

## **Barriers to Equal Access to Higher Education Opportunities for Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups at Telangana State Universities**

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**Abstract:** *In India, there has recently been a National Educational Policy-2020 include students with socioeconomically disadvantaged groups (SEDG) in all education levels. In recent years, Indian universities have seen a rise in SEDG student numbers access to higher education opportunities. As higher education in India is an important aspect of individual development of social, economic, political, and devotional. Due to the inequalities in the society, the disadvantaged groups are unable to access higher education. It is to be noted that Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors were barriers of SEDGs have access to higher education opportunities. “Issues of equity concerns in higher education include regional, social and gender disparities. They also include disparities at the entry-level, in academic interactions and outcomes, and in facilitating inclusive campuses.” (NEP-2020, Implementation Strategies). This research aimed to determine post graduate stockholders’ barriers of equal access to higher education opportunities, as their responses will help to identify and develop a framework for the same. Investigator selected 400 post graduate stockholders as a sample of research. A self-made five-point Likert scale was used to collect data; parametric and non-parametric statistics were used to analyse the data. The researcher found that Socio-Economic Factors were more hinders to equal access to higher education opportunities than Institutional Factors and have shown differences when we compared them based on gender, locality, and social group.*

Key-words: Post Graduate Stockholders, Institutional Factors, Socio-Economic Factors.

### **1.0 Introduction**

“Diversity and plurality are integral part of the Indian society. India being one of the largest democracies the diversity in the Indian society is characterized by miscellany in caste, religion, languages, festivals, attire, economic status and location, among others. Higher education system in India is no exception to the influence of such diversity. The system comprises stakeholders representing such diverse groups of the society in the form of regulators, providers

or beneficiaries. However, for various reasons the representation of various groups of the society in terms of participation in the higher education system has remained historically unequal. While the higher education in India faces various challenges in terms of access, efficiency and quality amongst others, the concerns related to the provision of an equitable access to higher education has remained a priority for the policy makers. The emphasis laid on providing an equitable access to higher education to citizens representing various diversified groups is highlighted even in the vision statement of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (Joshi, K. M., and Ahir, K. V. 2016).”

"Education is widely regarded as a powerful tool for fostering social justice and equality, enabling individuals to access opportunities, challenge systemic inequalities, and contribute to the betterment of society" (Weiland, S., Hickmann, T., Lederer, M., Marquardt, J., & Schwindenhammer, S. 2021). Due to the inequalities in the society, the disadvantaged groups are unable to access education. India's caste system is among the world's oldest forms of surviving social stratification. However, the “caste system in India has historically created significant barriers to accessing education for marginalized communities, particularly those of lower castes” (Thorat and Newman, 2010). Equity is fair access to livelihood, education, participation in social, cultural, political affairs of the community/society (Kamalakar, 2024).

Education in India is a vast and diverse system that encompasses a wide range of institutions, policies, and practices. It is the third-largest education system globally in terms of enrolment, with a focus on providing accessible education to its massive population. The education system in India is governed by both the central government and the state governments, resulting in a mix of national and regional variations in policies and practices.

### **1.1 Structure of education system**

The education system in India follows a 10+2+3 structure, consisting of ten years of primary and secondary education (Class 1 to 10), followed by two years of higher secondary education (Class 11 and 12), and three years of undergraduate education. However, in recent years, there has been a shift towards a 5+3+3+4 structure, emphasizing early childhood education and reducing the emphasis on board examinations. Government has taken full responsibility for the education of the children and adults. According to Sharma education system of our country is divided into three categories viz. primary, secondary, and higher education. Hence, the primary education is the fundamental right. We need to create a balance system of education provided in rural and urban areas on the basis of different categories. The quality of education in terms of better infrastructure, teachers, accreditation etc. There should be accessibility and affordability of education ensuring the poor and deserving students are not denied education. Avoiding over commercialization of education will also help in providing a better education system for the country.

### **1.2. Levels of Education system:**

**Primary Education:** Primary education in India is typically from Class 1 to 5, focusing on building foundational skills and basic knowledge across subjects like language, mathematics, science, and social studies.

