

A critical analysis of the “gendered unemployment” among educated women in India

Dr. Sujaya Routray

Assistant Professor (Sociology), Disha Law College, Raipur, Chhattisgarh, India

Abstract

Since time immemorial women are discriminated in almost all spheres of life. Access to and control over resources in the sphere of education, health care and economic activities have been always limited for women. This has not only led to gender discrimination in society but also has a drastic influence on individual and her fundamental rights. However after independence there is a sincere effort by the government to plan policies and programme for women in specific so that they get an equal chance and opportunities to be able to stand in a better social and economic position and voice their opinion. Specifically in matters of education, there are provisions to make education accessible to all. However when an important outcome of education such as employment is analysed it is seen that educated women are remaining unemployed because of various reason. It not only hampers the overall development of the economic scenario of the country but also affects the socio and psychological aspect of the educated women. This paper will deliberate the causes and consequences of unemployment among the educated women of India.

Keywords: education, unemployment, missing women

1. Introduction

Education is synonymous to increase in productivity ^[1] along with knowledge and skill enhancement. Education also plays a prominent role in economy as it is assumed that it would lead to employment .In case of women employability, accessibility, ownership, development and empowerment is the expected outcome. This financial independency will create independence in decision making, a greater autonomy of ones being. This changed situation will further strengthen women’s social and economic position in the family and in the community. Looking at the literacy rate of India in 2011 was 74.04%. But there is noticeably discrepancy in the literacy rates of men and women. The Male literacy rate is 82.14% and Female literacy rate is 65.46% according to Census 2011. ^[2]

This is about the basic education and also the enrolment of women in higher studies gives an optimist future for a better employment prospect in near future.

Total enrolment in higher education has been estimated to be 28.56 Million with 15.87 million boys and 12.69 million girls. Girls constitute 44.4% of the total enrolment.

Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education in India is 20.4, which is calculated for 18-23 Years of age group.GER for male population is 21.6 and for females it is 18.9. ^[3] However, for women students opting for higher studies are perplexed by the selection of stream of higher studies as it is a reflection of social and cultural stereotyping of education and career selection and less of individual preferences. Their selection has a tremendous impact on their future life and roles and career. The difference between masculine and feminine field of study has also within its scope different avenues of employability and a wide income generation opportunities. It has to be in accordance to the demand of the market and society at large. Education, health and welfare, humanities and arts, and social science, business and law are still dominated by women as they are seen as the extension of their predominate role of housework activities. ^[4]

In 2012-2013 the percentage of women enrolled in specific undergraduate degree programs included 28.5% of women in

Engineering/Technology, 40.2% in IT and Computer, 35.6% in Management and 32.0% in Law. ^[5] However given the fact that Indian women are getting equal opportunities in field of education, an increase in chances of gainfully employment is desired .Yet studies ^[6, 7, 8] and statistics reveal that the entire educated are not employed in comparison to the educated males of our society. According to NSSO, 2009-2012 saw an overall unemployment rate in female was more as compared to males and the number of employed women dropped from 18% to 16%.For females it was 7.2% whereas for male the unemployment rate was 4 %.^[9] There may be increase in job opportunities yet again in comparison to male, female are not employed. 13.4% of Indian working women have a regular salaried job compared to 21.2% of working men (aged 15–59). ^[10]

The preference for salaried employment ,avoidance of self-employment among educated jobseekers ^[11,12] ,mismatch of education system and labour market requirement ^[13] gender discrimination in labour market ^[14] makes men the sole breadwinner hence with limited employment opportunities men in a family are the first to opt them with full support of the society as it is meant to be like that .This does not happens with women as she has the option of either to work or not work because she has the already the acceptable role of a homemaker ^[6]. Education brings aspirations in both men and women. When this aspiration does not get support of the family, community and society for whatever the reason, it may cause of many of the present problems, a sense of inadequacy and insecurity leading to physical and mental disturbance ^[15]. Equal employment opportunity for women is one of the reasons why Norway and Australia are at the top of gender inequality index with the highest prevalence of gender equality. Whereas, India is in 135th position. These two countries has participation rate of females in 2012 was 61.5% and 58.8% whereas India has 28.8% in compared to 80.9% men. ^[16] In these two countries the provision of social support for women as an economic producer is reflected in the state

supported programmes such as day-care, parental leave with full compensation, healthcare, unemployment compensation. This shows the adjustments of the private and the public sectors to accommodate women's employment and family responsibilities. Gender equality is possible when power, opportunities, adjustment and accommodation, responsibilities is equally shared and the government through their welfare measure acts as a support system and makes it easier to balance between work and family life.^[7] Thus, the promotion and implementation of full and equitable employment for women should be part of development then only a country can truly progress.

