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Participation of Women in Government Degree Colleges of Srinagar District: A Trend Analysis (2000-2010)

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Abstract:

For centuries Kashmir has been a center of learning and attracted scholars not only from the different parts of India but from different corners of the world. Lalla-Ded is the oldest Kashmiri author. Her verses known as Vakyas (wise sayings) are rich in philosophical theme and content. It is a difficult task to recognize the self and channelize the confidence. Lalla Ded choose to break the mould of patriarchy in a stiflingly traditional society but not allowing her intellectual and spiritual freedom to be curbed.

This paper examines the trends in women enrollment in college education over a period of ten years i.e. 2000-10. In the case of women, education particularly higher education has much more role to play as it provides not only requisite equipment and training for their future economic participation but it also acts as revolutionary force that is expected to liberate them from their subjugation and exploitation.

Keywords: Higher education, college education, Srinagar district, trend analysis, women education, empowerment.

1. Introduction

Educational Institutions developed as a systematic way to provide what could not be learned easily within the family. Institutionalized education includes schools of many kinds plus the apprenticeship system. A lot of non-institutionalized education takes place, for better or worse, in homes, on streets, and through the mass media, especially television. Education has a number of perceptible functions, the principle of which are to help people attain their potential and to prepare them for occupational roles for personal fulfillment and social contribution. The world today has a stock of knowledge which is unmatched in its extent and power, but there need to be comparable sense of dedication and responsibility to make this knowledge for the services of community and mankind. Consequently, education prepares people to make a living by helping a person to use knowledge for economic and social betterment. It is difficult to be well-rounded person unless one can earn a living, and, conversely, an employee may be more valuable with an education which includes more than vocational skills. Yet a good general education does not always produce marketable skills, and narrowly focused vocational education may leave one ignorant of the cultural understanding needed for successful living. Thus, one of the perennial issues in education is the relative concern devoted to general or cultural as opposed to strictly vocational instruction. Most occupations require basic literacy, while many also demand specialized training. The cybernetics revolution with computer-controlled machines and robots is cutting the demand for unskilled labour and also eliminating some of the traditional craft positions. The market for professionals, semiprofessionals, and technicians is expanding. In fact, the perceptible function of the educational institutions has multiplied so much that we often assume that education can solve all the problems of society.

1.1. Higher Education

Higher Education sector has witnessed a tremendous increase in the number of Universities/ Universities level institutions and colleges since independence¹. It is a system of general education (other than professional) which starts after passing higher secondary education or the 12th standard and includes technical schools, colleges and universities. It is the shared responsibility of both the

¹ The Indian Independence Act 1947 was an act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom that partitioned British India into the two new independent dominions of India and Pakistan.

Centre and the States, managed in universities² and affiliated³ colleges. As per Indian education commission 1964-66, higher education includes three years Degree College, two years Post-Graduation and after completing post-graduation, scope for doing research in various educational institutes also remain open. Depending on the stream, doing graduation in India can take three to five years. Post graduate courses are generally of two to three years of duration.

For centuries Kashmir has been a centre of learning and attracted students not only from the different parts of India but from different corners of the world. During the rule⁴ of Maharaja Pratap Singh (1885-1925), the syllabi got recognized on Punjab University lines⁵. College is a key to success in life. In order to achieve success in life with little or no struggles financially one has to go to college to get an education that will lead them later on to a career of their choice. A two or four-year college degree is becoming more and more important to unlocking doors of economic and educational opportunities. Having a plan, knowing how much a person must and can do to get it to his goal of going to college will make it much easier and will give him the knowledge and skills required to get to college. Since the world is quickly advancing, college is becoming more and more of a requirement or necessity to get where a person wants to be in life. During the years of college students learn a profession(s) that keeps them choose a career that will keep them financially stable like everyone would like to be. Also since the world is advancing, many jobs rely on new technological ideas and problem solving skills that will be learning in college if that is the person's choice. On average a person that goes to college makes more money than a person that chooses not to go to college or further their educational standards and levels.⁶ This is mainly because there are more job choices and opportunities available to choose to those that went to colleges and universities.

