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Women in higher education: Aspirations and expectation

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Abstract

The vistas of gender as a discipline is enormous. When we talk about relation between the discipline of education and its relation with gender, then this terrain is equally heterogeneous. If we scan/explore through the rich literature on gender and education worldwide, it becomes apparent that the majority of the existing literature pertains to primary education, and there is dearth of literature in the field of higher education among women. Most of the studies which are done in these areas specifically discuss about the problems faced by women in access and excel in the higher education. There are very few studies who talk about the aspiration and expectation of society from these educated women and vice versa, i.e., the expectation and aspiration of women who are pursuing higher education.

In this research paper, the researcher has tried to understand this arena of higher education of women. In the first section of the paper, the researcher has tried to create an overview of higher education and the major trends related to gender in this arena worldwide and in specific context of India. In the next section, the researcher tried to elaborate upon the varied expectations of society from the educated females and how it has changed over the course of development of India. For this purpose, the researcher tried to trace the development of higher education of females in India and the ideology which was governing these developmental initiatives.

Keywords: Higher education, females, commissions, policies

Introductions

Higher education and gender: An overview

The higher education sector is quite colossal and diverse terrain – it encompasses varied disciplines like-

- General (sciences, commerce, humanities, arts, mathematics, social and cultural sciences),
- Technical (engineering, medicine, agricultural and life sciences and many other applied sciences)
- vocational and skill-based programmes education and training,
- Training for the hospitality and service sector
- Teacher education,
- Management education etc.

This sector has grown enormously and is becoming more diversified. Today it covers all types of higher education, training and research institutions. The prominence and quality of higher education are crucial indicators of any country's social and economic development. This not only leads to generation of highly skilled and knowledgeable citizens for social and economic advancement, but also influences the direction and condition of public discourse and policymaking. There is also a profound relationship between higher education and Education for All (EFA). The existence of meaningful educational opportunities at higher levels plays the role of a positive interventionist in pulling children and young people through the educational system.

Equally, upbeat promotion of greater and equitable participation of women of all social and ethnic groups in higher education can have a significant downstream impact. More women in public and private sectors, for example, school teachers, health care executives, journalists, bank employees, development workers and so on, have a ripple effect. The presence of more and more women in these areas lead to creation of role models for women in communities where gender discriminations are prevalent.

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If we try to trace major trends in the issues which are discussed in the literature and researches related to gender and education, then we may infer that majority of them caters to the issues related to accessibility. Most of the reports and researches focus on the problems faced by women in attaining their space in higher education. There are various Reports and Statistical Data which are provided by International Organizations like United Nation Organization (UNO) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) which try to jot down the reasons for women inability to access higher education. For example, UNESCO's World Atlas on Gender Equality in Education which was published in the year 2012 explains that in developing countries like India, females faces various disparities in their ways of accessing higher education. This report describes that there are four basic constraints which are faced by women which affects their chances of acquiring higher education, and these constraints are as follows:

- Constraints from Family: Firstly, the socio- economic condition of families have a significant impact on female's educational attainments. Secondly, the domestic responsibility of rearing and caring which are accorded to female members of the family affects the chances of a female's access to higher education.
- Constraints within society: The report explains that the societal issues like early marriages, sexual harassment and violence against women also influences the enrolment of women in higher education institutions.
- Constraints from administration: The gender discriminatory curriculum and educational practices play a significant role in defining the course of women's participation in higher education.
- Constraints in job market: This report explains that women do not get equal access to job opportunity even after gaining similar education as their male counterparts do. Women need to put in more efforts to gain same jobs which are easily accessible to males. This acts as a negative reinforce for female's participation in higher education.

UNO's Millennium Development Goals Report 2015 also expounded similar reasons for inequality in attainment of education among men and women. Some of the reasons provided by UNO's Report for unequal access of women in education were as follows:

- Gender based discrimination in law and practices;
- Violence against women;
- Unequal opportunity in labour market;
- Unequal pay;
- Limited control of women over assets and property;
- Women's unequal participation in private and public decision making.

