



# Analytical Study On Opportunities and Challenges for Empowerment of Rural Girls through Higher Education

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## ARTICLE INFO

## ABSTRACT

Education is a fundamental right for every individual, regardless of gender. However, in India, girls have long been denied this right due to societal norms and prejudices. As the rapid development happened in the industrial sector also affecting on the education sector in terms of skilled manpower requirement. But the accessibility of the education is not easy for everyone, at the same time the higher education is still dream of the many girls in rural areas. Education plays a vital role in development of a country. Education is also significant in terms of the development of individual's level of intellectual ability which in turn elevates chances of employability. 231 dropouts and 154 currently studying rural female students were considered for the study in the Prayagraj district's rural areas. The study has revealed, that number institutions in the rural areas are comparatively less with urban area. In addition to this larger portion of the rural family have mind set in educating their children based on their genders. Most of the times male have been encouraged to pursue their education compared to female. The poor financial condition again playing a crucial role which restricts them to pursue their higher education in rural areas. Awareness about the opportunities from the higher education is comparatively less in the rural areas in parents and the potential candidates of the higher education. To reach education destination aren't at acceptable condition in terms safety and frequency of the public transport vehicles. The present study focuses on challenges faced by rural girl students in the rural areas to pursue their higher education.

**Keywords:** *Rural girl students, Higher education, Rural Education, financial status, awareness, Women Empowerment*

## Introduction

India is considered the land of villages. Almost 68 per cent of the country's population resides in rural areas. Many previous scholarly studies indicate that rural India is suffering from many problems, girl education is one of them. Historically, rural women are powerful, strong and purposeful women who are deprived by the circumstances of abuse, inequality, and lack of opportunities. These challenges have hindered their personal development, economic empowerment, and community leadership. Although in recent decades, rural parts of the country are undergoing a considerable change. However, the status of girls' education in rural India is not satisfactory even in today's time [1]. It has been observed in recent decades that governments and civil societies have discussed a lot about the importance of girls' education. Despite this, millions of girls in today's time are out of schools. Many occasions come in a year when we worship girls and women as goddess and when the occasions end, we consider them inferior and abuse them. Education is the most powerful tool through which one can use to develop his/her life. It has been observed that governments across the world are trying hard to educate their citizens by investing more money on this sector because they know that education paves the path of development for a country (Vaish et al., 2019). It is regarded a very important sector as economic, social and

political development of any nation depend upon education. In recent years, the urban India has seen historical development in the context of girls' education but a lot of works need to be done in rural areas [2].

After the execution of Right to Education Act, although the education status of the girl child is gradually getting better as compared to previous status but we still have to work hard in this direction, especially in rural areas. In today's scenario, this is the hard fact that girls are doing wonderful jobs in different sectors. The constitution of India gives us equal status with respect to gender but there are many people in rural society who still discriminate between boys and girls. It is often seen in rural parts that boys are given more priority than girls in imparting education. Sometimes, it also happens that due to lack of money and awareness, poor villagers are not able to provide education to all their children. In such a situation, whenever it come to providing education of one or two children, they mostly prefer to boys rather than girls. Since Indian rural society is still considered to be a patriarchal society so several times such discrimination also happens due to this mentality. In this regard, we have to sensitise to rural people regarding girls' education [3].

### **Statement of the Problem**

Every research must have specific research problem to address. The research problem can be identified with detailed investigation of literature. The extensive survey conducted on existing literature on the women in the higher education and their challenges have given research gap to conduct the present study [4]. There are several studies conducted on the challenges faced by the women in education all over the globe. With respect to challenges faced by the rural women in higher education are very few, but in Uttar Pradesh very rarely researchers were touched upon the current issue [5]. The problems in pursuing higher education in rural areas for women are found everywhere. When it addresses the women participation the higher education its complications are still deeper. Women challenges in higher education in urban area are comparatively less to women in rural areas. The present study is aimed at throwing the light on women's challenges in the higher education with respect rural areas under Prayagraj district of Uttar Pradesh state of India [6].

### **Review of Literature**

Empowering young girls through education is essential for achieving gender equality and promoting prosperity in India. Every girl should have access to quality education irrespective of her social status or caste [7]. Educated girls can make informed decisions to break the cycle of poverty and improve economic development in their communities. Providing educational opportunities for young women reduces child marriage and increases inclusion and gender equity in the workforce [8]. Gender stereotypes must end so that every girl has access to critical thinking skills and higher education for a better future.

