



## PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTS TOWARDS GIRLS HIGHER EDUCATION

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### Abstract

*This study is carried out to know the perceptions of parents towards girls' higher education, by focusing their views regarding the benefits and barriers of Girls Higher Education, Cultural and Socio- Economic factors that effect Higher Education of Girls. Objectives of the study are (i)To know the perceptions of Parents regarding the benefits of Higher Education of Girls.(ii) To know the perceptions of Parents regarding the barriers to higher education of girls.(iii) To identify the Cultural and Socio- Economic factors that effect Higher Education of Girls.(iv)To compare the perceptions of Male and Female Parents regarding higher education of girls. The research adopted a survey method, data was collected from 30 parents of higher secondary graduates in Paschim Bardhaman district, West Bengal, through simple random sampling technique. Statistical techniques such as mean, standard deviation, percentage, and t-test were used for analysis.The findings of the study revealed that 93% parents responded that their perceptions towards the benefits of girls' higher education is high, highlighting its potential to promote economic independence, societal respect, and empowerment. However, 7% of parents have a low perception, often influenced by orthodox beliefs and financial challenges.57% parents responded that their perceptions towards barriers for higher education of girls is high, 36% parents perception towards barriers for higher education of girls is moderate, and 7% is low. Barriers include household chorus, care of siblings, lack of awareness, and limited access to higher educational opportunities.100% Parents responded that cultural, socioeconomic factors that influence girls higher education is moderate. The difference between perceptions of male and female parent of higher secondary graduates yielded no significant difference in perception, with a p-value of 0.591 and a t-value of 0.544.This shows that there is no significant difference in the perceptions of male and female parents towards higher education of girls. This shared perception highlights the need for collective parental support in overcoming challenges and advocating for girls' access to higher education.*

**Keywords:** *Girls' higher education, parents' perception, barriers, benefits, cultural and socio- economic factors*

## **Introduction:**

Education is a fundamental right and we all know that it is a powerful tool to empower as well as it is useful for societal development. Girls' education, in particular, plays an important role in empowering individuals, promoting gender equality, and fostering economic growth. Higher education equips girls with advanced knowledge and skills, enabling them to contribute effectively to society, achieve financial independence, and break the cycle of poverty. Despite these benefits, various cultural, social, and economic barriers often hinder girls from accessing higher education, particularly in regions like India, where traditional norms and financial challenges persist.

Parental perception plays an important factor in influencing girls' educational opportunities. Mostly in families Parents are decision-makers, and their attitudes towards girls' education significantly impact enrolment, continuation, and completion of higher studies. Positive attitude encourage educational attainment, while negative attitude acts as a barrier and can limit opportunities. Understanding parental perceptions is, therefore, essential in promoting girls' access to higher education and addressing the barriers they face.

This study focused on the perceptions of parents in the Paschim Bardhaman district of West Bengal towards girls' higher education. Its purpose was to examine their perceptions on benefits of higher education for girls, identify the barriers they perceive, and compare the perceptions of male and female parents. By analyzing these factors, this study seeks to contribute to the existing body of knowledge and provide insights for policymakers and educators to design effective interventions to improve girls' access to higher education.

## **Objectives of the Study:**

- (1) To know the perceptions of Parents regarding the benefits of Higher Education of Girls.
- (2) To know the perceptions of Parents regarding the barriers to higher education of girls.
- (3) To identify the Cultural and Socioeconomic factors that effect Higher Education of Girls.
- (4) To compare the perceptions of Male and Female Parents towards higher education of girls.

## **Review of Literature:**

**Saxena, R. (2023)** investigated on Parental Attitudes towards Girls' Higher Secondary Education, researcher explored the factors influencing parents' decisions to support their daughters' education. The research highlighted that educated parents were more likely to recognize the benefits of girls' education, including economic empowerment and societal respect. However, cultural norms and financial constraints were identified as significant barriers. The study

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concluded that raising awareness and providing financial assistance could improve girls' educational attainment.