Similarly, if we try to understand the trajectory of research in India in the field of gender and education, then similar trend is evident. Here also, the major focus of most of the studies is on women's access to higher education and the problems faced by them in the course of this journey of attaining higher education. For example, All India Survey of Higher Education 2011- 12 (Provisional) explains that

"Percentage share of male is higher than female in almost every level, except M.Phil. Post Graduate and Certificate. Student enrolment at Under Graduate level

has 50.8% male and 49.2% female. Diploma has a skewed distribution with 65.1% male and 34.9% female. Ph.D. level has 55% male and 45% female. Integrated levels have 56.2% male and 43.8% female. PG Diploma student enrolment is 53.6% for male students and 46.4% for female students." (MHRD, 2020, pp-17, 18)

Earlier also, the Confederation of Indian Industry has mentioned in his report, namely, Annual Status of Higher Education of State and UT's (Union Territories) in that, *"Females are significantly underrepresented among the faculty and staff in higher education institutes as compared to males"* (CII, 2015, pp-47) ^[15]. This also influence the enrolment of women in those courses.

If we try to explore the literature apart from these National and International reports and data, even then similar kind of researches and literary works are in prevalence which try to throw light on the issues faced by women in attaining higher education. There are many front-runner writers and researchers who have tried to explain the issues faced by women in attaining higher education and how does it influence their life at larger levels. For instance, Chanana (1988) ^[3] explained that the females' participation has increased manifolds in the field of higher education, but we need to see beyond the statistics, there are still certain courses like engineering and security wherein the females' participation is very less as there are usually termed as the courses which are deemed fit for the 'males'. The employment opportunities after completion of the course are also the guiding factors for influencing the participation of women in those courses. For instance, the working hours in the security sector, including Police and Army are flexible and the working conditions are also hard, as a result of this many families do not allow their daughters to go for these courses.

Furthermore, Menon (2012) ^[20] tried to explore the impact of different feminist movements on the trajectory of participation of females in different higher education courses, whereas Dhar (2014) ^[9] tried to locate the reasons for marginalization of females in the higher education vis a vis the prevalent scenario of world. He also tried to explore the historicity behind the female's participation in the higher education.

In all these researches, the major focus is on 'how and why women are not entering into higher education institutions?' There are very few studies which focus on the expectations and aspirations of females who get the opportunity to study in Higher Education Institutes and the aspirations and expectation of society from these women who are pursuing their higher education. For instance, Srinivas (2003) ^[33] shared that, females who enter into higher education institutions, usually try to 'pass their time' before marriage. Families of these women usually do not see education as a way of getting employment or mobility, instead they see it as a way to get 'better grooms' for their daughters.

Furthermore, Jabwala and Sharma (2015) ^[15] looked into the aspirations of females whose daughters are getting higher education. In this interesting study, she shared that the women who were not able to get education in their own times are more particular as well as motivated to ensure that their daughter should get higher education. But these studies are focused on expectation of societies from the females who are pursuing their higher education. In the next section,

the researcher has tried to explore the historical evolution terrain of societal expectation and aspirations from educated females through the lens of different educational researches, writings, reports of education commissions and different policies which came into effect at different point of times.

Expectations and aspirations of society from educated females

Education system can never be understood in vacuum as it is closely linked to society. The education system is shaped by the expectation and aspiration of society from the educated persons. These expectations are not static or fixed, rather they keep on changing as per the changes which happen in the society. Similar thing is true in the case of societal expectation from educated females. If we accept the dynamic nature of societal expectation than it is equally justifiable to trace its history. As it has wisely being said, that we need to understand past in order to understand present. So, in the coming section, the researcher has tried to trace the history of development of higher education of females in India in pre-colonial and post-colonial times to create a wholesome understanding of this arena. The researcher has also endeavored to find out how the nature of societal expectations from educated females changed in the course of time. The researcher has divided this historical exploration into two eras—firstly, pre-colonial era and secondly post-colonial era.

