Understanding the Challenges Faced by Diverse Groups in Indian Higher Education: The Role of Vedic Teachings in Shaping Modern Educational Policies for Diversity Management in India

Kanupriya Thakur[1] | Aditi Sharma[2]*

[1]HPKV Business School, Department of Commerce and Management Studies, Central University Of Himachal Pradesh, Dharmashala, (H.P), India.
[2]HPKV Business School, Department of Commerce and Management Studies, Central University Of Himachal Pradesh, Dharmashala, (H.P), India.

*Corresponding Author: kanupriyathakur202@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This policy-oriented paper assesses the interconnections between Indian ethos, multiculturalism, equality, diversity and fairness in the context of the higher education system in India. The authors assert that the Vedas and the Bhagavad Gita can be valuable sources in contemporary literature and practice aimed at the development of education policy that enhances our commitment to equity in education. It examines the roots of inequality in the Indian higher education system that are entrenched in its history, identifies social, including ethnic, and physical barriers faced by the disadvantaged sections of society, and suggests various measures to combat such discriminations based on sex and ability.

Keywords: Higher Education, Vedic Teachings, Educational Policies, Diversity Management, Physical Barriers.

Introduction
Indian Higher Education Landscape

In management literature, one of the most considered challenges of 21st century is managing workforce diversity. Workforce Diversity is defined as "the differentiating factors between the members of an organization" (Jackson et al., 1993, p 3). It can be explained with the help of demographic differences, comprising both "visible" or "surface level" such as gender, ethnicity, nationality, race, age, and economic status and "hidden", "psychological" or "deep level" such as culture, education, personality (Harrison et al., 2007). Diversity enhances the power of higher education institutions by facilitating comprehensive development and cultivating an atmosphere conducive to progress in governance, ecology, society, economy, and technology (Pandit & Paul, 2023). Diversity enhances the quality of learning and decision-making in higher education institutions. Research on diversity has predominantly focused on Western nations, highlighting the need to examine diversity management techniques in growing economies like India (Yadav & Lenka, 2020). The significance of this study is underscored by the fact that by 2025 India is expected to have 119 million students, potentially the country with the largest population attending college or university worldwide. This exponential increase makes studying challenges related to diversity in higher education even more important. (Alfonso & Ganesan, 2019).

Although many studies are being carried out on diversity, there are very few studies where diversity management is studied in the context of the education sector, especially in India. We have selected this sector for our study because globalization and internationalization are impacting education institutes. By 2025, India would have a maximum number of students going to HEI's and colleges. We need to be aware of the upcoming problems that can arise with this increase in number of students as it

would also increase the diversity in education institutes. This would also increase the workload and competition in the education sector. This creates a need to study diversity and performance of faculty.

India's higher education landscape is characterized by its rich diversity; however, it is also marked by significant inequalities. Discrimination based on caste, gender, and ability continues to hinder access to quality education for many individuals. The Indian ethos, deeply rooted in ancient texts such as the Vedas and the Bhagavad Gita, emphasizes principles of equality, respect for all beings, and social harmony. These teachings provide a moral foundation for developing policies that promote inclusivity in higher education. India is projected to emerge as the world's third-largest economy, exceeding the ten trillion thresholds by 2030-2032. Our economy will mostly be propelled by intellectual resources rather than natural resources (Aithal & Aithal, 2019). The "All India Higher Education Survey (AISHE 2021-2022) & Status of Higher Education in India" reported a deficiency in gender diversity within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) (Naik, et al., 2024). There is a significant scarcity of personnel in higher education institutions. The data presented by the Ministry of Education indicates a significant number of vacancies in posts designated for individuals with disabilities (PWD), necessitating an analysis of diversity-related policies at the implementation level.