1.1 Feminisation of unemployment

Research reveals the more educated a woman is wider the gender pay gap is and this gender pay gap increases with the advancement in their career of women.^[17]

The patriarchal setup of Indian society usually is not supportive with the idea that a house can run with a females income. Similarly parents are reluctant to use daughter's income and if at all they do that is up to her marriage and after that it is her husband decision how to use the money and also whether she would be even working or not. Social traditions, norms, values and expectation affects a women's behaviour, attitude and aspiration in her life and career.

The choice of education is also influenced by this setup. The professional course is expensive and it is usually not favoured as the money can be kept for marriage purpose similarly there was a trend where women were opting for the course so that they are a good position or higher demand in the marriage market. and after marriage, it is the decision of the husband and his family whether she will work or not. Privatisation of education further is disadvantages for women of rural areas with limited economic setup. So at times they are force to take up limited educational options even if they don't want to.^[18] The institution of marriage is a kind of social compulsion both for a man and a woman but the difference is the age of getting married for a woman is much early than a man. As a result women are in a disadvantage position as she gets less time to build her career well which is not so in case of a man. Similarly the concept of baby sitter or nanny is yet to have developed professionally in many states of India as a result, the only option left is either the older family take the responsibility or the working mother herself takes a break from her job.

Rejoining job after the break is not again so smooth for a mother, rather this transitional phase has to undergo through various layer of negotiations and compromises and severe time management. The management of women at home often determines the work efficiency at workplace and very often this natural accepted domain of women as the sole and primary caregiver results in "care penalty" operating in a scenario of women as natural caregiver, men as the sole breadwinner and hence devaluation of women's productive efficiency at paid work place.^[19]

In 2011-2012, women comprised 24.8% of all rural workers, down from 31.8% in 1972-73.^[20] Woman in rural areas is mostly self-employed and working under the aegis of family workers as unpaid. This rarely provides an ownership of asset and even earnings through other source such as SHGs is less^[21]. The structure of women workforce in agriculture has been modified according to the trends of the changing pattern of

agriculture. The hiring of labour is more of short and contract basis so there is less choice of employment for rural women.

When the entire population is involved in the economic sector, there is a speed development of the country. The statistics reveal that there is an increase in the number of higher educated women but the associated labour market to employ these educated women is missing. With a growth rate of India's economy from 2004 to 2011 on an average of 7% did not witness an equal and appropriate rise in the female labour force participation rate which fell from 31% to 24%.^[22]

Keeping aside the discussion on the quality and openings of the available employment opportunities, the difference lies in the fact that women are not working. There is "Missing women in production" taking Amartya Sen concept of "missing women".

The conservative patriarchal norms usually do not give women the chance to work outside if she is unmarried and if married it is in the complete discretion of the husband and his family.

Small scale entrepreneurship whether in rural areas through self-help groups or in urban areas with the financial banking facilities, the outcome is not splendid. The resistance of parents to send daughters outside town for studies or for job placement is a reflection of this mindset whereas in urban sector though accessibility to education is not an issue but the struggle women face to get entry in the so called masculine domain of employment opportunities still is a challenge.

As a result they are forced to select job which are of lesser responsibility and hence with a less salary structure. As a result if there is any chance of neglect of familial responsibility or the adequacy of husband's income, women are the first choice of victim to quit their jobs.

It is difficult to change the gender stereotyping of the classification of the jobs immediately but it is possible to improve the structural quality with the package of women dominate job. In case of Bangladesh for example because of the garment industry, the poverty rate has gone down from 80% to less than 30% since independence. Interestingly most of the workers are women. But other than the problems of low wages and inadequate labour laws for them, the women are gainfully employed which at such on a large scale that can turn the economic face of the country.^[23]

In India the working condition is much more regularised and systematic. The expansion of women dominated sector can be expanded. Women are equally good at workplace and understanding the gendered structure of the society that prevents women whether married or unmarried to work efficiently, steps to improve the working spirit of women is much needed.

2. Conclusion

The various dimensions on unemployment, the market economies and its relations with the social positioning of women as an economic producer, questioning the existing structure and the policy and the appropriate skill development as relevant to the present context or need of the market which are women specific or gender neutral as according to the suitability, planning for women development ect are all part of the matrix of women empowerment. Thus it is important to look into other likely factors that affect women's decision to work.