Pre-colonial Era

Indian public life has an intimate connection with the educational policies that were developed largely under British rule. Indian educational policies were moulded by innumerable British leaders, administrators, educators, and people in higher authority. Other than that, many missionaries, religious reformers, publicists, propagandists and politicians played a crucial role in defining the shape and status of Education Policies throughout the three centuries of Indo-British relationship (Sundaram, 1959)^[34]. It we try to trace the history of intervention of Britishers in India, then we can find that many reformist movements were done by Missionaries and English philanthropes in the early years of 19th century in the area of female education. Many reformists of Indian origin like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar also started movements for eradicating social evils like Sati and Child Marriages. They started movements and campaign to promote education for women. But many educationists and intellectuals explained that these reformers were not only working for the upliftment of women but there was also a hidden agenda behind it. All these earlier reform movements were guided by ideas of Regional Nationalism, as native people were feeling disconnected with English culture and started introspecting in their own culture (Kaviraj, 2010)^[17]. The women were at the centre of this introspection as they were considered 'carrier of culture', due to which many reform movements were started to uplift their status within society. Other than this, there were number of women including Pandita Ramabai, Savitri Bai Phule, Kadambiri Ganguly, Tarabai Shinde who were working for the cause of women education. In addition to the efforts of Indian reformers, Britishers were also taking many initiatives in order to promote education among females so that, they can propagate their western ideas among Indians. One of the most pioneer endeavours in this path was Wood's Despatch,

dated 19th July, 1854. This was one of the most prominent documents which provided a vision for women's education. These interventions from the part of government provided a fertile ground for paving ways for women in the arena of higher education, which resulted in creation of various milestones in the field of higher education among women in the latter half of 19th Century. First of these milestones was in the field of Nursing, when St. Stephens Hospital became the first hospital to start training female nurses in 1867 and subsequently first School for Nursing was started in Government General Hospital, Madras in the year 1871. The foundation stone for entry of females in teaching profession was laid in same era by Miss Mary Carpenter in 1870 by establishment of first college for female primary teachers. Till 1882, there were 15 training institutions and 1 college for the education of women. This was also the time when females were entering into the male dominated spaces of general disciplines, and the pioneers among them were Kadambini Ganguly and Chandramukhi Basu who were first female graduates of India who graduated from Calcutta University in 1883. Kadambini Ganguly was also the first female doctor of India who graduated from Calcutta Medical College in 1886.

These landmarks acted as positive reinforcer for other females due to which there was a boom in enrolment of female in higher education. During 1902-1921, there was another significant change in the social scenario which had a major impact on women access to higher education. In this year, the marriageable age of females was increased, which positively influenced the enrolment of females in higher education. This may also be inferred from statistical data, for example, in 1901-02, there were 76 women in medical colleges and 166 females in medical schools.

But if we try to understand the nuances underneath these higher enrolment of women in higher education, then we may infer that educated males were opting for educated females as their life partners. Karlekar (1986)^[16] explained this in following words, "at the same time, the need for educated daughters could not be ignored: Western education had created a new breed of young men who expected something more from their prospective brides. An article entitled "*Strishiksha*" (women's education) in *Jnanankur* (seedling of knowledge), a journal of the 1870s pointed out that "soon it will be difficult to get bridegrooms for women of upper and middle class Hindu families unless these women are given some education." Not only were the relatives of college-going boys looking for brides who were more than literate, but also, "a marriage between an educated man and an illiterate woman cannot be a happy one; discord and disagreement will naturally be the result of such a marriage (Karlekar, 1986, pp-5)^[16]."

Other than these two groups there were some other people like Radhakanta Dev, who were talking about female education in limited purview. On the one hand, they were advocating that woman should go out to gain education especially English education, but at the same time they must not forget the tradition of so called 'Indian society'.

