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Review Paper

Investigating Specific Educational Challenges Faced by Unmarried Female Students in Haryana: Access to Resources, Gender Bias, and Support Systems

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ABSTRACT

This specific review properly discovers the educational obstacles that are encountered by the female students in Haryana, India, who are unmarried. It highlights the various issues including limited access to resources, gender discrimination as well as the efficiency of support systems. Haryana observed notable progress in the matter of education and economy. On the other hand, it still faces entrenched gender biases. These respective biases create a negative impact on the educational opportunities that unmarried women have. The review presents a combination of the findings from various studies. It is to offer a thorough analysis of these challenges and their broader implications for fairness in education. On the other hand, it also keeps the focus on the socio-economic hurdles that restrict access to education, the widespread gender bias within schools as well as the mechanisms for providing support that aim to help unmarried female students in the matter of overcoming these specific difficulties. The conclusion of this review clearly highlights that it is very crucial to have measures that are more focused and effective. These respective measures are to reduce the gap of gender in education as well as to create a supportive learning environment for all women whether they are married or not. There are various suggestions discussed within this report that are for future research and the improvement of policies.

1. Introduction

Education is a basic right and a crucial tool that helps in the process of individual and societal progress. The access to education for women in India has improved. Despite that, there are various places in India including Haryana where unmarried female students still face specific issues in education. These challenges include cultural expectations, economic factors, as well as institutional biases that clearly favor the matter of getting married over getting educated. It is very crucial to deal with these specific issues. The female students in Haryana who are unmarried face various types of educational and socio-cultural difficulties. These specific difficulties contribute to limiting the access of females to resources and fair treatment. The primary aim of this specific review is to explore these challenges as well as contribute to the process of developing the policies and interventions that are better.

The review is organized into various sections. These sections are as follows: first, the analysis of the obstacles to accessing resources of education for unmarried female students is done. After that, the influence of gender bias in schools is examined.

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The reliability and effectiveness of support systems in the matter of dealing with these issues are evaluated at the last step of this review.

2. Access to Educational Resources

It is crucial to have the availability of educational resources for academic achievements. Socio-economic factors, pressure from the family, and institutional obstacles are some of the factors that often restrict access to education for unmarried female students in Haryana.

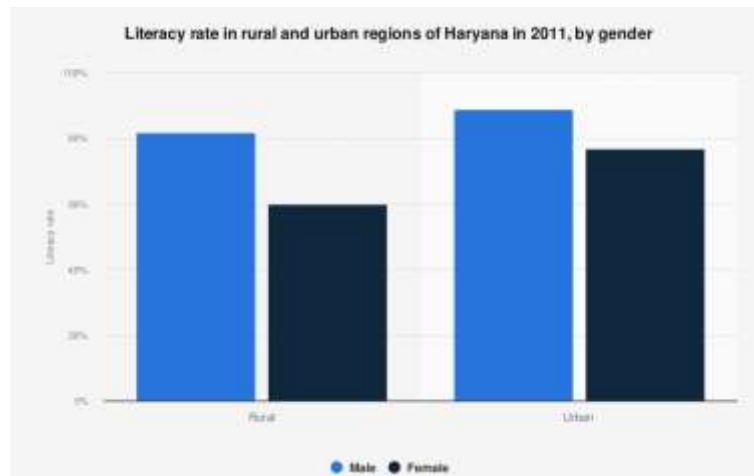


Fig 1: Literacy Rate in Rural and Urban Regions of Haryana in 2011. (Source: Rathore 2023)

2.1 Socio-Economic Barriers

A huge obstacle that is faced by the unmarried female students in Haryana is socio-economic inequality. The state still faces a huge gap in wealth despite the growth in the economy. The families that belong to the lower-income backgrounds often give priority only to the education of their sons. This happens because they see the sons as future providers. This is why the education of the daughters is considered of no importance.

It is clearly highlighted in the research by Yadav (2021) that financial limitations are the factors that pose a major obstacle to education for unmarried women in rural Haryana. There are many families who do not want to invest in the marriage rather than investing in the education of their daughters. This aspect leads to the early dropout of female students.