In the 21st Century India is fast emerging as a global power but for half of its population, the women across the country, struggle to live life with dignity continues. India is poised to becoming superpower, a developed country by 2020. This can become reality only when the women of this nation become empowered. The concept of women empowerment was introduced at the International Women Conference at NAROIBI in 1985. Lazo (1995) describes it as "a process of acquiring, providing, bestowing the resources and the means or enabling the access to a control over such means or resources". Stromquist (1993) for instance, defines empowerment as "a process to change the distribution of power both in interpersonal relations and in institutions through society". In the case of women, education particularly higher education has much more role to play as it provides not only requisite equipment and training for their future economic participation but it also acts as revolutionary force that is expected to liberate them from their subjugation and exploitation. In 1926 the Women's Welfare Trust was found at Srinagar for the improvement and development of women folk in education. The Trust worked a long way for the women in Kashmir by imparting knowledge by stimulating home industry in them and by promoting their physical health and well-being. With the Revolution of 1931 in Kashmir, there was a realization amongst Kashmiris that for social and cultural renaissance the education for girls was a must. Untiring efforts of Kashmiri leaders of that time removed to some extent the antagonism among Hindus and Muslims. Adult Education School was started empowering women, training them in various handicrafts and tailoring besides teaching 3Rs⁷. A women's league was formed by the Trust with the object of holding debates and discussions on social evils and their eradication. Government sanctioned liberal grants for the Trust. A separate department for the administration of female education was created in early thirties.

1.2. Historical Background of College Education in Jammu and Kashmir in general and Women in particular

The college in Srinagar was originally established under the auspices of Central Hindu College⁸ of Banaras in 1905 and was named Sri Pratap Hindu College.⁹ It was officially declared as Government College on 22nd July 1911, on the birthday of Maharaja Pratap Singh and was named as Sri Pratap College. The college in Jammu was established in 1907 and named the Prince of Wales¹⁰ College. T

² In India, "University" means a University established or incorporated by or under a Central Act, a Provisional Act or a State Act and includes any such institution as may, in consultation with the University concerned, be recognized by the University Grants Commission (UGC)² in accordance with the regulations made in this regard under the UGC Act, 1956.

³ An affiliated school/ college/ university is an educational institution that operates independently, but also has a formal collaborative agreement with another, usually larger institution that may have some level of control or influence over its academic policies, standards and progress.

⁴ Jammu and Kashmir state came into existence in 1846, after the first Anglo-Sikh war of 1845-46, with Maharaja Gulab Singh as its first ruler.

⁵ Till March 1948 all these colleges were affiliated to Punjab University when Jammu and Kashmir University came into existence. Preamble: "Whereas in view of the changed circumstances it is expedient to withdraw affiliation of the colleges and educational institutions of the State from the universities of Punjab and to establish at Srinagar, a teaching and examining university in the State and to provide for the affiliation of such colleges and institutions with the university." The Jammu and Kashmir University Act (1948).

⁶ By linking education and economics, higher education may sometimes be demanded for social prestige / status. For example, a person that only has a High school diploma will not make as much money as a person that went to a college or a university.

⁷ Reading, writing and arithmetic

⁸ The college was started with the advice of Dr. Annie Besant of the Theosophical Society.

⁹ Kapur, M.L. (1992). Social and Economic History of Jammu and Kashmir State (1885 To 1925 AD). Jammu: Jay Kay Book House. pp.196

¹⁰ During the visit of the then Prince of Wales to Jammu, Maharaja Pratap Singh announced to start a college to commemorate the visit of Prince of Wales. The College i.e. Prince of Wales College Jammu started functioning in 1908.

he Prince of Wales College of Jammu specialized in the Science subjects and Sri Pratap College of Srinagar did so in Arts, although other subjects were also taught in each of the two colleges. Thus, while at Jammu M.Sc. course in Geology was taught, at Srinagar M.A. in Philosophy, Sanskrit and Mathematics were offered. The number of successful students who obtained their degrees from both the colleges was 5 in 1911 and 51 in 1921. In order to examine the educational system of the State and suggest ways and means of improving it, the State Government secured the services of M.H. Sharp,¹¹ Educational Commissioner with the Government of India in 1915. This was to remove the backwardness of the Muslims¹² of the State; assistance to enable the Islamic schools to be raised to the collegiate grade; the grant of special stipends and scholarships for Muslims. There were two colleges in the State in 1920-21 with an enrollment of 481 and the same two colleges had an enrollment of 950 in the year 1930-31. The enrollment went to 2363 in the year 1940-41. Due to unprecedented increase in the enrollment of Sri Pratap Singh College Srinagar in 1942-43, the State Government bifurcated it and a new Degree College designated as Amar Singh Degree College was opened. Regarding higher education, girls did take admission in colleges¹³ but their number remained very small. Both male and female students got education in Amar Singh Degree College. The female students were also enrolled in S.P. College numbering 32 in the year 1943-44.