In the country like India, the position of women and girl child had been a topic of discussion, dispute and argument. As from beginning, the girl child of the house has been viewed as weight on the family comparatively and not as a blessing, conveyors of excessive dowries, who once are going to go away to their husband's house rather than staying for a lifetime. Infusion of immense cultural and economic causes in the society are the hindrances faced by the female children about not getting equal health-related, sentimental, and educational recognition as compared to the male child of the family. Henceforth, resulting in lower literacy rate amidst the women population in rural sector [9].

Access to quality education is a fundamental right, especially for young girls in India. Educating them can break the cycle of poverty and improve economic development, leading to better futures and prosperity [10]. Despite government initiatives aimed at improving enrolment rates for girls' education, inequality remains a significant issue that needs addressing. Inclusion is critical, irrespective of caste, creed, ethnicity or age group. Educational opportunities that focus on life skills and hygiene are essential for young women from rural areas who often face gender stereotypes and early marriage [11]. Gender equity can be achieved through better governance and financial support from CSR activities. Primary school and secondary school-aged girls must receive adequate nutrition and sanitation facilities to ensure their overall well-being. Girls must have access to higher education and tertiary education as well so that they become an educated woman able to think critically; this will help close the gender gap across India's labour market [12].

There is a need of rethinking about the higher education of women. The present rate of women access to higher education is 38.84% which does not ensure the quality higher education. Access of women to technical disciplines viz. engineering, medicine, veterinary science and law should be increased through these subjects in the colleges of smaller cities and towns without compromising in quality. Initiative should be taken for increasing access of women to short term diversification that may cater to large unorganised and organised sector [13].

Educating women benefits the whole society and on the basis of this education they enjoy their status in our society. It has a more significant impact on poverty and development than men's education [13].

Equivalent approach regarding educational opportunity is noted as a fundamental human right accessible to all the citizens of the country irrespective to their gender. The gap between male and female in acquiring education and also among rural female and urban female are the main points of research. This paper in particularly is focused on a village in Punjab to estimate the empowerment of rural women in education. The study took place on a selected sample size of 200 women distinguished as rural women in the age group of 20 to 50 years. Semi-structured interview program, field records and observation were the methods applied for

the study. The study disclosed that rural women have very low literacy rate. And in between in together all social groups, scheduled caste women are at the border [14].

There are a number of issues that female students had to face for gaining their career prospective. Some of the grave issues are as such issues related to family, educational institutes, Society, Economic problems, educational problems, Girl dropout ratio has increased with design of gender inequity with approach to education, which seems to be achievable and applicable from urban to rural and to disadvantaged group in the society. Access should be provided for local applicable high-quality in education and providing training opportunities is important to retain rural girl students in Higher Educational Institutions [15].

A changing society and a developing economy cannot make any progress if education, which is one of the important agents affecting the norms of morality and culture.

to a fragmented view of the country's and the world's heritage. The differences between the positions of men and women in the society will not lessen as long as there are differences between the education levels of men and women.

### Research Objectives

1. To identify the challenges for girls taking higher education in Prayagraj Rural.
2. To analyse the satisfaction among the girls regarding higher education supportive environment in Prayagraj Rural.
3. To find out best possible remedies to enhance the participation of girls for higher education Prayagraj Rural.

### Hypothesis

**H<sub>1</sub>** There is significant relationship among financial problems and higher education environment in Prayagraj rural.

**H<sub>2</sub>** There is a significant relationship between family restrictions and higher educational environment in Prayagraj rural.

### Research Methodology

The descriptive research design has been adopted for this study. The study is considering both types of data i.e., primary and secondary. The data were collected from currently studying at higher educational institutions and dropout girls' students from higher educational institutions from Prayagraj rural of Uttar Pradesh state of India. Data were collected by using the self-developed structured questionnaire by using the simple random sampling technique. All the items available in research tool are based on 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 Highly satisfied to 5 Highly Dissatisfied. The used tool was validated by using the Cronbach Alfa and observed the overall Cronbach's alpha is 0.7425. Population for proposed study were teaching and non-teaching staff members of selected higher educational institutions. Since the population were infinite so, this means 385 or more measurements/surveys are needed to have a confidence level of 95% that the real value is within  $\pm 5\%$  of the measured/surveyed value.

