

Pursuing Higher Education among Women Aspirants in Teaching Profession through Social Worker's Lens

Ms. M. Thendral, Dr. F. Carter Premraj

Ph.D.Scholar, Department of Social Work, Bishop Heber College (Autonomous) (Affiliated to Bharathidasan University), Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu, India.

Research Supervisor, Department of Social Work, Bishop Heber College (Autonomous) (Affiliated to Bharathidasan University), Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu, India.

Abstract

The intrinsic motivation of women to participate in higher education and teaching in today's context has taken a lot of attention to mold their personality and the young minds of the nation. The journey to pursue their dreams, despite barriers based on family life, socio-cultural factors, and economic status are still prevailing in developing countries. Education to women, from a social work perspective is not merely an advancement, but it would serve as a catalyst for social change from home to society for the empowerment of family members and community development. This article assesses the aspirations, motivations, structural challenges, institutional dynamics, and social implications shaping women's pursuit of higher education for careers in teaching. Educational Learning Theories such as Cognitive Learning Theory, Behaviorism Learning Theory, Constructivism Learning Theory, Humanism Learning Theory, Connectivism Learning Theory highlights the need for social workers in advocating equitable access to education, emphasis on gender equality and empowering women through counselling, participation and social engagement. This study allegedly focuses on systematic interventions, powerful implementation of policies and passion for the teaching profession.

Keywords : motivation, women, higher education, aspirations, social work, teaching

Introduction

Women aspirants intended to pursue higher education initially complete their schooling and enrol in colleges and universities to qualify more. Many of the women who choose the teaching profession are prepared to qualify for B.Ed . and [M.Ed](#) at the school level and or step towards pursuing their masters degree and qualify for UGC NET / SET. They are keen in their professional development, empowerment and mature social behaviour. Teaching has historically been a preferred occupation for women across many societies due to the perception of it being a nurturing, flexible, and noble career. This perception opens avenues for women. The innate nature of nurturing that stems from gendered expectations of caregiving and soft skills also gives direction towards the teaching profession. In recent years, higher education for women has become a central focus in developmental agendas, educational policies, and gender mainstreaming initiatives.

As a social worker, when women intensely seek to pursue higher education, it indicates her desire to achieve and overcome social constraints. Ultimately, the woman at a micro level expects equality, dignity and autonomy and from a macro level to be independent and contribute to her family and the community. The uniqueness of this teaching profession is to prepare healthy generations equipped with life skills such as critical thinking, leadership qualities, emotionally intelligent and equipped citizens to directly contribute to the nation.

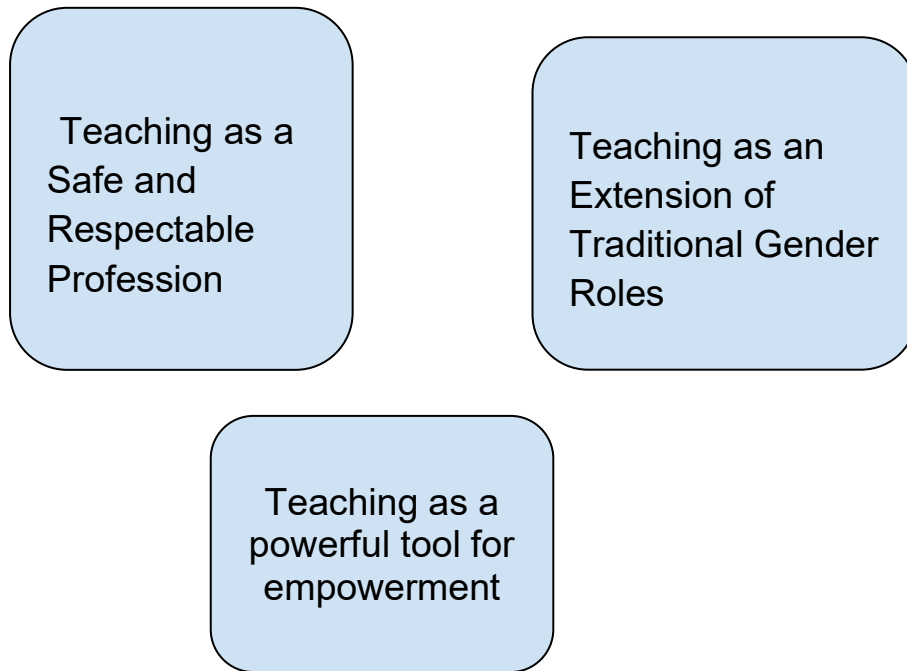
The reality of the deep sense of achievement in the teaching profession still remains unreachable for the majority of the women due to family issues, social constraints, economic instability and other hazards. The rural and the urban divide widens because of the lack of accessibility, patriarchal system, early marriages and poor economic status in the rural areas. A social worker's analysis must therefore engage with structural inequalities, gender dynamics, and power relations that influence women's educational journeys.

