

This is the text transcript for the 9th episode: <https://soundcloud.com/jamkaokk/femaleacademics-role-in-nepal>

How is the role of women and girls changing in academia in Nepal?

Solving the Global Learning Crisis podcast, text transcript

Podcast intro with instrumental drum and flute music playing on the background: Welcome to this podcast series on solving the global learning crisis. We'll discover how Ethiopia, Nepal and Mozambique are reshaping their higher education programs in response to the changing demands of the 21st century. (Music playing)

Graham: Welcome to the latest edition in the HEI-ICI podcast series, Solving the global learning crisis! I am Graham Burns. One of the core cross cutting themes in the HEI-ICI program is increased equitable access to education at all levels, and by extension academia, for underprivileged and ethnic minority groups, including women and girls. Now this raised the interesting point of how the role of women is changing in academia around the globe. Today I'm discussing this matter with Doctor Usha Acharya, who is a lecturer in health education in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Education at Nepal Open University in Kathmandu. She is also currently a member of the co-creation team in the HEI-ICI project, Developing pedagogy for 21st century Skills in Nepal. Doctor Usha, welcome to the programme!

Dr. Usha: Thank you.

Graham: So Doctor Usha, can you tell us how you see the role of female academics changing in Nepal?

Dr. Usha: Nepal is (unclear word) practise society, also social constructs are hierarchical. This is barrier for educating female. That we are experiencing. So it is difficult for female to give equal opportunity and equality like men here. Even though the constitution of Nepal has decided it is illegal to have hierarchy and bias in society, but still we can see practise in our society.

Dr. Usha: If we observe the recent report of school enrollment of girls, the ratio is 1 is to 1.05 in primary level. The percentage is found decrease in higher level education enrollment. It is only 25 % for female. Still the ratio is significantly lower for the underprivileged or marginalised society girls. When girls grown up from puberty to adolescent, lots of responsibilities, for example, household work, child rearing, comes to the girls. So for some reason higher education enrollment trends goes decrease. In Nepal Open University we are conducting classrooms in online modality. We also have enrollment of female students, that are fewer than male students'. And our female students here have painful experiences. They have to cook dinner for their family before joining class. If they are in joint family, it is more painful. They're used to be blamed that, daughter in law is joining class without feeding their husbands and children. This is the real scenario of our society. Conservative mindset of our society, all female and also male should be aware. We female teachers are trying our best to motivate the female students to participate regularly teaching learning activities, frequently talking, guiding them and counselling them. And now it is gradually found fruitful changes on their feelings, perception regarding management of household or continuation of the study, also for the (unclear word) future study.

Dr. Usha: At last I want to say that to make competent to female, and marginalised groups of Nepal, suitable opportunity and access of higher education is needed to provide. For the most essential support is motivation, inspiration, guidance and counselling. Thank you.

Graham: Thank you very much, Doctor Usha, that's very interesting. Well, there you have it. It's clear that the HEI-ICI core theme of increasing equity for female academics is having an effect in Nepal. But it seems that we have a long way to go. Doctor Usha, thank you for your time today and we all wish you the very best success in your work within this project.

Dr. Usha: OK, thank you very much.

Graham: Keep up to date by listening to this podcast series and follow the progress of this project, Developing pedagogy for 21st century skills in Nepal and other HEI-ICI actions online. Bye bye now!

Podcast outro:

This podcast series is produced in the Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument HEI-ICI program, with the support of the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (Music playing)



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