

Chapter 6

Barriers to Women's Leadership in Higher Education: A Quantitative and Qualitative Study

Usharani Bhimavarapu

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0246-1420>

*Department of Computer Science and Engineering, Koneru Lakshmaiah
Education Foundation, Vaddeswaram, India*

ABSTRACT

Women university administrators are confronted with various challenges that impede their career growth and professional growth. This research assesses the most frequent challenges to university women leaders in Andhra Pradesh, including society culture, gender discrimination in leadership choices, poor mentorship programs, financial issues, and labor discrimination. The mixed-method research design employed qualitative and quantitative data to determine the most severe challenges and effective interventions. The results of the study indicate that socio-cultural norms, institution policies, and systemic biases are the greatest causes of future narrowing of women leaders. The study also concludes that organisation change, mentoring programmes, policy-making with the gender perspective incorporated, and policy changes are all paramount in an effort to attain gender balance among leadership roles in higher education institutions.

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INTRODUCTION

Andhra Pradesh higher education has also undergone a massive change with many universities, colleges, and research centers being behind pursuing academic excellence since years. Andhra Pradesh has universities like Andhra University, Sri Venkateswara University, and Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University (JNTU) that provide a variety of undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral courses. With its strong focus on technical education, Andhra Pradesh established varied engineering, medical, and management colleges with a view to meet the ever-increasing demand for technically qualified graduates. Assistance from central universities, deemed universities, and private industry schools have helped to further strengthen the level of power in higher educational infrastructure. Technical and professional training is a dominant factor in Andhra Pradesh higher education. The state has several JNTU-affiliated engineering colleges, medical, pharmacy, and agricultural colleges. With the increase in information technology and industrialization, the demand for qualified personnel propels the development of private universities and self-financing colleges with industry-oriented courses. Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Tirupati and Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Visakhapatnam are added to the glory of the state as an education hub.

Andhra Pradesh's higher education is no exception to the rest despite all the development that it has witnessed, as one of the most important issues being inequality in access to quality education is also prominent, especially in rural regions. While Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam, and Tirupati have quality centers, there are many rural students who do not have adequate infrastructure, teachers, and internet services. In a bid to fill this gap, the state government has attempted to neutralize this by initiating scholarship programs, setting up digital learning websites, and extending public-private partnership for enhancing the quality of education in backward areas (Sun et al., 2019; Witteman et al., 2021).

Government policies and programs have also played a major role in the growth of the higher education system in Andhra Pradesh. Launch of schemes such as “Jagananna Vidya Deevena” and “Jagananna Vasathi Deevena” is aimed at offering the finance to the economically weaker section of students so that higher education will be accessible to the masses. Government is also offering the skill development schemes in collaboration with industries to boost the employability. Research centers and knowledge parks development has also promoted students' and teachers' innovation and entrepreneurship.

The future of long term higher education in Andhra Pradesh is based on the investment in the infrastructure, the research, and the long-term instructors. Academia-industry collaborations can maximize graduate employability and experiential learning. In addition, integrating online learning and incorporation of next-generation

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