Irrespective of these traditionalist and patriarchal ideas about female higher education, the status of higher education among females was satisfactory at the time of independence. In 1948, 59 Arts and Science colleges for women and 4,288 institutes for professional, technical and special education for women were present in India. The crucial thing to be noted here is that most of the institutes

were co-educational institutes during that time and more than 50% females used to study in those co-educational institutes.

So, if we try to summarize the historical development of higher education among women in pre-colonial era, then we may conclude that there were three groups of people who were working for the cause of women education as explained by Forbes (1998). These were:

- British Government
- Indian Male Reformers
- Indian Educated Women

All these groups were influenced by the ideologies of patriarchy and traditional notion of females and education. They had different ways of promoting higher education among females. But liberation of women was never the focal point of these educational interventions. British Government was in favour of women education as they wanted that the civil servants of colonial government should not suffer from the psychological trauma of nuclear family. Secondly, British government was also expecting that educated females will produce loyal citizens of Crown. If we talk about interventions from Indian reformers, then we may infer that, they were in favour of female education as they wished for an educated companion both inside and outside home. So they favoured and promoted female's entry in higher education institutes. On the other hand, Indian Educated Females were promoting women education for creation of obedient housewife, so they also opened avenues for educating women to promote the same ideas, but in subtle ways. (Shinde, 2015)^[32].

Post-Colonial Era

After independence, the whole and sole responsibility of providing education was laid on government and other factors had very limited role to play. So, it is quite interesting to track the expectation of society from educated females through the lens of reports of commissions and committees formulated by government of India. It is quite justified to analyse them, as they are influenced by the socio-political scenarios. In addition to this, these commissions also try to capture the popular notions and ideas prevailing in the society. In other words, we may state that, these reports may act as a mirror to understand what is the imagination and expectation of society from an educated female? What are the roles which society assign to the educated females? Is there any change in the pattern of these expectations or not? In the following section, the researcher has tried to explore the answers to these questions through an analysis of reports of commissions and committees.

The first major report which came into existence after independence and directly dealt with the issues of women in higher education was University Education Commission (1948-1949). There was a separate chapter on women education in this report. But after the analysis of this report, it may be inferred that, the ideas about female education which are being discussed in this report are guided by patriarchal and traditionalist approach. This report expounded that "There was no planning of Women's education. It just happened." (MOE, 1948-49, pp.- 351).

On many places, the UEC report states that primary occupation of females is of homemaker and an "educated, conscientious mother who lives and works with her children in the home is the best teacher in the world of cloth,

character and intelligence" (MOE, 1948-49, pp.- 343). This report recommended introduction of subjects like home making in the curriculum for female candidates as "A well-ordered home helps to make well-ordered men." (MOE, 1948-49, pp.- 346). The report also reiterated that unmarried or widow women may utilise their time to do useful work.

This report also endorsed that separate schools for women and boys between the age of 13 and 18 are desirable but the reason behind this adherence was not clearly shown in the document, i.e., whether it was based on custom or upon experience.

Apart from providing these differential notions about aims of women's education, this commission recommended opening up of co-educational institutes at college level as it may lessen the burden of government of opening up separate institutes for boys and women. In addition to this, the commission also stressed on providing safe and secure environment to females in co-educational colleges by introducing such courses which are of 'interest' of female students like needle work, painting, art and craft etc.

