

Declaration

I do hereby declare that the thesis entitled “Gender Gap in Higher Education: A Study of Student Community in the Higher Educational Institutes of North Bengal” has been prepared by me under the supervision of Dr. Sushma Rohatgi (Retired Professor). This document is a work undertaken as part of a programme of study at the Department of Geography and Applied Geography, University of North Bengal. All the views and opinions expressed therein remain the sole responsibility of the author, and do not necessarily represent those of the institution. The work of other authors or any other organization or agency wherever made use of, in this document have been thoroughly acknowledged. No part of this thesis has formed the basis for the award of any degree or fellowship, previously.

Date: 20/01/2023 .

Srashta Chowdhury .

(Srashta Chowdhury)

Department of Geography and Applied Geography

University of North Bengal

Raja Rammohunpur

Dist: Darjiling

Pin:734013



समानो मन्त्रः समितिः समानी

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY & APPLIED GEOGRAPHY
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

ACCREDITED BY NAAC WITH GRADE B++

RAJA RAMMOHUNPUR, P.O. NORTH BENGAL UNIVERSITY, DIST. DARJEELING, WEST BENGAL, PIN - 734013
Ph. No. +91-0353-2776342, FAX +91-0353-2699001, URL: www.nbu.ac.in

Certificate

This is to certify that Srashta Chowdhury has prepared the thesis entitled “GENDER GAP IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A STUDY OF STUDENT COMMUNITY IN THE HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES OF NORTH BENGAL” for the award of Ph.D. Degree in Geography and Applied Geography of University of North Bengal under my guidance. The researcher has carried out the research work in the Department of Geography and Applied Geography, University of North Bengal and the thesis has been prepared based on extensive field study using primary and secondary sources of information.

Sushma Rohatgi 20/01/2023

(Prof. Sushma Rohatgi)

Retired Professor, Department of Geography and Applied Geography

University of North Bengal

Raja Rammohunpur

Dist: Darjiling






Pin: 734013

Professor (Retired)
Department of Geography &
Applied Geography
University of North Bengal

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1 GENDER GAP IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A STUDY OF STUDENT COMMUNITY IN THE HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES OF NORTH BENGAL CHAPTER I 1 INTRODUCTION 1.1 Education System in India With the rise of modernization and industrialization processes post-Independence, Indian educational system witnessed crucial changes. As India declared its principle of social justice and equality, the universities became institute of closed academic learning for only a limited number of people. The doors of the higher educational institutes opened up to every citizen irrespective of their socio-economic position. Despite the heightened stress on non-discriminate nature of higher education, the situation has not changed drastically in terms of advantage to the population in higher education representing the genders other than the men. This adds to the existing gender differences in the academic space. Gender is not only about the men and the women but also the inextricable mix of the social institutions existing. Gender Gap in education refers predominantly to the less representation of either the female or male gender from the education system, a situation that requires intervention as well as rectification.

Srashta Chowdhury
20/01/2023

Sushmalokah
20/01/2023
Professor (Retired)
Department of Geography &
Applied Geography
University of North Bengal

Preface

The location of HEI in North Bengal are highly dispersed, there are not many HEIs that provide professional degree courses also there are lack of any Institute of National Importance or Deemed to be Universities. There are high number of B. Ed. colleges which give a very misleading idea about the region in case of quantity of the institutes. The growth of degree colleges is very slow or rather stagnant. Lack of an HEI in any area leads to the lagging behind of the younger generations to be socially responsible and sustainable, to create atmosphere of global tolerance and to save up for the future generation. Looking at gender representation of students in HE, the enrolment ratio does not provide a very specific picture of if the gender gap has actually been reduced. There still remains disparity in how the different streams of study still remain gender segregated. There are still fewer female students in the science, commerce and professional streams of study. This may lead to a high disparity where with time the study area may not have a female workforce for the industries that are concerned with the aforesaid subjects. Spaces can only be gender neutral when it allows people of all gender to co – exist. In a gender – neutral space there should be no fear of expression of gender identities or no judgements passed for practicing gender. Gender goes beyond the grammatical practice of classifying nouns as masculine, feminine or neuter rather it is the core of a person’s psychological and physical existence. The HEIs of North Bengal are extremely androcentric, even though emphasis has been given on gender neutral campus and gender – neutral curriculum. As the focal theme of the work is discussing gender, there are schemes for the women students or we could say the female students. There should also be schemes introduced for the male students and the students who do not identify as either male or female. The female students are represented proportionately but there are still people doing gender who are left behind.

The northern part of West Bengal is still left behind in socio – economic development, HE development in the state should be looked at on a regional perspective and policies should be undertaken accordingly.

The whole study is divided into eight chapters including introduction and concluding remarks. First chapter is dealing with the general introduction, conceptual framework, literature reviews, and statement of the problem, research hypothesis, research objectives and adopted methodologies. The chapter also describes significance of the study The second chapter is on the overview and geographical background of the study area i.e., North Bengal which includes geographical location, historical geography of North Bengal (India), physical environment, demographic, social, economic background and North Bengal as a region. In the third chapter the location and distribution of the HEIs of the study area has been discussed based on secondary data. The difference in the distribution of HEI in the northern and the southern districts of West Bengal is discussed in this chapter. The Fourth chapter discusses the pattern of enrolment in the HEIs in the different streams. Relationship between gender and choice of stream is established in this chapter. Gender Parity Index in the different streams is calculated for all the universities and the districts of the study area. In chapter five, different factors that help students

choose their HEI is discussed; socio economic status, infrastructure in the HEI, school leaving examination grades are some of the important factors that is established during the analysis. Chapter six, the opinions of the students on gender roles has been considered for the study. Also, how the students are present in a highly sex segregated HEI space, the existing gender stereotypes and the ways students themselves practice gender unconsciously in the space. Chapter seven deals with the awareness of the students about the different schemes and initiatives taken by the government. Lastly, chapter eight is a complete summary of the study and concluding remarks.