**Yadav, A. (2022)** analyzed the Changing Perceptions of Parents regarding Girls' Education in Urban and Rural areas. The findings indicated a growing positive attitude towards girls' education due to increased awareness about its role in achieving gender equality and economic stability. However, rural parents still faced challenges such as traditional beliefs and lack of access to quality educational institutions. The study recommended targeted interventions to address these disparities.

**Sharma, P. (2021)** investigated on the Societal Barriers to Girls' Higher Education in India. Findings revealed that many parents acknowledged the benefits of higher education for girls, they were often deterred by societal pressure, safety concerns, and financial constraints. The study emphasized the importance of government policies, scholarships, and community support in overcoming these barriers.

**Gupta, N. (2020)** studied the Role of Parental Education and Socioeconomic Status in shaping Attitudes towards Girls' Higher Education. The study revealed that parents with higher education levels and stable financial conditions were more supportive of their daughters pursuing higher studies. Conversely, parents with limited education were more likely to prioritize marriage over education.

**Mishra, S. (2019)** studied on Parental Perceptions in Semi-urban areas of India. In the study researcher highlighted a significant gender bias in educational opportunities. The study found that while some parents viewed education as a pathway to empowerment, others considered it unnecessary for girls due to traditional gender roles. The research recommended awareness campaigns to challenge these stereotypes.

The reviewed studies consistently emphasize the growing recognition of the benefits of girls' higher education. However, they also stressed on the persistent barriers, including financial constraints, societal norms, and safety concerns. While some studies note positive shifts in parental attitudes, they highlighted the need for continued efforts through awareness programs, financial aid, and policy reforms to overcome these challenges. This study builds on these findings by examining the perceptions of parents in the Paschim Bardhaman district, focusing on the benefits, barriers, cultural and socioeconomic factors and comparing male and female Parent towards higher education of girls.

## **Methodology:**

### **Research Design**

The study employed a descriptive survey design to explore the perceptions of parents towards girls' higher education. This design was chosen to gather comprehensive information about parents' perceptions towards the benefits, barriers to girls' higher education, cultural and socioeconomic factors that effect girls higher education, as well as to compare the perceptions of male and female parents.

### **Population and Sample**

The population for the study comprised parents of higher secondary school pass-out girls in the Paschim Bardhaman district of West Bengal. A sample of 30 parents, including both male and female parents, was selected using the simple random sampling method to ensure unbiased representation.

### **Variables of the Study**

Independent Variable: Parents' perceptions

Dependent Variables: girls' higher education

### **Data Collection tool:**

Perception Scale consisted of 30 items based on three dimensions was developed by investigators. Each dimension has 10 items in it.

- (i) Benefits of Higher Education of Girls.
- (ii) Barriers to higher education of girls.
- (iii) Cultural and Socio- Economic factors that effect Higher Education of Girls

### **Data Collection Procedure:**

Data were collected with 30 parents by simple random sampling technique. Responses were recorded anonymously to ensure privacy and encourage honesty.

### **Statistical Techniques:**

The collected data were analyzed using statistical techniques such as:

- Mean and standard deviation to understand overall trends.
- Percentage analysis to evaluate the distribution of perceptions.
- t-test to compare the perceptions of male and female Parent.

### **Findings of the Study:**

The key findings of the study are summarized as follows:

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### **1. Perception of parents towards the benefits of higher education of girls:**

majority (93%) of parents demonstrated a high level of perceptions regarding the benefits of girls' higher education.

Parents recognized higher education as essential for girls' empowerment, economic independence, career advancement, and societal respect.

Only 7% of parents exhibited a low level of perception towards the benefits, often due to orthodox beliefs or lack of awareness.

### **2. Perceptions of parents towards barriers to higher education of girls:**

Among parents, 57% perceived barriers to girls' higher education at a high level.

The most commonly reported barriers included financial constraints, safety concerns, societal norms, and limited access to quality institutions.

36% of parents had an average perception of barriers, while 7% believed there were few or no significant barriers.

**3.Cultural and Socioeconomic factors that effect higher education of girls:**100% Parents responded that cultural, socioeconomic factors that influence girls higher education is moderate.It means neither extremely positive nor extremely negative.