After UEC 1948-49, Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) was the second intervention of government of India in the field of education. The report of this commission does not have a special chapter on women education. The commission felt that, in this era of social evolution there is no need to discuss women education separately, as females are making their presence felt in all the spaces which were restricted for males only in earlier time. This report also recommended that mixed schools should be opened and both male and female teachers should be present in those schools. But if we try to have a nuanced reading of that report, then it can easily be comprehended that, this report is also following the traditional, patriarchal approach as has been followed by the earlier commissions and committees. This report explains that education should be more closely linked with the social environment, it should prepare the students to play their roles in society in a better way. "For this reason, it was urged that the teaching of home science in women's school (and wherever possible, for women attending boy's school) should be radically improved not necessarily with the idea that women's place is restricted to the home, but because it is essential that she should be educated to full fill her two-fold duty to family and society." (Aggarwal, 1992, pp-34-35)^[1]. In other words, this report voiced that woman should move out of their home and make their presence felt in the society, but should also be loyal to their families. In this way, we may infer that this report moves a step ahead from the traditional approach but still remain tied in the shackles of patriarchy.

But in coming year, the demand for opening up varied avenues for women in the field of education became stronger. So, in the year 1958-59, a special committee was formulated by Government of India to look into the matter of women's education. This committee was named as National Commission on Women Education (1958-59) and is popularly known as Durgabai Deshmukh Committee, as she was the chairman of that committee. First and foremost recommendation of this committee was that a National Council for the Education of women should be opened up, as early as possible. This report also suggested that more and more opportunities should be provided to females to pursue vocational education and courses in commerce, engineering, agriculture, medicine etc. This report also favoured that, scholarships should be provided to women so

that they can enrol in higher education and can gain more and more knowledge. Another remarkable endorsement of this commission was related to providing grant-in aids to the institutes. This commission stated that the norms to gain aids from government should be relaxed for women's institute, so that they can function better. This endorsement was in stark contrast with the recommendation of earlier commissions and committees. The earlier reports always focused on providing space to females in co-educational spaces, but this report recommended that separate institutes should be opened up. In other words, we may infer that this report endorsed the separation of public space on the basis of gender which was not endorsed so strongly in earlier committees.

Furthermore, another committee was formulated in the year 1961, under the chairmanship of Hansa Mehta to look into the matter of differentiation of curricula for boys and women. This committee was named as Committee on differentiation of Curriculum for Boys and Girls (1961) and is popularly known as Hansa Mehta Committee. Aggarwal (1992) ^[1] explained that, this report describes the role of women in society in following words:

“We do realise that child- rearing and home making will have prior claims on women. We, however, feel that owing to the development of science and technology, both these functions will occupy less and less of their time. It would now be possible for women to take up career of their own and it will be great tragedy not to allow them to do so. We, therefore, recommend that the education of women should be so planned as to enable them to follow a career of their choice without, in any way neglecting their responsibilities for child- rearing and home making” (Aggarwal, 1992, pp-44) ^[1].

In this way, this report also propagated similar patriarchal and traditional ideas that home should be the prime responsibility of females, which were promoted by earlier commissions and committees. Interesting this report also focused on promotion of home economics subject, which was also the focus of UEC Report- 1948-49.

So, we may infer that, in first fifteen years of independent India, majorly the traditional patriarchal ideas were dominant in government's interventions towards female education. These commission had a limited purview of seeing educated females, i.e. within the periphery of house. But, in coming decades, a change in perception may be observed in the recommendations of committees and commissions, as the expectations of society from educated women were changing.

The first breeze of this change in expectations from educated females can be felt in the report of Committee to look into the cause for lack of Public Support Particularly in Rural Areas for Women's Education and to Enlist Public Cooperation (1963). This report advised that more and more female teachers should be appointed in schools to increase the enrolment of women in schools. The report also suggested that various provisions like improvement in salaries, provision for government home, part- time employment and posting of women in nearby areas should be implemented so that women in large numbers should feel motivated to join this profession.

In the subsequent year, Education Commission (1964-66) was appointed, which made pioneer commendation for women's education. The commission stated that *“The role of women outside the home has become an important feature of the social and economic life of the country and in the years to come, this will assume large proportions affecting a majority of women. It will, therefore, be necessary to pay adequate attention to the problems of training and employment of women* (GOI, 1966, pp-224).”