The National Education Policy (NEP) of 2020 also attaches great importance to the issue of inclusion and diversity in education. But, despite these advances, significant gaps remain in achieving true equality. The objective of this paper is to seek guidance from Indian philosophy to highlight how such issues can be tackled in a manner that enables the creation of an education system that values diversity but not at the cost of equality. The paper sheds light on diversity management among employees with challenges of higher education. This paper would also talk about how these challenges can be managed if we take the help of vedas. Indian Diversity management is the strategic approach to "creating a workplace that embraces and leverages differences among employees". It includes the execution of policies and procedures that foster inclusion, including impartial recruitment, diversity training, and assistance for employee resource groups. Effective diversity management cultivates an environment in which all employees feel appreciated, respected, and empowered to share their unique ideas. This not only augments creativity and innovation but also elevates employee happiness and corporate performance. Research on diversity has predominantly focused on Western nations, highlighting the need to examine diversity management techniques in growing economies like India (Yadav & Lenka, 2020)

History of Upholding Commitments: An Overview of Discrimination in Higher Education

The evolution of higher education in India showcases a historical narrative marred by social oppression and discrimination. Access to education has for centuries, been skewed by caste hierarchies and more so to those who belong to the marginalized sections of the society. Besides, women in particular have been historically disadvantaged of educational access by the prevailing trends that favour men.

Obstacles and Discrimination Experienced by the Handicapped

There are also facilities for the access of higher education which are not available for the disabled. As per the Rajasthan State Disability Policy, barely 2% of disabled people pursue education in universities (Rajasthan State Disability Policy, 2020). Insufficient facilities, unavailability of means to cater for their needs and the stigma attached to them further isolates them from the academic environment. Therefore, policies must be drawn to foster inclusive education for people with disabilities with a view to involve them fully in academia.

Historical Context of Discrimination in Higher Education

The period saw the expansion of higher education opportunities for large populations in the country while discrimination in the forms of caste, gender, and disability persisted within the structures of the society. As per the data provided by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) for Scheduled Castes (SCs) stands at approximately 22 percent, and for Scheduled Tribes (STs) it is around 15 percent (NSSO, 2019). The discrepancy shows quite clearly that the collections of people from the disadvantageous sections of society do have barriers in terms of seeking higher education (Rathod, 2017).

Gender-based Discrimination

Women have also been at a disadvantage compared to men when it comes to higher education enrollment. The Census of India 2011 indicated that the literacy rate among women stood at 65.46% in

comparison to 82.14% for men, a gap over 16% (Census of India, 2011). Women with disabilities are subjected to a harsher plight of discrimination where the very fact that they are women plays a role in their being discriminated against and additionally the affliction adds a layer to the issue. This is also presented in the meaning of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities where they state that there are people who suffer from the effects of dual discrimination. Hence a system needs to be established that believes in empowerment (Nizar. 2011).

Identifying Current Challenges Faced by Marginalized Groups

Looking at the fact that there are strong philosophical perspectives supporting inclusivity, there are still some minorities that face serious hurdles in the sphere of higher education institutions (Sabharwal, et al., 2017). Widely woman disabled are believed to face and experience the barriers that are there to work against the learner in this case. A study published in the International Journal of Research in Special Education highlights such facts as women with disabilities encounter systemic barriers such as inadequate infrastructure, lack of support services, and societal stigma (Singh & Begum, 2022). Not only do these barriers prevent them from acquiring education of high standard but also their mental state and wellbeing and discrimination from society.

Application of Indian Principles

Principles from the Vedas

It makes it possible for each individual to practice their innate individuality while helping to foster a society free of discrimination and rooted in dharma (righteousness) and social justice. Some of the key teachings include:

- **Unity in Diversity:** The Vedic scriptures honour the vastness of life and elevates the need to respect life's different dimensions. This principle can help in formulating policies that factor the multicultural needs of higher education. For example Religious diversity fosters a more conducive learning atmosphere, enhances interpersonal skills, and allows for the freedom of expression (Siman, 2015). Employees from diverse religious origins possess varying practices and ideas. Employees who respect and are knowledgeable with many cultures and religions are more likely to adapt to diversity (Heliot, et al., 2020).