The development¹⁴ of the first Government College for Women in 1950 provided an emancipator forum for the women of Kashmir furnishing an instrument of change as more and more women joined the college. Mahmuda Ahmad Ali Shah, the first Kashmiri woman to head a college in Srinagar, was largely responsible for making this college an institution of academic and cultural excellence. Higher education in the state received a greater impetus with the establishment of Jammu and Kashmir University.¹⁵ The mobilization of women from various socio-economic classes intended to avail themselves of educational opportunities, enhance their professional skills, and attempt to reform existing structures so as to accommodate more women. "The years from 1950 to the '70s were the kind of years when everything seemed within reach, anything possible with hard work and determination".¹⁶ The Kashmiri girls fitted themselves into the routine of a modern college life by participating in co-curricular activities like sports, debates, NCC, educational tours, cultural activities and drama. "The achievements of women during these decades were so significant that they altered the gender landscape of schools, colleges, offices, courts, police stations, hospitals, hotels and business establishments. Women were everywhere, making their mark in every field. This revolution had been brought about surprisingly, without there being an organized women's movement in the state".¹⁷ "The events from mid-'80s onwards leading to the total collapse of the educational edifice in the 90's could be attributed, to some extent, also to the frustrations generated from the unnaturally high expectations of the rewards from free education".¹⁸ As tension¹⁹ escalated in late 1980s an underground secessionist movement launched an armed struggle for the right to self-determination. During 1989-90, the spirit of the people was sweeping towards freedom (*azadi*) that eventually scorched the landscape, particularly the development that had been made in providing women with educational and economic opportunities.

¹¹ Sharp came to the State on the 9th of April and left on 1st June, 1916. During this short period, he visited all the Districts of the State with the exception of those of Riasi, Ladakh and Gilgit, and in all inspected 78 institutions. It was a one man Committee with Sir Henry Sharp as the Chairman and sole member.

¹² This was justified by the size and poverty of the Muslim community and its educational backwardness. This increase was to enable the Muslim students to continue education in High schools, colleges and technical institutions. The establishment of a few college scholarships of Rs. 10 for Muslims was also suggested. Such a proposal was supposed to have a good effect on the Muslim community.

¹³ The first woman who was admitted to S.P. College, Srinagar was a revolutionary lady. Mrs. Vimla Koul (even today known as Ammiji in Jammu). Girls did take admission in colleges but their number remained small. After 1947 many steps were taken to improve female education. Scholarships were offered to girls, special enrollment drives were taken up. Women teachers were appointed to teach girls. As a result of this, girls education substantially improved.

¹⁴ The Mahila College Jammu was taken over by the Government in 1953 and designated as Government College for Women, Jammu.

¹⁵ In 1948, the Jammu and Kashmir University came into existence, starting its career as an examination body but slowly transformed into teaching university where teaching was started in 1956 with the opening of Post Graduate Departments. In 1964 the University of Jammu and Kashmir got split into two divisions one located at Srinagar and the other located at Jammu. However in September 1969 the Jammu and Kashmir University was replaced by University of Kashmir through an ordinance promulgated by the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir State on 5th September, 1969.

¹⁶ Butalia, Urvashi, Ed. (2002). Speaking Peace: Women's Voices from Kashmir. New Delhi: Kali for Kashmir, pp.164.

¹⁷ Butalia, Urvashi, Ed. (2002). Speaking Peace: Women's Voices from Kashmir. New Delhi: Kali for Kashmir, pp.164.

¹⁸ Butalia, Urvashi, Ed. (2002). Speaking Peace: Women's Voices from Kashmir. New Delhi: Kali for Kashmir, spp.164.