The purpose of this manuscript is to explore how women navigate their aspirations to pursue higher education for careers in teaching, the barriers they encounter, and the role of social workers in supporting women's educational

trajectories. The paper also examines the broader implications of women educators on society and the need for systemic reforms to promote equitable access to higher education.

Women's preference for Teaching Profession

Teaching has long been regarded as a feminized profession, especially in countries where gender roles prescribe women as caregivers, nurturers, and moral guides. While this perception is rooted in patriarchal norms, it inadvertently opens educational and professional opportunities for women.



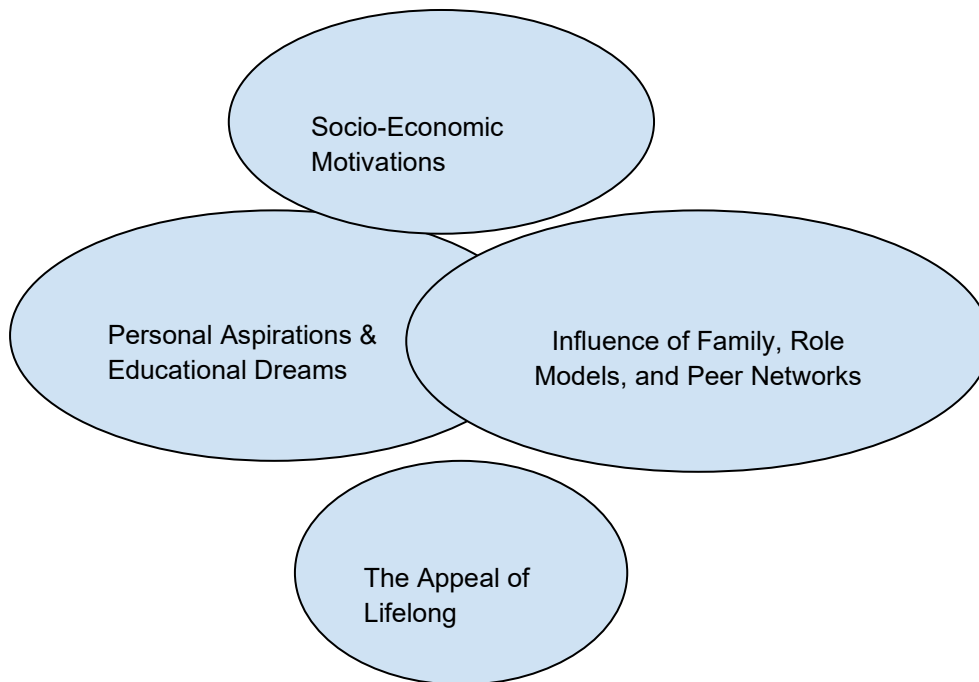
The following reasons validate teaching profession for women from the perspective of self, family and society:

- a. It is affirmed with no doubt that the teaching profession make the women self reliant
- b. In addition to academic skills, it guarantees intellectual growth
- c. Embodies with the skill of leadership and influence
- d. Boosts financial independence
- e. As a noble profession, the community recognizes the commitment of teachers
- f. It yields a lifelong learning experience
- g. Families consider it as a safe profession within the campus
- h. The working hours are predictable
- i. The nature of job security and stability makes their family relaxed
- j. They consider it as a socially respectable profession
- k. Society aligns the teaching profession with the nature of women being caring and nurturing
- l. The society also believes that women mentors the children through social norms
- m. It also helps in creating gender awareness

Thus, the career choice of becoming a teacher is welcoming and the output is a well rounded experience according to the family and society.