Social Responsibility

The Vedic texts advocate for individuals to fulfill their duties towards society (dharma). This notion can encourage educational institutions to take responsibility for promoting inclusivity and addressing inequalities and any sort of discrimination.

Vasudeva Kutumbakam

In its most profound sense, Vasudeva Kutumbakam translates to "the world is one family" This has some interesting applications in today's generation as there is a need for inclusivity and interconnectedness between all people, regardless of their background. Society has been claiming that gaps in inclusion, diversity, and equity activities in higher education, culture, and the environment still exist. In spite of such endorsement of respect and oneness, some ethnic minorities, including women, people with disabilities have been mistreated or neglected to a great extent in academic spheres.

Insights from the Bhagavad Gita

- **Intrinsic Worth**: Bhagwat Gita teaches us that every individual is more than his/her profession, social status, physical appearance or educational background etc. This view brings into focus the need to appreciate each and every person irrespective of their caste, gender or disability as every human is a child of God and there can be hidden potential in everyone.

- **Karma Yoga:** Selfless action specific to karma yoga emphasizes working without getting attached to the results of the work one has done. Geeta tells us to devote ourselves to the lord and to do all good deeds without expecting the fruit of our labour. This educative principle in this case can help in enhancing teamwork and cooperation among students and faculty members from different groups in the society.

- **Equanimity:** The Gita teaches that one should maintain calm be it in success or failure. This teaching provides a potential for facilitating a learning environment where students do not feel embarrassed regardless of their academic performance. As academia is a competitive environment teachers can also learn this lesson to not get depressed in times of failure.

Current Challenges in Higher Education

Though workplace diversity can bring a lot of growth to the organization by "increasing the talent pool, nurturing a broader mindset, and revenue", it can be challenging to manage a diverse organization if one is not prepared well. If not managed effectively by upper management, diversity can destabilize the firm, compromising work quality and damaging its reputation. H ere are few challenges to consider: Enhancing inner strength, diversity being embraced, and progress towards equality of higher education has numerous challenges which include the following:

- **Communication Barriers**: An inclusive atmosphere entails a greater number of employees conversing in diverse languages. Despite the presence of bilingual staff to mitigate language obstacles, communication among team members might be time-consuming to comprehend and grasp. Numerous prospective employees may possess substantial skills and knowledge, although they may have acquired this expertise in their native language. Although English is seen as a worldwide language, it is not the primary language for many individuals. Divergences in language, culture, and communication styles can engender misunderstandings and disputes among personnel. Linguistic variety and multilingualism present challenges that require management (Mengesha, et al.,2016). Language limitations can lead to misunderstandings and complications due to inefficient communication. Inability to comprehend job-related responsibilities and instructions can adversely impact a team's production and efficiency.

    An organization intending to incorporate diversity initiatives should establish stringent communication policies among personnel. Gender discrimination and age disparity should not justify employee misconduct or the subjugation of others. Primarily, when employees converse in their native language, it can pose difficulties for others to comprehend. The use of certain slang or language can create exclusion and marginalize individuals who lack proficiency in that language.

    For example, female and male employees may have communication difficulties when they fail to communicate respectfully or employ profanity and offensive expressions. It may result in misinterpretations and escalate into verbal assaults. Older generations may occasionally address younger personnel with disdain. Communication problems such as these can arise at any moment. Employees with a social circle comprising their colleagues may experience misunderstandings outside of work, thereby impacting their professional lives.

- **Handling Different Perspectives**: Employees from varied cultural backgrounds will possess distinct innovative ideas and problem-solving approaches. A plethora of ideas can consistently benefit corporate leaders in selecting the optimal plan to pursue. Various concepts can enhance job quality by retaining essential elements and eliminating superfluous ones. Conversely, it can be challenging to determine the most superior idea. Choosing one perspective among other options may result in disappointing others who may have proposed superior ideas. An excess of viewpoints may impede work completion timeframes and overall productivity. Unrecognized innovative ideas can dishearten certain minority personnel and may deter them from contributing their thoughts in subsequent sessions.