¹⁹ No one could have predicted the suddenness with which the liberal, humanist atmosphere, which had survived through several upheavals threatening to tear the social fabric of Kashmir apart, like the dismissal and imprisonment of Sheikh Abdullah in 1953, the infiltration of the mujahideen in 1965, the Pandit agitation of 1967, the tension of the 1971 war, the politically and communally charged elections of 1983 and 1987, could be blown away. Something was certainly brewing in Kashmir, stealthily striking at the roots of the trust and bonhomie that existed between the communities, destroying the sense of common future of all Kashmiris that had been their dream and pride. Butalia, Urvashi, Ed. (2002). Speaking Peace: Women's Voices from Kashmir. New Delhi: Kali for Kashmir, spp.168.

This political flux entirely collapsed the optimistic thought of the students in “1990s with the burning of a large, fully equipped auditorium formed in 1960s”.²⁰ Schools and colleges were targeted and the libraries and laboratories went up in flames. “The sickness that affected the world outside suddenly entered the college in a dramatic way in the year 1989”.²¹ The Muslim girls were forced to wear veil (*burqa*) and the Hindus wear a *bindi*.²² At first the girls refused to follow it but there was no other option for them to be in dispute. The burden of the new adjustments has disproportionately fallen on women. In such a vexed situation students were still able to sit in the examination.

Ironically, women in the Valley have not yet found niches in the upper echelons of decision-making bodies – political, religious or social. Had it been any western society, a mass women’s movement would have evolved against these atrocities which would have shaken the entire sub-continent. And the Women’s College, given its role in Kashmir’s social development in the past, would have been a source and inspiration for such a movement. But nothing of that sort has happened. Rising against oppression is its past and producing flocks of students unable to rise for the genuine rights seems to be its present and immediate future.

Social, economic and political development of a nation depends on its educated youth. Educated youth supply the required manpower to government, industry, business, banking and other areas of human activity. Since higher education is expected to supply the required personnel to take responsibility of equipping individuals with advanced knowledge and skills required for taking up such position, its quality cannot be ignored for two main reasons. One is its rate of return for individual himself and second for the society at large. “It is easy to assert that the aim of education is to build the character and moral of mankind. But after spending the invaluable twenty years of life in getting just the university rolls of degrees the young people fail to ensure their entry into the domain of public or private sector. The frustration of the youth mounts up with the realization that over the past years they did not acquire any vocational skill which could have enabled them to earn their subsistence”.²³

1.3. Statement of the Research Topic

Participation of Women in Government Degree Colleges²⁴ of Srinagar District: A Trend Analysis (2000-2010).

1.4. Objective

To find out the Participation of Women in Government Degree Colleges in Srinagar District: A Trend Analysis (2000-2010).

1.5. Sample in the study

The study of the whole population would have been expensive in terms of time, money, effort and manpower. Therefore, a representative sample of population has been selected for the present study. The sample for the present study comprised of women enrolled in the summer capital²⁵ of Jammu and Kashmir. The study was conducted on the women enrolled in Government Degree Colleges affiliated to the University of Kashmir.

2. Research Methodology

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, the investigator has selected trend analysis for the present study. The trend study is an interesting application of the descriptive method. In essence it is based on a longitudinal consideration of recorded data indicating what has been happening in the past, what the present situation reveals, and, on the basis of these data, what is likely to happen in the future. The trend study points to conclusions reached by the combined methods of historical and descriptive analysis.

2.1. Data Interpretation

Data Interpretation is the examination of data based on studying the tabulated material in order to determine inherent facts or meanings. It involves breaking down existing complex factors into simpler parts and putting the parts together in new arrangements for purposes of interpretation. The process of interpretation is essentially one of the process of assigning meaning to the collected information and determining the conclusions, significance, and implications of the findings. As far as higher education is concerned, the interpretations given below have been analyzed by the investigator for the data for higher education in Srinagar on the basis of the faculty wise enrollment given in Table no. 1 and 2.

²⁰Butalia, Urvashi, Ed. (2002). Speaking Peace: Women’s Voices from Kashmir. New Delhi: Kali for Kashmir, pp.164-165

²¹Butalia, Urvashi, Ed. (2002). Speaking Peace: Women’s Voices from Kashmir. New Delhi: Kali for Kashmir, pp.168

²² Bindi, a dot worn on women's foreheads is one of the most recognizable items in Hinduism.