2.2 Familial Expectations and Cultural Norms

The cultural traditions and the expectations of the family create huge effects on the educational prospects of unmarried female students in Haryana. They often provide more amount of value to marriage than education. This fact contributes to discourage the families about higher education if it is postponing the marriage. This respective approach forces the women to choose between education and the expectation of the family despite their unwillingness.

According to the research study of Dassi (2022) the cultural norms that are related to marriage and gender biases create heavy impacts on the choice of education in Haryana. It also discovered that there are many such families in the rural areas that think it is unnecessary to provide education to unmarried females. This is because they consider that the main role of the females is the future wives and mothers. This narrow mindset contributes to the restrictions on educational opportunities as well as strengthens the matter of gender inequality.

2.3 Institutional Barriers

Institutional barriers make a notable contribution to the challenges that are faced by female students in Haryana. Many rural schools do not have proper facilities to support the education of girls. These shortcomings include inadequate female-friendly amenities like secure transportation, separate restrooms, and appropriate hostel accommodations.

A study by the National Commission for Women described that there are many educational institutions in Haryana that are not fully able to address the needs of female students. This fact contributes to the higher rates of dropout among unmarried students. The aspect of the absence of the environment that is supportive in the institutions creates huge difficulties for continuing the education for the female students.

3. Gender Bias in Educational Institutions

The gender prejudice within the schools hugely impacts the education of female students in Haryana. These difficulties appears hugely through the biased attitudes of the teachers, gender-stereotyped curricula as well as the scarce female leaders

3.1 Discriminatory Attitudes and Practices

The presence of biased attitudes and practices is one of the crucial obstacles for female students in Haryana. The approach of providing more preference to the education of male students contributes to the matter of unfair treatment. These specific treatments include lower levels of expectations for females, reduced amounts of motivation to deal with various difficult matters as well as very less support for their educational goals. A study by Stewart et al. (2022) has noticed that the matter of gender bias is hugely spread in the educational settings of Haryana. The study also reflected that the teachers set very lower amounts of expectations for female students. On the other hand, they do not encourage female students to pursue higher education in the fields that are dominated by males. This specific bias negatively affects the self-esteem and the education of female students. This fact contributes to creating a lower rate of retention and opportunities for advancement.

3.2 Gender-Stereotyped Curricula

The curricula in many of the Haryana schools highlight the traditional gender roles and stereotypes. The textbooks and the resources of teaching often highlight the subordinate roles of females. This keeps the focus on the domestic responsibilities and caregiving roles of females rather than the success in the profession. This fact more stresses the idea that women are more suitable to the roles in home rather than in education. A content analysis by Babulicová (2024) highlighted a notable gender bias. It showed that the women who are depicted in traditional role are less achievable in the positions of profession and leadership. This specific bias provides support to the societal norms that it is crucial for unmarried women to give priority to family and marriage in comparison to their education and career goals.

3.3 Lack of Female Role Models

The lack of female leaders in educational institutions is a huge barrier to education for female students in Haryana. Female educators are able to create positive impacts on the educational goals of female students. Haryana underrepresents the matter of female leadership. This fact reduces the visibility of successful female models. The absence of female role models perpetuates gender bias (Porter and Serra 2020). This study has also highlighted that female students feel more inclined towards educational goals with the help of female teachers and mentors. On the other hand, the fewer amounts of female role models strengthen the fact that females are less capable of achieving educational and professional success.

Table 1: Gender Disparities in Education in Haryana

Indicator	Value	Year	Source
Female literacy rate in Haryana	About 62.2%	2011	Census of India
Male literacy rate in Haryana	About 81.4%	2011	Census of India
Percentage of female teachers in Haryana schools	About 30%	2022	Education Department, Haryana
Gender disparity index in education	About 0.43	2021	National Commission for Women
Representation of women in leadership roles in education	About 15%	2022	Porter and Serra

4. Support Systems for Unmarried Female Students

It is crucial to provide support mechanisms to assist the unmarried female students in Haryana in the matter of overcoming the difficulties in education. These mechanisms can include family backing, peer groups, services of counselling as well as educational programs organised by the government or NGOs.