- **Prejudice:** It is defined as "an adverse opinion or judgment formed beforehand or without full knowledge or complete examination of the facts; a preconceived idea or bias" (Aghazadeh, 2004). Workplace prejudice constitutes a substantial obstacle to realizing genuine diversity and inclusion. It emerges in multiple forms, ranging from explicit discrimination to nuanced microaggressions, fostering a hostile atmosphere for underrepresented groups. Biased attitudes can affect recruitment decisions, promotions, and daily encounters, resulting in inequitable opportunities and treatment. This sustains a cycle in which varied talent is devalued and underexploited. Organizations must proactively detect and rectify biases through extensive diversity training, equitable policies, and the promotion of a culture of inclusion and respect. Only then can the complete advantages of a diverse workforce be actualized, fostering innovation, engagement, and overall organizational success.

- **Stereotyping:** It is defined as "a fixed impression which conforms very little to the facts it pretends to represent" (Judd, & Park, 1993). Stereotyping constitutes a substantial obstacle to workforce diversity, since it engenders preconceived beliefs on individuals based on their color, gender, age, or other attributes. These **prejudices** can affect recruitment, advancement, and everyday interactions, frequently leading to inequitable treatment and diminished chances for

those who do not conform to the 'standard'. This fosters uniformity among firms and suppresses the potential advantages of a diverse workforce, including innovation, creativity, and varied views. Addressing stereotyping necessitates deliberate actions to confront and alter these biases, fostering a more inclusive and equal workplace for everyone.

- **Access Barriers**: Loss of **finance**, lack of educational opportunities, poor infrastructure, and social barriers are some of the factors which can prevent those from the minority communities from seeking education.

- **Glass Ceiling for Female Faculty Members:** The concept of the "glass ceiling" refers to the invisible barriers that prevent women from reaching top positions in various fields, including higher education. In the context of Indian ethos, which emphasizes respect for women and values inherent in Indian culture, it is crucial to explore how these **values** can help dismantle the glass ceiling in higher education. Women frequently encounter cultural barriers that typically diminish their access to job prospects in leadership and senior management positions (Banker, 2023). Educational institutions, as the foremost catalysts of societal change, have to be the principal advocates for the dismantling of these glass ceiling obstacles (Blau & Lynch, 2024). A study on female professors in India identified significant obstacles to achieving top-management roles, with survey data from educational institutions indicating that merely 6.67 percent of women educators have attained such positions (Banker, 2023). This figure is significantly lower in comparison to other countries (Basu, 2015). The professional trajectory of women in India diverges from that of men. In India, women frequently exit the workforce due to familial obligations (Srinivasan & Nakra, 2013). The aim of diversity management strategies is to attract and retain a diverse workforce (Doghan et al., 2019). The objective of diversity practices is to enhance employees' collective perceptions of the practices, processes, and policies that promote diversity by addressing issues such as bias, discrimination, and stereotypes within the organization (Boehm et al. 2014). This paper discusses the interplay between Indian values, women's empowerment, and the role of higher education in fostering an environment conducive to gender equality.

Harvard University has established specific female leadership centres that aim to assist women in exploring their potential as leaders in educational institutions (Hill, Miller, Benson & Handley, 2016). Most leadership positions are concentrated on women in business, and corporations are implementing measures to enhance female leadership. The Indian higher education industry has failed to rectify the existing gaps in the male-female ratios. Where females are in very low numbers in higher leadership positions (Gandhi & Sen, 2021).

Indian Ethos and Respect for Women Indian culture have a strong tradition of worshipping women, often portrayed through different historical figures and mythological stories. The respect for women is very much in Indian ethos, which talks about the ideals of Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge and wisdom, and Durga, who represents strength and resilience. These cultural stories can be used as a basis for advocating women's rights and their presence in higher education.