²³Education Mail Vol.4, Issue no 08, Srinagar Wednesday April 20 to May 04, 2011.

²⁴ These Government Degree Colleges are affiliated to the University of Kashmir.

²⁵Darbar Move is the name given to the bi-annual exercise of shifting the secretariat and all other government offices from capital city to another in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. It involves housing offices from May to October in State’s summer capital, Srinagar and rest six months in its winter capital, Jammu. The tradition was started during Dogra rule in 1872 by Maharaja Ranbir Singh.

Academic Year growth	Science Rate of growth	Arts Rate of growth	Commerce Rate of growth	Rate of growth
2000-01	41.75	-	79.68	-
2001-02	41.15	-6.12	61.54	24.23
2002-03	38.85	18.38	58.23	62.11
2003-04	37.73	-3.14	57.21	2.97
2004-05	39.66	16.66	56.84	34.86
				20.16
				5.50

Table 1: Faculty Wise Under-Graduate Women Enrolment in Srinagar from 2000-2005
Excludes Ganderbal²⁶

Source: Digest of Statistics, University of Kashmir.

Academic Year growth	Science Rate of growth	Arts Rate of growth	Commerce Rate of growth	Rate of growth
2005-06	40.22	-1.01	56.57	8.16
34.44				24.04
2006-07	41.79	-5.76	54.60	1.20
14.59				22.64
2007-08	41.08	-15.31	55.09	7.66
32.65				24.31
2008-09	43.64	2.08	57.19	8.36
0.71				24.07
2009-10	44.51	13.11	58.59	15.24
				23.79
				38.23

Table 2: Faculty Wise Under-Graduate Women Enrolment in Srinagar from 2005-2010
Excludes Ganderbal

Source: Digest of Statistics, University of Kashmir.

2.2. Trend Analysis _by Faculty

The faculty wise trend analysis for under graduates in Srinagar is discussed below:

2.3. Science

A decline in growth rate is observed in the faculty of science except for 2002-03, 04-05, 08-09 and 2009-10. The enrollment started with 41.75 per cent of women in 2000-01. 2002-03 shows the highest growth rate of 18.38 per cent in the decade and the enrollment reached the first highest peak of 44.51 per cent in the decade in 2009-10.

2.4. Arts

The enrollment in 2000-01 started with 79.68 per cent with the highest peak in the decade declining abruptly by 18.14 per cent in 2001-02. The maximum growth rate of 62.11 per cent is observed in 2002-03 and the minimum growth rate of 1.20 per cent is observed in 2006-07 with lowest women enrollment of 54.60 per cent in the same year. A trend observed in the faculty of arts shows that a good percentage of women are enrolled in this faculty as against the trends observed in science and commerce. The amount of growth rate for the decade does not show any decline for the faculty of arts.

2.5. Commerce

In commerce faculty the enrollment as against the trends observed for science and arts faculties' shows very low percentage of women registered. 30.66 per cent is the highest enrollment in 2000-01 for the decade which declined to 23.79 per cent in 2009-10. The minimum enrollment of 20.16 per cent is observed during 2004-05. The maximum growth rate of 79.08 per cent is observed in 2001-02 and the minimum growth rate of 0.71 per cent is observed in 2008-09. This gives the reflection of lower women enrollment in this faculty. The annual growth rate for a decade does not show any decline for this faculty.

As far as higher education of undergraduate women of Srinagar is concerned there is a decadal growth of 148.18 per cent. A maximum growth rate of 41.56 per cent is observed in 2002. During 2006-07, there is an annual decline in growth rate of 0.04 per cent. A graphical representation of annual rate of growth of women for under graduates from Srinagar district from the University of Kashmir is illustrated in Figure No.1.

