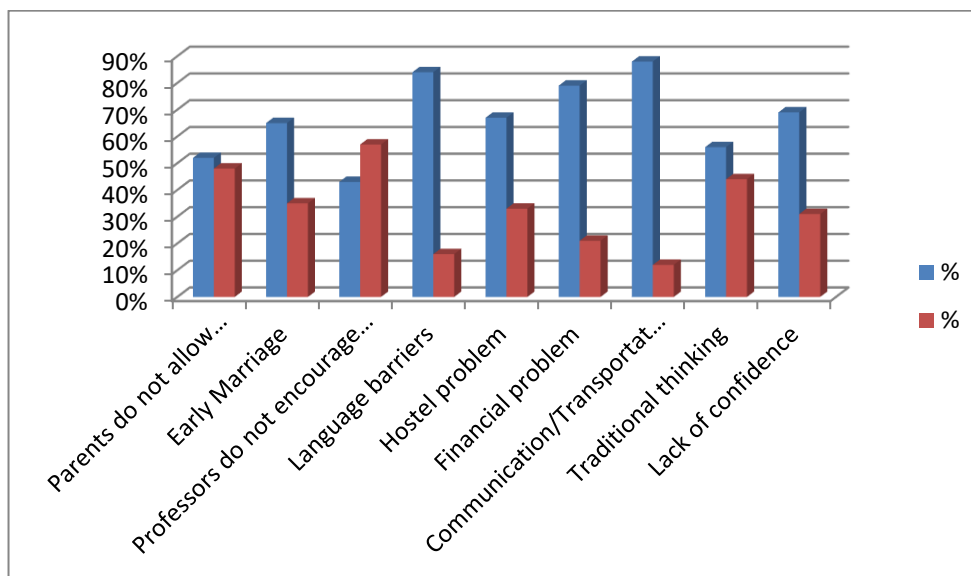
v. 79% of women agree and 21% are disagree with the point that hostel problem is an obstacle for women to take higher education.

vi. A lots of women cannot take higher education for their economic obstacles and that is why 79% of women support and 21% are not agree

vii. Many women are unable to take their higher education for the required communication or transportation, lack of these they cannot far for higher studies. Therefore, communication or transportation is a major barrier and this is supported by 88% women and 12% are disagree with this.

viii. Traditional thinking is also an obstacle for women. They cannot study more for this problem and that is why this point is accepted by 56% of women and not supported by 44%

ix. For higher education, confidence is also essential. Lack of this many women cannot come out from their home or go far for further study and that is why lack of confidence, this is supported by 69% of women and 31% are disagree with this point.



### Interpretation Of The Data Of The Second Objective:

**Problems of women studying in higher education:** It can be interpreted from the analysis that women in higher education face a lot of problems in different aspects that holds them back from pursuing higher studies. One of the main reasons is due to the lack of support from their family as they are still stuck with the traditional and obsolete thinking that women should get married at an early stage and get busy with the household activities sacrificing their career and dreams. Professors do play an important role in shaping the students' career. From the present study it can be interpreted that majority of the respondents has responded positively in regards to the support gain from their teachers. The female students also face language barriers as most of them come from vernacular medium decreasing their classroom interaction and participation. Due to their communication problem they are also lacking in confidence. Financial problem is another major concern for the women as everyone cannot afford to pay high fees and continue their higher studies. This financial constraint has lead to problem of mobility and accommodation especially for the ones coming from remote rural areas to cities for fulfilling their dream of higher education.

### Suggestions for improving the status of women in higher education:

The following suggestions can be helpful in bringing a change in the scenario of women in higher education-

1. There should be changes in the traditional practice and attitude which subordinates women.
2. Women should stand to claim for equal responsibilities in the decision making bodies of the society.
3. All types of educational institutions should be expanded in the remote rural areas as there is a dearth of higher education and the women have to move to cities for their studies.
4. Women should be properly trained and educated in degree level to pursue higher education and be liberated from ignorance.
5. Women should be given equal opportunities according to her qualification and abilities.

6. Education should enable self- sufficiency among women and be able to provide her to get employment to improve the economic condition.
7. Governments should give free basic facilities to the women in the rural areas like electricity, radio, transportation etc which will enhance their rise in educational level.
8. Education should help girls to be aware of human rights.

### **Conclusion:**

In order to bring a significant transformation in the field of education is to bring a drastic increase in participation of women to get access to colleges and universities. Formulating and implementing stringent and powerful laws and policies can address the issue of gender discrimination of higher education. Women with their economic independence, respectable employment can become an important earning member of the family. An educated woman has the skills, self-confidence and the power to be a better citizen. Women have all the power and capacity as that of men, they just need to manifest themselves exploring different opportunities provided through higher education.

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