- **Cultural Biases**: Societal Biases towards females can create unfriendly environments in educational setups. Impact on Mental Health because of these biases. The psychological impact of navigating a biased academic environment can be significant. Female faculty members may experience feelings of isolation, inadequacy, or burnout due to constant scrutiny and unequal treatment. Research indicates that gender bias contributes to higher levels of stress and anxiety among women in academia, ultimately affecting their mental health and job satisfaction (Llorens, et al., 2021).

- **Policy Implementation Gaps**: While policies exist to promote inclusivity, their implementation often falls short due to a lack of commitment from institutional leaders.

All these issues can be addressed by fostering a diversity climate that encompasses inclusivity.

Policy Recommendations

- In Jordanian higher education institutions, regular assessments of diversity management practices have been shown to positively influence outcomes related to inclusion.

- The University of Rostock in Germany has established guidelines for diversity management that emphasize the importance of creating a non-discriminatory campus culture. Their approach includes integrating diversity into leadership responsibilities and decision-making processes across all university functions.

- The University of Toronto has implemented mentorship initiatives aimed at supporting women in STEM fields by connecting them with experienced female mentors. This approach not only helps with career development but also fosters a sense of belonging. Indian universities should consider developing similar programs to support marginalized groups effectively.

- Institutions like the University of Melbourne have made significant efforts to incorporate Indigenous perspectives into their curricula, ensuring that all students engage with diverse viewpoint

- Indian universities can adopt similar frameworks to ensure that diversity is prioritized at all levels.

    Indian universities should establish similar frameworks to manage diversity in higher education sector.

    These challenges should be addressed to enhance non-discrimination based on caste, gender, and ability in the appointment of higher education faculty recommend the following policy:

- **Strengthening Affirmative Action Policies:** Reservation policies should be made as high as needed along with implementation and monitoring mechanisms to ensure that the underserved are able to secure access to the faculty position in an equitable manner.

- It's also considered to establish universities that can integrate education based on a mix of Historical methods and modern innovative ways. This will help in moving toward an inclusive curriculum that integrates Vedic/Bhagavad Gita education, which encourages principles of equality and respect for everyone.

- **Capacity Building for Faculty:** Develop and implement capacity-building programs for faculty on diversity competence and inclusive pedagogy to enable them to foster an inclusive learning atmosphere for all students.

- **Establishing Support Systems:** Establish support efforts specifically targeted at faculty from marginalized constituencies in an attempt to assist them through difficult academic pursuits regarding such issues.

- **Monitoring Compliance with Non-Discrimination Policies:** Develop policies that detail procedures for assuring compliance with non-discrimination policies in the workplace.

- **Engaging Stakeholders:** Promote networks among the state, educational, civil society and communities' representatives for the purpose of creating a comprehensive approach towards improving the equality of representation of the faculty in recruitment processes.

- **Leveraging Technology:** Technologies will be used to improve access to information regarding the educational opportunities available for the disadvantaged communities and similarly, infrastructural arrangements for the disabled population should be provided.

Future Research and Direction

- **Research on Discrimination:** The study of the difficulties that many academicians encounter in a foreign academic environment should be studied in order to further the interests of policy intervening in the processes of faculty hiring and retention.

- Research on diversity management, equality, inclusion, fairness, and equity should be extensively researched together with variables like discrimination, glass ceiling, and bullying behaviors. These types of studies can highlight the existing problems in academia and future policies can be framed on such types of research.

- **Creating Inclusive Infrastructure:** Devote money for the improvement of the infrastructure to meet the functional requirements of disabled faculty members.

- **Awareness Campaigns:** Conduct awareness campaigns focused on combating stereotypes related to gender or disability among faculty members while promoting empathy through intervening workshops based on the Indian philosophy.

Conclusion

Despite its benefits, achieving workforce diversity in Indian higher education institutions is not without its challenges. One major challenge is the pervasiveness of unconscious bias in hiring and promotion procedures. These prejudices often lead to homogeneity inside academic departments by promoting discriminatory behavior and decision-making. The lack of intentional efforts and awareness to promote diversity is another issue.