Unemployment among educated women is a reflection of the divergence existing between men and women workers. A country can develop when both men and women are getting equal and fair chances of self-development. The problem of unemployment among educated women not only has a bearing on the economic loss to the nation but also a psycho-social impact of the individual, family and society at large. Educational facilities are increasing but how far educated women are able to utilise this education in the present social situation is an important duty of the social scientist to find out and suggest suitable solutions.

Education as assumed would play a catalyst in the development of women's economic ability whereas the existing unemployment shows the gendered work structure in society, limited job opportunities and the limited transformative role of education in case for women. It would help to assess our educational system that is unable to provide job opportunities to women who are already in a gendered web. Along with this, there should be strengthening of the scope of demand of such women-centric jobs so that they have the potential to turn the face of the country's economy towards a brighter side.

3. Reference

1. A Study of Unemployment among Female Graduate in Pune City Study sponsored by Planning Commission, Govt. of India. Indian Institute of Education, 2002.
2. Literacy Rate of India. India facts on, in India Census 2011, 2013.
3. All India Survey on Higher Education. All India survey on higher education (Provisional) government of India ministry of human resource development department of higher education new delhi 2011-12 2013. http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/statistics/AISHE2011-12P_1.pdf
4. Tertiary enrolment by field of study. http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/worldswomen/WW_full%20report_color.pdf
5. Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Table 12 Enrolments at Under Graduate Level in Major Disciplines/ Subjects (Based on Actual Response) 2011.
6. Dhanaranjan, Prof. Gajaraj, Young women's unemployment: The education factor, in the guides' commonwealth chief commission conference Victoria, Canada.
7. Gender equality in Sweden. <https://sweden.se/society/gender-equality-in-sweden/>
8. Jacqueline G. Occupational pressures in Banking: Gender difference "Women in Management Review, 2004; 19:4.
9. Alice Sebastian and K Navaneetham, Gender, Education and Work: Determinants of Women's Employment in Kerala, www.isical.ac.in/~wemp/.../PaperAliceSebastianAndKNavanitham.doc and Empowerment of Women, Mangal Deep Publications, Jaipur, 2001.
10. International Labour Organization, Global, 2014.
11. Devi L. Education, Employment and Job Preference of Women in Kerala: A Micro-level Case Study, Discussion, krp1ld, 2001, 42.
12. Mathew ET. Employment and Unemployment in Kerala, Some neglected Aspects, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1997. www.salary.lk/home/job-and-women/career-tips/higher-education-lends-to-high-unemployment-truth-or-a-myth
13. Shayan Javeed and Anupam Manuhaar Women and Wage Discrimination in India: A Critical Analysis 2013, 19. <http://www.ijhssi.org/papers/v2%284%29/version-1/B240612.pdf>
14. Robins *et al.* Lifetime prevalence of specific Psychiatric Disorders in Three sites in Unemployment among Low Income Women.
15. UNDP, Human Development Reports. Gender Inequality Index. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/table-4-gender-inequality-index>
16. Paycheck India, Gender Pay Gap in the Formal Sector: 2006-2013. http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/worldswomen/WW_full%20report_color.pdf
17. Returning to work after childbirth: still a case of 'managing *et al.* 2015, 8 <http://theconversation.com/returning-to-work-after-childbirth-still-a-case-of-managing-it-all-34048>
18. Indiastat.com, "Workforce Participation Rate by Sex and Sector in India. Catalyst. Quick Take: Women in the Labour Force in India. New York: Catalyst, 2015. <http://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/women-workforce-india>
19. Routray Dr. Sujaya, Enabling rural women as agent of social change by reinvigorating SHGs: a qualitative analysis of SHGs in Odisha" <http://anvpublication.org/viewarticles.php?j=2347-5145&vol=3&issue=3&ab=ab104elf> Help Groups: a qualitative analysis of SHGs in Odisha"
20. Why Aren't India's Women Working? By rohini pande and charity troyer mooreaug, 2015, 23. www.nytimes.com/2015/08/24/.../why-arent-indias-women-working.htm
21. The thing that makes Bangladesh's garment industry such a huge success also makes it deadly. Marc Bain & Jenni Avins 2015, 24. qz.com/.../the-thing-that-makes-bangladeshs-garment-industry-such-a-hu