Intrinsic Motivation versus Extrinsic Motivation

Women’s educational aspirations and their desire to join the teaching profession are shaped by personal, social, cultural, and economic factors.



The inner motivation for a woman to pursue higher education and choose the teaching profession as a career is derived from childhood dreams of teaching, an instinct for personal growth, seeking identity confidently and the nature of nurturing young minds. Otherwise, family members practicing teaching and teachers during school days always have a lasting impact on career decisions for every woman. Peer networks—including classmates, senior students, and professional acquaintances—also motivate women by sharing experiences about scholarships, admissions, and teaching opportunities.

On the other hand, short term and quick benefits like a stable income, prospects for higher earnings, sustainability contribute towards choosing the right career as teaching.

Finally, the teaching learning aspects are continuous and mutual and are life long.

Challenges encountered by women aspirants

Despite both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and determination, women face numerous obstacles in accessing and completing higher education on the basis of the following social, domestic, psychological and barriers:

1. The patriarchal norms and gender expectations in our society often compels the women to prioritize the dysfunctional social expectations like early marriage, family life, social reputation of the family, not to send women to work and prioritize domestic duties over education. This leads to reduced opportunities to explore her career interests.
2. There are also restrictions on women who travel long distances or opt for co-educational institutions or even shifting of residence either for higher education or career progress. Quality enrichment for the women is always doubtful in this situation.
3. The additional burden of pursuing education for teaching career is taxing to handle household chores, children, elderly and marital life. This will amount to emotional and physical disengagement in both personal and professional life.
4. Economic barriers double, when women incur tuition fees, hostel accommodation, commutation, study materials and other necessary accessories.

5. Psychological hazards are the most difficult to overcome swiftly. It includes low self-esteem, poor command over language, fear of failures and competition, lack of awareness regarding career directions and anxiety to become successful.

6. Infrastructure or institutional difficulties include inadequate resources on campus, biased procedures and gender insensitiveness especially for rural women.

The Social Worker's Analytical Lens

Social workers approach women's educational challenges through multiple theoretical and practical perspectives. This includes educational theories to explain and optimize learning for women.

1. Empowerment Theory

Empowerment theory stresses women enhancing their self-worth and personal spaces during their higher education. It consists of resources like a conducive learning atmosphere, financial support to complete their degrees and get placed on merit.

Summary of a Case Study 1

A 22 year old woman, unmarried, who moved from her native to pursue her higher education was empowered. She had the ability to choose the best for her career prospects in teaching. Even though she lacked a good communication skill, she made sincere efforts not only to learn but master the language. There was no fear in her. She explored herself and had a thirst to look for opportunities tirelessly. Thus, she was able to pursue her higher education.

2. Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner's framework helps understand the importance of family, educational institutions, community, cultural norms and government policies working together to shape women's educational and career potentials.

Summary of a Case Study 2

The systems to which a woman is attached are her family, college, friends, professors with a set of rules and regulations. A college going student from a low-socioeconomic family aged 21 years has a desire to upgrade herself through higher education. Her family members could be of moral support and always encouraging. Hence, she had to apply for scholarships. Thus, the institution guided her for her economic stability. She encountered a lot of challenges during her course of study from friends. She stepped on all these hurdles and concentrated only on the system which is of significant support for her career path. Thus, she brought laurels for family members and professors.

3. Rights-Based Approach

The right to education is fundamental to all and is often restricted to women. Thus, social workers advocate every woman to pursue their higher education as well. The nature of rights are equitably accessible to all, there should be no discrimination on the basis of age, sex, caste and so on, and there must be a conducive learning environment to all.

Summary of a case study 3

A girl child aged 15 years, prepared herself to appear for Board examination from a Government school. Her parents were not able to afford further education to her, whereas they were keen on offering opportunities to their son. This disturbed her a lot, and she studied very well to clear her exams with very good grades. Thus, she achieved a topper and came to limelight by exercising her right with the support of the well wishers.

Strengths Perspective

Every human being has their own strengths and weaknesses. A woman is always considered vulnerable and pulled down for her weaknesses, if she focuses only on her strengths, she is likely to achieve. The strengths perspective

emphasizes women's resilience, talents, determination, and inherent capabilities. Social workers help women identify and build on these strengths.