4.1 Family Support

It is very crucial to have the support of the family to gain educational achievement for unmarried female students. The traditional gender roles and norms of Haryana sometimes create restrictions on the support that unmarried female students get from their families. The families that give more priority to marriage than education reduce the amount of resources for encouragement. A strong kind of support from the family enhances the educational success of unmarried female students (Suna et al. 2020). On the other hand, there are still various families in Haryana that do not support the education of their daughters if that clashes with the marriage expectations.

4.2 Peer Networks and Mentorship

The peer groups and various types of schemes of mentorships are able to provide huge assistance for the education of unmarried female students. It helps the student in the matter of dealing with the challenges of education in a setting that is gender biased. These types of networks provide the aspects that are crucial for the individual who feels alone or unsupported. These aspects may include support, guidance, as well as a sense of belonging. Research by Oddone Paolucci et al. (2021) clearly highlighted the importance of these networks. On the other hand, it also demonstrated that the women who involves themselves in peer groups and mentorship programs are more capable of persisting to their studies as well as dealing with the educational challenges.

4.3 Government and Non-Governmental Programs

There is huge importance of various types of government and non-governmental initiatives that aim to advance the matter of female education in the matter of reducing the issues that are faced by the unmarried female students in Haryana. These types of initiatives provide financial aid, scholarships as well as various campaigns of awareness. These are to influence the families and communities to provide support to the education of unmarried women. The effectiveness of these initiatives sometimes gets disrupted by the factors of cultural resistance and poor quality of execution. A report from the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD 2021) has clearly highlighted the impacts of various governmental initiatives in the matter of enhancing the status of women in society. These initiatives include the *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* campaign and many more. On the other hand, the reports also highlight that there are various factors including cultural opposition and insufficient funding that reduce the success of these programs in the matter of improving the opportunities for education for the female students who are unmarried.

5. Discussion

The educational challenges that are heavily encountered by unmarried female students in Haryana are highly complex. These issues are deeply rooted in the economic and socio-cultural fabric of the region. Limited access to resources, significant gender discrimination in schools, and the inconsistent effectiveness of support systems are the examples of factors aspects that contribute to the continued marginalization of unmarried women within the education system of Haryana (Oppong et al. 2021).

The economic and social obstacles that are faced by the unmarried female students clearly highlight the importance of having targeted measures to alleviate financial limitations (Liaqat et al. 2021). It is crucial to encourage the families in Haryana to support the education of their daughters. On the other hand, government initiatives need to be improved. It is to provide higher financial and mental support to unmarried women who are seeking higher education. The aspects of gender bias are a major issue within schools that is in need of urgent action (Basantia and Devi 2022). Curricula should be updated to remove gender stereotypes. On the other hand, educators need to be properly trained to recognise and counteract their own biases. On the other hand, the increasing amount of female representation in the roles of leadership can provide the opportunity to the unmarried females students to have the role models that are aspirational. There are various types of support systems including family, peer networks, and mentorship programs that are in need to be improved and expanded. Both the government and nongovernmental initiatives need to enhance the process of funding and execution. It is to address the obstacles that are faced by unmarried female students.

6. Conclusion

The obstacles to education that are faced by unmarried female students in Haryana are very intricate. This situation makes it necessary to have a thorough and unified approach. The solutions for this specific problem must include the reformation of policies, educational changes, as well as the involvement of communities. On the other hand, the approach of improved access to resources, reducing gender bias in schools as well as improving the systems for support can contribute to an educational environment that will be fair for every student regardless of their gender. The findings of this study clearly highlight that it is crucial to have ongoing research and the development of policies that are aimed at helping unmarried female students. This is to address these specific issues. Future studies should assess the impact of interventions as well as the role of cultural norms and gender bias in the outcomes of education. This is to aim for an environment for all the women in Haryana that will be more inclusive.

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