Higher education institutions in India must have comprehensive diversity management techniques to eliminate these problems. This would include fair and transparent recruitment processes so that candidates are judged on their qualifications and not biased. The way to reduce bias is by using blind recruitment methods where the personal details of the candidate are not available.

A diverse workforce is necessary to foster an inclusive, vibrant, and productive academic atmosphere in India's higher education institutions. True diversity is hard to achieve, but major strides can be made by using thorough diversity management techniques and guaranteeing leadership commitment. Higher education institutions in India can enhance student achievement, encourage creativity, and promote academic quality by embracing diversity. This helps the institutions themselves as well as the larger objectives of national growth and social fairness.

Breaking the glass ceiling would mean that women overcome obstacles in the workplace, which prevent them from reaching the top rung. Such barriers can be removed when Indian values are combined with higher education. Higher educational institutions, in harnessing such cultural values related to respect and empowerment of women, may set up an environment that ensures the growth of women in their academic circles, thus accelerating societal development. As India steps into the new phase of higher education development, the empowerment of women must be one of the focal points for the process of transformation toward balanced, more organized, and developed societies.

Zero discrimination based on caste, sex, gender, and ability should be the goal of higher education. Only then Indian society can move from a regressive to a progressive state. A policy must be enforced within the higher education institutions targeting such discriminatory practices since it promotes social integration and economic development. Such a goal can only be reached by walking on the path of Dharma and by using teachings from the Vedas and Bhagavad Gita. The integration of Vedic teachings into modern educational policies presents a unique opportunity to address issues of equality, diversity, and inclusion within India's higher education system. Policymakers can frame an education structure, by harnessing the holistic approach of Vedic education: emphasis on moral values, inclusiveness, and the bond of teacher and student with well-crafted, relevant contents, to respect India's rich heritage but to shape the minds of generations. As India moves forward through its richly complex socio-cultural landscape, integrating ancient wisdom with contemporary practices is bound to be a great challenge for fostering an equitable educational environment in which every individual stands the chance to succeed. By embracing these teachings, it will not only create a better academic outcome but also contribute to building a more just society reflective of India's core values.

References

1. Aghazadeh, S. M. (2004). Managing workforce diversity as an essential resource for improving organizational performance. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, *53*(6), 521-531.

2. Aithal, P. S., & Aithal, S. (2019). Analysis of higher education in Indian National education policy proposal 2019 and its implementation challenges. *International Journal of Applied Engineering and Management Letters (IJAEML)*, *3*(2), 1-35.

3. Al Doghan, M. A., Bhatti, M. A., &Juhari, A. S. (2019). Do psychological diversity climate, HRM practices, and personality traits (big five) influence multicultural workforce job satisfaction and performance? Current scenario, literature gap, and future research directions. *Sage Open*, *9*(2), 2158244019851578.

4. Alfonso, T., & Ganesan, S. (2019). Perceptions of diversity among faculty members in Indian higher education institutions: A qualitative investigation. *Contemporary Education Dialogue*, *16*(2), 208-228.

5. Banker, D. V. (2023). Status of women leadership in the Indian higher education sector. International Journal of Educational Management, 37(3), 662-680.

6.   Basu, M., & Sinha, A. S. (2021). The Glass-Ceiling Phenomenon: A Literature Review and Research Agenda.

7.   Blau, F. D., & Lynch, L. M. (2024). *50 Years of Breakthroughs and Barriers: Women in Economics, Policy, and Leadership* (No. w32820). National Bureau of Economic Research.

8.   Boehm, S. A., Kunze, F., & Bruch, H. (2014). Spotlight on age-diversity climate: The impact of age-inclusive HR practices on firm-level outcomes. *Personnel Psychology*, *67*(3), 667-704.

9.   Breaking Barriers. (2023). *Fostering inclusivity: Need for transformation in higher education*.

10.   Gandhi, M., & Sen, K. (2021). Missing women in Indian university leadership: Barriers and facilitators. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, *49*(2), 352-369.