**Secondary Education:** Secondary education in India covers classes 6 to 10, aiming to provide a broader curriculum and preparing students for higher levels of education. Students usually take board examinations at the end of class 10, such as the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) or the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE) exams.

**Higher Secondary Education:** Higher secondary education (also known as senior secondary education) includes classes 11 and 12. Students typically choose a stream at this stage: Science, Commerce, or Humanities/Arts. They prepare for board examinations, such as the All India Senior School Certificate Examination (AISSCE) or various state-level examinations.

**Undergraduate Education:** After completing higher secondary education, students can pursue undergraduate programs in various disciplines, including engineering, medicine, arts, science, commerce, law, and more. Undergraduate programs usually last for three to four years, depending on the field of study.

**Postgraduate Education:** Students can pursue postgraduate degrees, such as Master's programs or professional courses, after completing their undergraduate studies. Postgraduate programs can be academic (M.A., M.Sc., etc.) or professional (MBA, M.Tech., etc.) and are typically of two years' duration.

### 1.3. Types of Institutions in India

Higher education in India is offered by various types of institutions, including universities, colleges, institutes, and deemed universities. These institutions cater to a wide range of academic disciplines and professional fields.

**University System:** The university system in India consists of central universities, state universities, and private universities. Central universities are established and funded by the central government, while state universities are established by state governments. Private universities are established by private entities.

**Academic Programs:** Higher education institutions in India offer a wide range of academic programs at undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral levels. These programs cover various disciplines such as arts, sciences, commerce, engineering, medicine, law, and social sciences. The National Board of Accreditation (NBA) and the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) are responsible for assessing and accrediting higher education institutions in India. Accreditation ensures quality standards and promotes continuous improvement.

**Undergraduate Programs:** Higher education in India offers a wide range of undergraduate programs across various disciplines. Students can pursue Bachelor's degrees in fields such as arts, sciences, commerce, engineering, medicine, law, and social sciences.

**Postgraduate Programs:** Postgraduate programs in India provide opportunities for specialized study and research. Students can pursue Master's degrees in disciplines such as arts, sciences, commerce, engineering, management, and more. Additionally, professional degrees like Master of Business Administration (MBA) and Master of Technology (M.Tech) are also available.

**Research Opportunities:** India offers a vibrant research environment with numerous opportunities for research scholars. Universities and research institutions provide Ph.D. programs for students interested in pursuing advanced research in their respective fields. Research funding and fellowships are available through various government schemes and organizations. Indian higher education institutions have a strong focus on research and innovation.

**Competitive Exams:** Several competitive exams serve as gateways to higher education opportunities in India. National-level entrance exams like the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE), National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET), Graduate Aptitude Test in Engineering (GATE), and Common Admission Test (CAT) are conducted for admission to prestigious institutions and professional programs.

**Scholarships and Financial Support:** The Indian government, along with various organizations and institutions, offers scholarships and financial support schemes to promote access to higher education. These schemes provide assistance to deserving and economically disadvantaged students, reducing financial barriers and facilitating higher education opportunities.

**International Collaborations:** Indian higher education institutions actively engage in international collaborations and partnerships with foreign universities and research institutions. These collaborations foster academic exchanges, joint research programs, faculty and student mobility, and the sharing of knowledge and expertise.

**Online Education:** The rise of online education platforms in India has opened up new opportunities for higher education. Several universities and institutions offer online programs and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) that provide flexibility and accessibility to learners.

According to Martin Luther, “Where there is injustice for one, there is injustice for all.” Despite India's vast higher education opportunities, many policies state that the socio-economically disadvantaged groups are still lagging behind in higher education due to such inequalities in the society. According to Kiran and Kumari, R. (2016), problems in pursuing higher education are poor infrastructure, inadequate faculty, unqualified or untrained faculty, inappropriate or overloaded curriculum, lack of financial resources, and a high level of excellence in education. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, “Higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.”

Oza (2019) states that there are a number of issues that need to be addressed in order to meet the challenges for equity and equality in higher education in India. 1. Social Equity and Equality: India provides a very dynamic environment to propose and supply any equity and equality for education due to its multi-culture, multi-caste, multi-language, multi-regionality, and multi-religion. 2. Gender Equity and Equality: As a matter of fundamental justice and human rights, it is vital to address the discrimination that women suffer. Despite having more

chances and better treatment than males in the majority of spheres of economic and social life, women nonetheless experience disadvantages in many areas.