This report further pronounced that teaching, social service and nursing are well organised areas where women are in majority, but numerous new boulevards should be opened up for them to increase their participation in Indian economy. The report suggested that scholarships and economical hostels should be provided to female to increase their enrolment in higher education. Another idea which was promoted by this report was setting up of research units in 1-2 universities for studying issues related to women's education.

A move ahead in this field of increasing accessibility of females in higher education was made by recommendations of UNESCO Seminar on Women Education (January 1966). It was organised by the Indian Federation of University Women's Association. The main aim of this seminar was to emphasis on women's access to education. This seminar provided a recommendation to the government for the establishment of a Special Bureau to create a liaison between educated women and employees, so that more and more educated women can enter into job market.

These committees and commission opened up new avenues of expectation from females, where they were not seen as mothers or wives only. On the backdrop of this change in the perceptions, a committee was appointed in the year 1971, to find out the status of women in India. This committee was named as 'Commission on the Status of Women (1971-1974)' and it submitted its report in the year 1974. This report was quite revealing and unique in many senses. Firstly, the report of this committee was based on ground level intensive study which was done for around 3 years. Secondly, this report also tried to trace the historical reasons of present status of women. This report claimed that the view of people towards female education has always remained parochial in both pre-colonial and post- colonial era. The report analysed the pre- colonial scenario and the commission and committee reports which came in post-colonial era. On the basis of analysis of these documents, this report claimed that women education was promoted in both the times, but the major aim of that was only to improve their status within family, not outside it. A field-based survey was also done by the members of this commission, in which it came into light that people have hostile attitude towards females opting for higher education. In this survey 64. 50% respondents shared that woman should not be allowed to go for higher education, even if they are intelligent. After providing these data, this commission endorsed that government should take initiatives to promote the entry of women in higher education institutes. In addition to this, the focus should also be set on providing employment information and guidance services to females who are entering into higher education. After the recommendation of this committee, special provision were prepared in Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90) to promote higher education among females. In this

five-year plan, 'Open Learning System' comprising of correspondence programme for women was introduced, so that talented women can go for higher education. In addition to this, various polytechnics were also opened in various areas to promote technical and vocational education among females.

All these changes which were coming in society regarding the perception towards educated women and their importance in this world were visible in National Policy on Education (NPE-1986) and its subsequent Programme of Action (POA-1992). "*The National Policy on Education (NPE) envisages that education would be used as a strategy for achieving a basic change in the status of women. The National education system would (i) play a positive interventionist role in the empowerment of women,*

(ii) Contribute towards development of new values through redesigned curricula and textbooks, and

(iii) Women's studies will be promoted as part of various courses (NPE, 1986, pp-101)."

This policy also focused on women's access in higher education institutes and stated that "The women's access to technical education will be improved qualitatively and quantitatively. The choice of trades/disciplines offered to women at Certificate/ Diploma/Degree levels in all types of technical education institutions, will be made keeping in view the objective of bringing about women's equality. Necessary incentives, as spelt out in the section of Technical Education will be provided (NPE, 1986, pp.105)."

Furthermore, the National Education Policy, 2020 also states that-

"The policy additionally recognizes the special and critical role that women play in society and in shaping social mores; therefore, providing a quality education to girls is the best way to increase the education levels for these SEDGs, not just in the present but also in future generations. The policy thus recommends that the policies and schemes designed to include students from SEDGs should be especially targeted towards girls in these SEDGs." (MHRD, 2020, pp. 26.)

So, if we try to summarize the expectation of society from educated females through the perspective of committees and commission than we may infer that there is a change in pattern in these expectations. In the earlier years of independent India, the commissions and committees had overtly patriarchal ideas about education of females. These commissions promoted that, women should enter into the courses like home science, nursing etc. which may facilitate them in managing their homes in better way. But in later year, ground level study were done to find out the actual status of female's higher education. This led to some broadening in the horizons of expectation from educated females. In later years, commission and committees started seeing that there are avenues for females outside their homes too and these should be opened for them. So, these commissions and committees made various recommendation to promote higher education among females.