S. No.	Areas Covered	Selected Sample	
		Studying	Dropouts
1	Karchhana	15	36
2	Shankargarh	13	23
3	Handia	12	19
4	Hanumanganj	14	26
5	Manda	17	23
6	Koraon	15	19
7	Sauraon	16	21
8	Bamrauli	17	16
9	Phoolpur	15	21
10	Jasara	20	27
	Total	154	231

Table:1, Areas selected for data collection

### Result and Discussion

Factors	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Unavailability of Higher educational Institutions in nearby areas	2.142857	1.107849	1.262319	0.956222
Poor financial status of the family	1.428571	0.952277	2.583333	6.106753
Long distance to Higher educational Institutions	2.190476	1.211573	0.960469	-0.10796
Higher involvement in household affairs	1.683983	1.091331	1.707348	1.950738
Marriage at early age	2.082251	0.958797	1.625606	2.795269
Lack of parental attention	2.17316	1.12109	1.128742	0.567082
Lack of Female Teaching staff at existing Higher educational Institutions	3.354978	1.252635	-0.29601	-1.05683
Illiteracy of the parents	2.238095	1.197651	1.154576	0.481671
Unsafe locations of Higher educational Institutions	2.21645	1.166894	1.193261	0.670081
Political interference at Higher educational Institutions	3.255411	1.197698	-0.24418	-0.82609
Negative attitudes of parents about girls' higher education	3.056277	1.150177	-0.02424	-1.20069
Unavailability of scholarship	2.238095	1.197651	1.154576	0.481671
Lack of Transportation facilities for the college	1.683983	1.091331	1.707348	1.950738
More Number of Children in Family	3.255411	1.197698	-0.24418	-0.82609
Death or absence of a parents	3.372294	1.160927	-0.46008	-0.53303
Lack of male children in family	2.238095	1.197651	1.154576	0.481671
Unemployed peers	2.238095	1.197651	1.154576	0.481671
lack of education and learning environment	2.21645	1.166894	1.193261	0.670081

Table:2, Descriptive statistics

Table (2) expressing the Further, Mean, Standard Deviation, kurtosis and Skewness for different items of girl's empowerment through higher education and related constructs falls within the threshold value of -2 to 2 has been presented. The results revealed that the factors identified through the detailed study of available literature have direct relationship with girls' intention to higher education and affecting their decision either join or not to join the post plus two educations.

#### ***H<sub>1</sub> There is significant relationship among financial problems (VR1) and overall higher education environment for girls in Prayagraj rural (VR2).***

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
VR1 – VR2	2.424	1.561	.103	2.222	2.627	23.604	230	.000

Table: 3, H1 analysis

Table (3) explains the result of research hypothesis one. The first hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>), Financial Problems has significantly predicted overall higher education environment for girls in Prayagraj rural (Mean 2.424, Std. Deviation 1.561, t value 23.60 and Sig, (2-tailed) .000) this indicates that Financial Problems have a positive relationship with overall higher education environment for girls in Prayagraj rural. Therefore, based on this result the first hypothesis was supported.

#### ***H<sub>2</sub> There is a significant relationship between family restrictions (VR1) and higher educational environment in Prayagraj rural (VR2).***

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
VR1-VR2	1.46080	1.23087	.08098	-1.62037	-1.30123	18.038	230	.000

Table: 4, H2 analysis

Table (4) explains the result of research hypothesis two. The first hypothesis (H<sub>2</sub>), family restrictions have significantly predicted overall higher education environment for girls in Prayagraj rural (Mean 1.460, Std.

Deviation 1.230, t value 18.03 and Sig, (2-tailed) .000) this indicates that family restrictions have a positive relationship with overall higher education environment for girls in Prayagraj rural. Therefore, based on this result the first hypothesis was supported.

### **Government Initiatives for Girl's Education**

The Government is constantly working at providing increased educational opportunities for women by launching welfare schemes. These include:

The state government recently announced scholarship to over 1.5 lakh students and free education scheme for girls till graduation. All the students will get their scholarship transferred to their account so that they will not have any problem in further studies. Under this scheme, govt. will provide free education to girls till graduation level, but if there are two sisters in a family, only one will get the benefit. The state govt. will focus on parents to make them understand the need of sending their wards to school. Moreover, govt. will take strict action against all those parents who denies their wards to go to school.

The Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan is the central government's contribution to further the promise held by the rich expanse of India's state universities. The country's future lies in empowering these campuses with all that it takes to enhance learning, better research and promote innovation. A centrally sponsored scheme, RUSA understands that sometimes the most important lessons of life are learnt outside the classroom. So, whether it is upgrading libraries or computer laboratories, promoting autonomous colleges or clubbing them to consolidate their strength and forming cluster universities, this programme realizes that every institution holds the power to enrich lives through top-class education. With universities, to prepare universe-ready scholars.

**Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao:** Launched in 2015, Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao is an initiative to encourage women empowerment. The scheme aims to educate every girl to empower them for life. It also addresses the sex ratio discrepancy throughout the country by providing equal opportunities to girls and ensuring protection.