11.   Government of India. (2020). *National education policy 2020*. New Delhi: Ministry of Human Resource Development.

12.   Hall, R. (2017). *How do we make higher education truly diverse & inclusive?*

13.   Harrison, D. A., & Klein, K. J. (2007). What's the difference? Diversity constructs as separation, variety, or disparity in organizations. *Academy of management review*, *32*(4), 1199-1228.

14.   Heliot, Y., Gleibs, I. H., Coyle, A., Rousseau, D. M., &Rojon, C. (2020). Religious identity in the workplace: A systematic review, research agenda, and practical implications. *Human resource management*, *59*(2), 153-173.

15.   Hill, C., Miller, K., Benson, K., & Handley, G. (2016). Barriers and Bias: The Status of Women in Leadership. *American Association of University Women*.

16.   https://www.tmu.ac.in/blog/diving-into-diversity-embracing-multiculturalism-on-campus

17.   https://www.uni-rostock.de/storages/uni-rostock/UniHome/RIH/Profil_International/Guidelines_for_Diversity_management_at_the_University_of_Rostock.pdf

18.   India, C. (2011). Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India. *Population Census*, *13*, 2011.

19.   International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts (IJCRT). (2022). *Management lessons from the Bhagavad Gita in higher education*.

20.   Jackson, S. E. (Ed.). (1993). *Diversity in the workplace: Human resources initiatives*. Guilford Press.

21.   Judd, C. M., & Park, B. (1993). Definition and assessment of accuracy in social stereotypes. *Psychological review*, *100*(1), 109.

22.   Llorens, A., Tzovara, A., Bellier, L., Bhaya-Grossman, I., Bidet-Caulet, A., Chang, W. K., ... &Dronkers, N. F. (2021). Gender bias in academia: A lifetime problem that needs solutions. *Neuron*, *109*(13), 2047-2074.

23.   Mengesha, Z. B., Dune, T., & Perz, J. (2016). Culturally and linguistically diverse women's views and experiences of accessing sexual and reproductive health care in Australia: a systematic review. *Sexual health*, *13*(4), 299-310.

24.   Naik, B., Chandiramani, J., & Majumdar, S. (2024). Is India's higher education system a case of elusive inclusive development?. *Cogent Education*, *11*(1), 2428874.

25.   National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA). (2023). *International seminar on diversity and inclusion in higher education*.

26.   National Sample Survey Office (NSSO). (2019). *Education statistics*. Government of India.

27.   Nizar, S. (2011). Impact of UNCRPD on the status of persons with disabilities. *Indian journal of medical ethics*, *8*(4), 223-229.

28.   Rathod, B. (2017). Caste-based discrimination in higher education: An application of microaggression theory in Indian context.

29.   Sabharwal, N. S., & Malish, C. M. (2017). Student diversity and challenges of inclusion in higher education in India. *International Higher Education*, (91), 25-27.

30. Singh, S., & Begum, S. (2022). Higher education for women with disabilities: A review study. *International Journal of Research in Special Education*, 2(2), 52-56.

31. Srinivasan, V., Murty, L. S., & Nakra, M. (2013). Career persistence of women software professionals in India. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, *28*(4), 210-227.

32. The Leaflet. (2023). *Breaking barriers: Fostering inclusivity in higher education*.

33. UNESCO. (2020). *Global education monitoring report 2020: Inclusion & education*. Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

34. Varghese, N. V., et al. (2018). *Diversity and equity in higher education: A study in India*. New Delhi: National University of Educational Planning and Administration.

35. Yadav, S., & Lenka, U. (2020). Diversity management: a systematic review. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, *39*(8), 901-929.

Websites

36. Government of Rajasthan. (2020). *Rajasthan state disability policy*. Retrieved from https://sje.rajasthan.gov.in/Default.aspx?PageID=56

37. Guidelines_for_Diversity_management_at_the_University_of_Rostock.pdf

38. United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). (2006). *Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities*. Retrieved from https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf.

❑❑❑