Summary of a case study 4

A single mother of two grown children, had focussed only on her strengths and made higher education possible for both her son and daughter. Both of them are empowered to get placed and take care of their mother. She is aged 48 and has gone through many hardships to get her children educated. She concentrated only on her skills, work and determination to build her strengths.

Role of Social Workers in Supporting Women Aspirants

The vibrant role of a social worker in identifying women aspirants and supporting them for their higher education contributes to the welfare of the society at large. They are:



1. Social Workers are very keen in advocating for women's higher education by looking into their safety measures for enrolling in higher education, comfortable accommodation and transportation facilities, to avail scholarship for the eligible candidates, and financial support for their career plans during their course of study inside the campus.

2. The majority of the women are hooked to multiple complex problems, from which they need to be relieved to pursue their dreams of achieving higher education and progressing towards career goals. Therefore, counseling and guidance are given by social workers to support the women from every aspect of their life. Academic counselling, career counselling, life skills training, emotional support as well as stress management guidance are also provided to boost their self-esteem.

3. A woman represents her family, her secondary group and also community to a greater extent. The social worker affirms her active participation in the community through engagement for greater benefits yielding to the women of the self-help groups, skill development workshops and through awareness programmes based on parenting, health camps, reproductive health, entrepreneurship, engaging the mothers for their daughter's higher education, motivational workshops, collaborating with NGOs for their long-term achievement and so on.

4. The empowerment of women is purely based on the sensitivity of the society towards women's needs. Thus, it could be accomplished through collaboration with institutions focussing on gender equality, women empowerment, and inclusion of women in all perspectives of the globe.

Social Problems identified by Social Worker

There are a number of social evils that hamper the progress of women. It includes domestic violence, dowry, abuse (physical, emotional, verbal, sexual), trafficking of women, commercial sex work, rape and so on. Despite all these problems, women find a way to ladder up towards achieving their higher education to facilitate their profession in teaching. A social worker serves as a catalyst in identifying social problems and making efforts to tackle them.

Holistic development of women in the Teaching Profession through Higher Education

Education plays a transformative role in young minds as learners and also teachers. This profession has a great impact on society and the women's economic and professional dimension.

Socially, the teachers make impressive contributions and serve as a role model for their students. They have a great influence on younger generations. The teaching profession has an increased dignity, status in society. They can voice out in community participation. The right to decision making becomes a powerful tool during their teaching career. They promote gender equality and awareness among women.

Economically, their career choice paves way to family financial stability, investments and savings, participation in the community.

Professionally, women gain opportunities to present their view through paper presentations and publications in workshops, conferences and research. They gain opportunities for promotions, leadership positions in the institution and method of practicing curriculum and pedagogy.

Female teachers intend to choose their passion towards teaching to nurture the young minds to contribute towards the society and to follow moral values. Students receive only good inputs from the teachers. They are moulded and their lives are shaped during the young years with the teachers. They are inspired to live up to their teacher's expectations. Thus, teachers have a great impact on the students.

Discussion

A social worker's understanding of women's pursuit of higher education is incomplete without recognizing intersecting factors like gender, class, location, and cultural norms. While teaching provides a feasible career path for many women, systemic barriers continue to restrict equal access to teacher education. Women who persist in their educational journeys demonstrate resilience and determination, yet structural inequalities persist in the form of patriarchal norms, economic disparity, and institutional inadequacies.

The role of social workers becomes vital in enabling women to navigate these barriers through advocacy, counselling, community engagement, and institutional reforms. There is a need for continuous collaboration between educational institutions, NGOs, government bodies, and families to create supportive environments.

Conclusion

The case studies based on the various rights perspectives, clearly denote the ability of every woman who chooses their teaching profession are shaped in personal and professional arena. The social worker looks into her invisible problems and the way they are handled by women through the process of empowerment, resilience and social change. Continuous family support, social policies, advocacy strengthen and sustain the development of women.

Women educators are powerful agents of change who inspire, lead, and contribute to community development. Strengthening their access to higher education is essential for building inclusive, progressive, and equitable societies.

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