Even though tracking of the expectation of society from educated females through the lens of commission and committees provide us an overview, but it doesn't provide us a complete picture of whole scenario. Because, India is a heterogeneous society where people of different socio-economic, cultural background stay together and government's interventions have differential importance and impact on the life of these people. So, it is quite relevant to

explore what are the expectations of the people of different socio-economic background from educated females.

Aspirations of females entering in higher education institutes

In the earlier section, the researcher has tried to formulate a sketch of societal expectation from educated females. But it is also important to understand what are expectations and aspirations of females who are entering into higher education institutes. This is quite significant arena, as education is a social enterprise. It is governed by both parties, i.e., one who is sending the pupil to educational institutes and the other who is gaining education. So, it is important to understand the perception of both the parties, so that a clear picture of expectation and aspirations from higher education of females can be formulated.

If we try to understand this arena in world's perspective then we may inter that, research on gender and career aspirations shifted in the 1990s. Earlier researches showed a clear division between the career aspirations of male and female students, with female students often defaulting to what has been labelled "family safe" career choices. This is also evident in the policy recommendation of the Government of India.

For example, Dasgupta, (1972) ^[10] also revealed that social role perception affects the educational ambition of women. He found that female's aspirations are significantly influenced by the expectations of their family members. But in later years, there was a change in this pattern. For example, Scheel, *et al.* (1994) ^[31] find a gender difference in educational aspirations. Although women showed more ambition than men in attaining a master's degree but they were less inspired than men in obtaining a doctorate or professional degree. Scheel *et al.* (1994) ^[31] construe these findings as women having impractical career aspirations. The researchers speculated that collectively these findings are due to women having expectations of their future family life that acts as a barriers in higher education.

Many other intellectuals (Beauvoir, 1983; Chanana, 1988; Dubey, 2001; Warton, 2005) ^[2, 3, 7, 37] also discussed the societal expectations of family life and female behaviour and how these expectations conflicted with a women aspirations and expectations. These writings also subtly inform that social norms and culture significantly influence the aspirations of individuals.

In we try to see it in the context of India, then we may infer that, educational aspiration of the women with social correlates is less researched area. Most of the studies done in the area focused on the psychological, economic and physical aspects only (Holmes, Valerie & Lillian, 1988; Li, 2007) ^[14, 18]. Social aspects are generally neglected and in the name of social context mostly socio-economic status, family background and parental education are taken into account (Conolly, Paul & Healy, Julie, 2004; Alloway, Nala *et al.* 2004, Daniel, Kasomo 2009) ^[4].

Conclusion

The societal expectations of females who are entering into the field of higher education has changed significantly from earlier times. For instance, the major reason behind initiation of education for women was to create educated females who may look after their families in a better way. Later on, there was a shift in this scenario and their need was felt in the outside world also. So, the female's education has been looked up as a way of creating space for social change by uplifting the socio-economic position of women in the society. But in these times also, the study has

remained in centre stage. Whereas, after the advent of privatization and globalization there was an increased demand for labour force as a result of this, positive interventionist policies were developed so that more and more females can get educated and aid in the economic development of the country. But there are various studies which explains that even after increased participation of females in the employment sector, the females are still being expected to look after their familial responsibilities also, i.e., females are expected to excel in their careers but they are also being expected to fulfil their duties of 'raring and caring' of the family. As a result of these dual expectations of the family from the females, the aspirations of the educated women also get complex, as they try to manage their 'household' and 'outside home' responsibility and in this process they sometimes 'lose their actual aspiration or dream'.

So, there is a need to move beyond these traditionalistic and patriarchal ideas, so that females should feel less 'burdened' from the societal expectations and 'aspire' for bigger dreams and achieve the same in their lives.

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