They are regularly treated unfairly in terms of socioeconomic possibilities and treatment and are subjected to a variety of types of discrimination. In addition to having intrinsic value and being a legal right, equality is crucial for promoting social progress, economic development, and the eradication of poverty. Women have the potential to be powerful economic actors who change societies and economies. 3. Economic Equity and Equality: Today's low-income students are only just beginning to enrol at the same rate that high-income students did forty years ago. Low-income and lower-caste students are much less likely than other students to enrol in institutions where the majority of students graduate and much more likely to enrol in institutions where very few of their students graduate and place a heavy financial burden on them.

#### **1.4. Equal access to higher education opportunities faces several challenges, including**

“Broadening access to higher education is a goal which can produce positive outcomes both for the individuals concerned and for wider society (Forsyth and Furlong, 2000) Equal access to higher education opportunities means ensuring that all students, regardless of their gender, locality, and socio-economic background, have the same opportunities to access and succeed in higher education. This includes providing equal access to admission, financial aid, educational resources, and support services. Several factors have been identified as barriers to equal access to higher education opportunities for socioeconomically disadvantaged groups from different backgrounds. These include mainly Socio-Economic Barriers and Institutional Barriers.

##### **1.4.1. Socio-Economic Barriers**

There are significant socio-economic barriers that prevent many students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, from accessing higher education. These include poverty, Gender inequalities, Caste inequalities, Culture and traditions, Group inequalities, and regional inequalities.

**Poverty:** The cost of higher education in India is often prohibitively high, particularly for students from low-income families.

**Gender inequalities:** Women in India face significant barriers to accessing higher education, including cultural and societal biases against women's education.

**Caste inequalities:** There are significant caste inequalities in higher education opportunities in India, with many students are different social groups having limited access to higher education institutions.

**Culture and traditions:** Different groups of students are hindered by their cultural traditions in accessing higher education opportunities.

**Group inequalities:** Group inequalities also impede access to higher education opportunities.

**Regional inequalities:** There are significant regional inequalities in higher education opportunities in India, with many students in rural areas having limited access to quality higher education institutions.

#### 1.4.2. Institutional Barriers

There are significant Institutional barriers that prevent many students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, from accessing higher education. These include Admission, administration interaction, academic Integration and social Inclusion, curricular and co-curricular activities, student- teacher relationship, peer interaction, and Increasing Employability Potential.

**Lack of infrastructure:** Many institutions of higher education in India lack adequate infrastructure, including classrooms, laboratories, and libraries, which affects the quality of higher education provided.

**Admission:** At the time of admissions reservation policies can help increase access to higher education for disadvantaged groups, but they can also create tensions between different social groups and may not always be implemented effectively.

**Administration interaction:** Student-administration interaction is one of the ways to access higher education opportunities. Students from social groups like SC, STs, and the disabled will interact with the administrative staff for their stipends and regulations. Due to a lack of sensitivity, disadvantaged groups are often discriminated against by administrative staff.

**Academic Integration and Social Inclusion:** Lack of access to higher education opportunities can be attributed to academic integration and social inclusion. Despite some interventions by the UGC to promote diversity and non-discriminatory campuses, the institutionalization of equity and diversity as a value of inclusion is not supported by concerted efforts in the form of policy frameworks. There is a shortage of qualified faculty in many institutions of higher education in India, which affects the quality of education and research conducted. Remedial classes are not being conducted effectively. This does not address students who are struggling with academic adjustments. Lack of understanding of basic concepts severely hampers them to tackle the rest of the academic workload. This ultimately

leads students to engage in academically unsupported activities or withdraw from colleges and universities.

**Curricular and co-curricular activities:** Participating in co-curricular activities is integral to a student's holistic development. Patriarchal norms on some campuses restrict female students from participating in co-curricular activities. As a result, only male students will continue. Special needs of disabled people are not adequately considered. As a result, students with disabilities are less likely to actively participate in co-curricular activities.