**Balika Samridhhi Yojana:** This scheme provides scholarships to girl children in all regions living below the poverty line. Along with educational support, it also gives survival support for eradicating child marriages. Under the scheme, every girl child below the poverty line can avail annual scholarship from INR 300-1000 till 10th grade.

**CBSE Scholarship Scheme:** Under this scheme, a scholarship is provided to female children if they are the only child in the family. All children passing 10th grade with 60% or more are eligible for this scholarship. It supplements the tuition fee for 11th and 12th grade.

**National Scheme of Incentives to Girls for Secondary Education:** This scheme caters to the upliftment of girls from SC and ST communities through providing educational incentives. Students get a fixed deposit that they can withdraw with interest when 18.

**Ladli Laxmi Yojana in Madhya Pradesh:** This scheme aims to eradicate child marriages and female foeticide. Families with one or more girl children who attend school get financial aid.

**Rajshree Yojana in Rajasthan:** This scheme provides financial aid of up to INR 50,000 to the family of a girl child for education and health expenses till 12th grade. The amount provided to the family increases with the standard the child is studying in.

These are some commonly known schemes to promote women's education in India. Newer programs are coming up now and then to incentivize the girl child education and empower them for the rest of their lives.

### **Suggestive Remedies to Improve the rural girls' participation in higher education.**

There are studies which proposing the five steps remedy to improve the girls' education, Skills and related Job Prospects. These five steps are as follows:

**First**, give girls a strong foundation through early childhood development (ECD). Disadvantages built early in life are difficult to remedy, but effective ECD programs can avoid such disadvantages and thereby yield high payoffs. ECD programs build the technical, cognitive, and behavioural skills conducive to high productivity later in life. Successful interventions emphasize, among other areas, nutrition, stimulation, and basic cognitive skills.

The **second step** focuses on basic education. Gaps remain, to be sure: Data from a forthcoming paper suggest that in 24 low-income countries, only 34% of girls in the poorest 20% of household's complete primary school, compared with 72% of girls in the richest 20% of households. These income-related gaps can be reduced through interventions to reduce the opportunity cost of schooling for girls, such as conditional cash transfers.

The **third step** in helping girls grow is to provide them with job-relevant skills that employers actually demand, or that they can use in launching their own business.



Many countries have achieved (or are making rapid progress toward) gender parity in basic education. By contrast, labour force participation in most developing countries remains substantially lower for young women than men.

**Step four** relates to the creation of an environment that encourages investments in knowledge and creativity. This requires innovation-specific skills and investments to help connect people with ideas, as well as risk management tools that facilitate innovation. Again, girls are at a disadvantage when compared with boys, with fewer opportunities and, therefore, lower rates of entrepreneurship in many countries.

Finally, and this is the **fifth and last step**, it is important that societies promote flexible, efficient, and secure labour markets. Apart from avoiding rigid job protection regulations while strengthening income protection systems, providing intermediation services for workers and firms is important to transform skills into actual employment and productivity.

### Conclusion

The above study reveals that in India still rural girls' students have to be empowered to face the gender discrimination and they have to fight to get their constitution right. Quality of the education in the area should be uplifted. The financial assistance for the rural girls' students must be given and should create awareness about sources of the finance. The parents at their home must give them moral support. The transportation facility must be developed and activities of discriminant people must be destroyed to the root. Rural girls' students must be supported to perform to the fullest potential by making them to have their higher education, where it will mould them strong socially, economically and morally. The education makes her to participate in the different areas of the business environment in order succeed in her way. The obstacles to Pursue higher education is lie with rural girls' students, parents and society, the root cause for this have to addressed from basic level to highest level in order make the rural girls' students stronger in all the aspect of the life. The United Nations General Assembly established 15 other sustainable development goals, including gender equality and high-quality education, which are expected to be achieved by 2030. The country's socioeconomic development depends on how well its human resources are developed. Advanced education fortifies HR hence adds to the general advancement of the country. Advanced education is perhaps of the most pre-famous player in changing society into a more maintainable one. To annihilate disparity, separation and abuse against ladies advanced education should be guaranteed to them which engages ladies with information, decisive reasoning limit, abilities, and certainty. In the information society, equivalent training is fundamental to achieve economical turn of events. A woman with an education is productive, creative, and dynamic, and she can improve her life and the lives of others.

### Scope and Limitations of the Study

Every research has its own limitation while conducting the study. Following is the scope of the study for the present study. Study concerned with the rural areas only so findings cannot be directly related to urban areas. The geographical area is restricted to rural areas of Prayagraj district. The findings of the present study well be a mile stone for policies development in terms of female education in rustic areas.

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