²⁶Ganderbal is a district carved out from Srinagar district in the year 2007 in the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

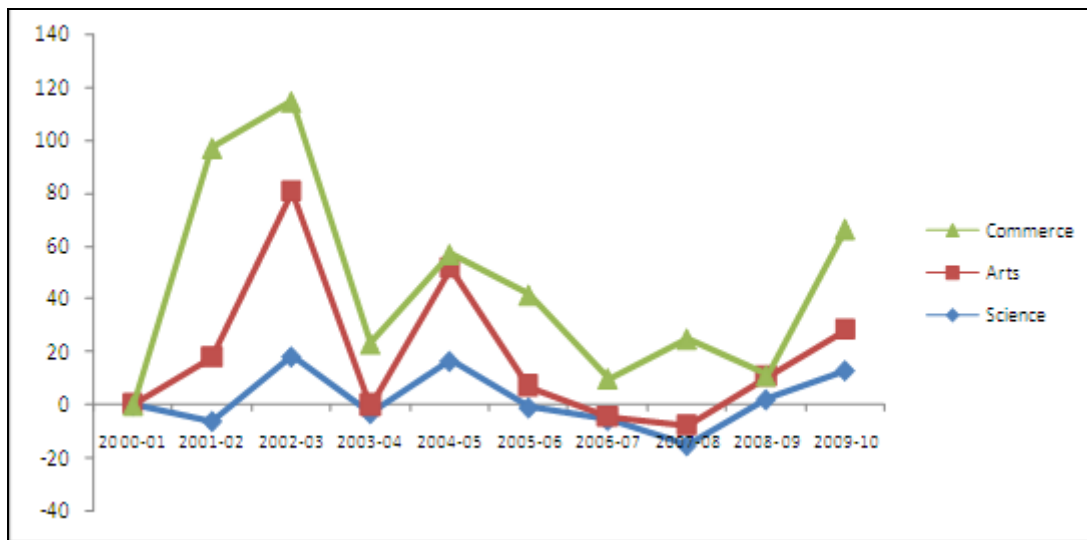


Figure 1: Annual Percentage Rates of Growth in Higher Education (UG), UOK.

UG: Under Graduates

UOK: University of Kashmir

Source: Digest of Statistics, University of Kashmir.

3. Main Findings of the Study

In order to arrive at verifiable generalization, “an educational research worker has to exercise all care and caution in formulating his conclusions on the basis of his data. Like interpretation of results, the formulation of conclusions and generalizations also demands keen observations, wide outlook and power of logical thinking”.

Accordingly, the investigator has drawn the conclusions on the basis of the data analyzed, on the personal observations of various departments and colleges visited and also on the basis of the interview conducted with some of the teachers and the students studying in these institutions.

1. Women’s Colleges are doing particularly well and quite a large number of women students are taking higher education in the colleges and also in the post-graduate departments. There are various faculties in the university where women participation is good like the Faculty of Education and Arts.
2. There is lack of moral, social and spiritual values among the students due to immense materialistic approach towards life.

3.1. Conclusion

It is now common to suppose that there is a positive perception of women education in Srinagar as more and more women are being enrolled in higher education. In the past ten years, there has been an increase in the number of women enrolled at all the levels of education in Srinagar district and in the coming years this number is likely to increase.

3.2. Suggestions

1. It is an established fact that women remain poorly represented in the work force throughout Asia _ more so in South Asia _ resulting in a loss of potential economic growth in these countries. The lack of an enabling environment for women’s career advancement and empowerment has resulted in their under representation in decision-making and in top executive jobs, especially in the spheres of business and science. To alter this trend, more women are required in leadership positions in politics and business. Higher education is crucial to empowering women to become active members in their respective domain, something that can bring about a positive change in society. Education is increasingly important for strengthening the economy as well as the health of our societies. In the newly emerging knowledge economy, human capital is the most precious resource, there is thus a greater imperative to educate women to help nations to reduce the gender gap in employment and improve their productivity. With the changing role of women in society, and considering their significant contribution to national and economic development, the need for women’s university is becoming increasingly significant. Women’s university can address these challenges by providing focused, relevant and need-based education. Students at women’s university can think about themselves and their life course through Women’s Studies and other women related courses.
2. The trend of contractualism needs to be discouraged as it mars the academic atmosphere of the colleges and universities.
3. Time demands inclusion of moral education in curriculum at high and higher secondary school and college level.
4. The need of the hour is to stress the ideal character of the teachers in order to bring about desirable change in the behavior of the students.

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