### **4. Comparison of Male and Female Perceptions:**

No significant difference was observed between the perceptions of male and female Parents regarding the benefits of higher education for girls, barriers to higher education of girls, cultural and socio economic factors that effect girls' higher education.

Statistical analysis showed a t-value of 0.544 and a p-value of 0.591, indicating similar attitudes among both groups of parents.

### **Discussion of Results:**

This study aimed to investigate the perception of parents toward girls' higher education, focusing on their views about its benefits, barriers,cultural and socio-economic factor that effects higher education of girls and the comparison of male and female parents perceptions. The findings are discussed in the context of the reviewed literature.

#### **Perception of Parents towards Benefits of Girls' Higher Education:**

The study revealed that 93% of parents perceive the benefits of girls' higher education at a high level, recognizing its role in fostering economic independence, career advancement, and societal empowerment for girls. This finding aligns with Saxena's (2023) research, which highlighted that

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educated parents acknowledge the transformative impact of higher education on girls' lives. Similarly, Yadav (2022) observed a growing awareness among parents about the importance of girls' education, particularly in urban settings. The high percentage of supportive parents in this study suggests a positive shift in attitudes, which reflects increasing awareness of the societal and personal value of educating girls.

#### **Perception of Parents towards Barriers to Girls' Higher Education:**

The study found that 57% of parents perceive barriers to girls' higher education at a high level, including financial constraints, societal norms, and safety concerns. This aligns with Sharma's (2021) findings that societal pressure and safety issues are significant deterrents for parents, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas. Gupta (2020) also noted that socio-economic status plays a crucial role in determining parental attitudes. The presence of financial and cultural barriers in this study indicates the persistence of challenges despite increasing awareness of the benefits of girls' education.

#### **Comparison of Male and female parents' Perceptions:**

The comparison of male and female parents perceptions yielded no significant difference, as indicated by the t-test results ( $p = 0.591$ ,  $t = 0.544$ ). Both groups shared similar views regarding the benefits and barriers of girls' higher education. This finding is consistent with Yadav's (2022) research, which found that both parents play an equally supportive role in promoting education when they are aware of its long-term benefits.

The study's findings complement existing literature, highlighting both progress and persisting challenges in promoting girls' higher education. While there is an encouraging level of positive parental perception, barriers remain a significant concern. Mishra's (2019) research, which emphasized the need for awareness campaigns to address gender biases, supports the conclusion that societal norms and financial constraints still need to be tackled effectively.

#### **Implications for Policy and Practice:**

The findings emphasize the importance of interventions to address the barriers to girls' higher education. Awareness programs, financial aid, and policies promoting safe and accessible education can overcome these challenges. As suggested by Sharma (2021) and Gupta (2020), collaborative efforts involving parents, educators, and policymakers are essential to ensure equitable access to education for girls.

Investigators would say that the study adds the importance of parental perceptions in shaping educational opportunities for girls. Continued efforts are needed to address existing barriers and promote a supportive environment for girls' higher education.

### **Conclusion:**

This study concludes that parents in the Paschim Bardhaman district of West Bengal hold predominantly positive perceptions of girls' higher education. An overwhelming majority (93%) of parents recognize its benefits, including economic independence, career opportunities, and societal respect for girls. However, the presence of barriers such as financial constraints, societal norms, and safety concerns—perceived at high levels by 57% of parents—highlights persistent challenges in ensuring equal access to higher education for girls.

The comparative analysis between male and female parents' perceptions revealed no significant differences, indicating shared understanding and collective agreement on both the benefits and barriers to girls' higher education. This finding emphasizes the unified role of parents in supporting girls' educational aspirations and addressing the obstacles they face.

The study highlights the need for interventions to overcome these barriers. Initiatives such as financial assistance, awareness campaigns, and policy measures focusing on safe and accessible educational opportunities are essential to address these issues. In particular, creating a supportive environment for girls' education will require collaborative efforts from parents, educators, policymakers, and the community at large.

this research highlights the important role of parental perceptions in shaping girls' access to higher education. By addressing societal and institutional barriers, it is possible to enhance educational opportunities for girls, ultimately contributing to their empowerment and the broader goal of gender equality.

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