Sourashtra Chowdhury
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List of Abbreviations

A&A: Assessment and Accreditation	DEC: Distance Education Council
AICTE: All India Council for Technical Education	EC: Education Commission
AISHE: All India Survey of Higher Education	EFA: Education for All
B. Com(H): Bachelor of Commerce (Honours)	ESCS: Economically and Socially Challenged Students
B.A.(H): Bachelor of Arts (Honours)	EWS: Economically Weaker Section
B.Agric. : Bachelor of Agriculture	FPPP: Footprints of Projects and Professional Practices
B.B.A.: Bachelor of Business Administration	FRU: Financial Resources and their Utilisation
B.Lib.Sc.: Bachelor of Library Science	FSR: Faculty – students ration with emphasis on permanent faculty
B.Pharm: Bachelor of Pharmacy	GER: Gross Enrolment Ratio
B.Sc.(H): Bachelor of Science (Honours)	GPI: Gender Parity Index
B.Tech. : Bachelor of Technology	HE: Higher Education
BDS: Bachelor of Dental Surgery	HECI: Higher Education Commission of India
BHA: Bachelor of Hotel Administration	HEI: Higher Educational Institute
BHM: Bachelor of Hotel Management	HES: Higher Education System
CABE: Central Advisory Board of Education	HS: Higher Secondary
CBCS: Choice Based Credit System	IAS: Indian Administrative Service
CCI: Cabinet Committee on Infrastructure	IBA: Indian Banks Association
CEC: Consortium for Educational Communication	ICAR: Indian Council for Agricultural Research
CoA: Council of Architecture	ICC: Internal Complaints Committee
Coed: Coeducation	ICHR: Indian Council of Historical Research
CPBU: Koch Bihar Panchanan Barma University	ICPR: Indian Council of Philosophical Research
CSS: Centrally Sponsored Scheme	ICSSR: Indian Council of Social Science Research

ICT: Information and Communication Technology	NCC: National Cadet Corps
IEP: Indian Education Policy	NCERT: National Council of Educational Research and Training
IGNOU: Indira Gandhi National Open University	NCHE: National Council for Higher Education
IIM: Indian Institute of Management	NCTE: National Council for Teacher Education
IIT: Indian Institute of Technology	NDLI: National Digital Library of India
Int. M.Sc.: Integrated Masters of Science	NEP/NPE: National Education Policy/ National Policy on Education
IPS: Indian Police Service	NET: National Eligibility Test
IQAC: Internal Quality Assurance Cell	NFHS: National Family Health Survey
IRAHE: Independent Regulatory Authority for Higher Education	NIOS: National Institute of Open Schooling
ISC: Indian School Certificate	NIRF: National Institutional Ranking Framework
JNV: Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya	NIT: National Institute of Technology
LGBTQIA: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual	NITTTR: National Institute of Technical Teachers Training and Research
LLB: Legum Baccalaureus/ Bachelor of Law	NKC: National Knowledge Commission
LQ: Location Quotient	NKN: National Knowledge Network
M.Com: Master s of Commerce	NMEICT: National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology
M.Phil.: Master of Philosophy	NPTEL: National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning
MAKAUT: Maulana Abul Kalam Azad University of Technology	NSS: National Social Service Scheme
MBBS: Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery	OBC: Other Backward Classes
MHRD/MoE: Ministry of Human Resource Development/ Ministry of Education	OI: Outreach and Inclusivity
MOOC: Massive Online Open Courses	OTT: Over the Top
NAAC: National Assessment and Accreditation Council	PCS: Physically Challenged Students
NBU: North Bengal University	

PG: Post Graduate	UG: Under Graduate
Ph.D.: Doctor of Philosophy	UGB: University of Gour Banga
POA: Plan of Action	UGC: University Grants Commission
PR: Perception Ranking	UN: United Nations
PwD: Person with Disability	UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
QE: Quality Enhancement	WBCHSE: West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education
R&D: Research and Design	WBCS: West Bengal Civil Service
RTE: Right to Education	WBFS: West Bengal Freeship Scheme
RTPS: Regional Transition Paths to Sustainability	
RU: Raiganj University	
RUSA: Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan	
SC: Scheduled Caste	
SDG: Sustainable Development Goal	
SEDGs: Socio – Economically Disadvantaged Groups	
SES: Socio- economic Status	
ST: Scheduled Tribe	
STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics	
SWAYAM: Study Webs of Active – Learning for Young Aspiring Minds	
SwD: Students with Disabilities	
TE: Tertiary Education	
TFW: Tuition Fee Waiver	
TLR: Teaching, Learning and Resources	
TSP: Talent Support Programme	
TT: Teacher’s Training	
UDHR: Universal Declaration on Human Rights	