**Student- Teacher relationship:** The prevailing attitude among teachers that students from disadvantaged social groups on campuses are unmotivated and have no interest in academic subjects is reflected in student-teacher relationship. Female students have less opportunities to interact with teachers. The low proportion of women faculty in some departments also aggravates the situation. Due to such reasons, they are lagging behind in getting higher education opportunities.

**Peer interaction:** Students from different social groups form a peer group with students from their own social group. Students from disadvantaged groups prefer to choose peers from the same groups to avoid discriminatory behaviour from others in the mixed group. Peer interactions provide resources for academic growth and the ability to live and learn with different types of other people. Mixing with other groups of students also makes them lag in getting higher education opportunities.

**Employability Potential:** One of the significant equity concerns facing the higher education system is access to employment opportunities. Higher Education SEDG graduates must possess cognitive skills, generic attitudinal and socio-emotional skills such as teamwork and respect of peer perspective, communication skills, planning, independent working skills, presentation skills and decision-making skills are valued by employers. Importantly, information and communication technology (ICT) skills and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) skills are important to be successful in a digital era.

Equal access to higher education is important for promoting social and economic mobility, reducing income inequality, and fostering social cohesion. It enables individuals from disadvantaged groups to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in the employability and contribute to society's development. However, achieving equal access to higher education opportunities is not an easy task. It requires a comprehensive approach that includes addressing structural barriers such as poverty, discrimination, and inadequate educational resources. Governments, educational institutions, and civil society organizations need to work together to develop policies and programs that address these several challenges and promote equal access to higher education opportunities from socioeconomically disadvantaged groups.

## **2.0. Rationale of Research:**

Researchers have found that most research on equal access to higher education opportunities has been conducted to higher education institutions in India and Telangana. Few studies were conducted on the identifies socio-economic, cultural and structural factors that hinders or facilitate access and suggests strategies to promote equal educational opportunities. Some research was conducted on access to higher education Bhattacharya, D., & Sarkar, S. (2018). Some of the researchers addressing inequality (Rama, M., Béteille, T., & Li, Y., 2014). Various studies were also conducted on the relationship between inequality and higher education to explore how socio-economic factors and institutions factors were barriers the post graduate stockholders in higher education opportunities. It was evident from the reviews of related literature that no study was found in the researchers' knowledge of developing a framework

for Socio-Economic Factors and Institutional Factors were barriers to equal access to higher education opportunities in the Indian context. The primary reason for selecting this study has been NEP-2020 also addressing, socioeconomic and institutional factors are significant barriers for socio-economically disadvantaged groups and lack of research that addresses the issues related to equal access to higher education opportunities for post graduate stockholders' barriers of socio-economic factors and institutional factors in their higher education institutions.

### **3.0. Objectives of the study:**

To study the barriers of post graduate stockholders towards Socio-Economic Factors and Institutional Factors, we have taken considered following objectives –

- To compare the mean score of Socio-Economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for post graduate stockholders with respect to Gender.
- To compare the mean score of Socio-Economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for post graduate stockholders with respect to Locality.
- To compare the mean score of Socio-Economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for post graduate stockholders with respect to social group.
- To find out the differences between socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for postgraduate stakeholders in the whole sample.

### **4.0. Research Design of the study**

As the given research was carried out on a sample of post graduate stockholders to investigate their barriers of Socio-Economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities, the researchers adopted a descriptive survey method as the research design. A five-point Likert Scale was developed and administered to two universities post graduate stockholders to study post graduate stockholders' barriers of Socio-Economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities. The scale has 41 items distributed under different dimensions of Socio-Economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities.

### **5.0. Sample of the study**

Two university post graduate stockholders were selected to know their barriers of Socio-Economic Factors and Institutional Factors. The following tables show the distribution of samples.

**Table.1. Distribution of the Sample.**

S. No.	CATEGORY	PESPONDENT	SAMPLE	PERCENTAGE
1	Gender	Male	200	50
		Female	200	50
2	Locality	Rural	290	72.5
		Urban	110	27.5
3	Social Group	OC	58	14.5
		OBC	161	40.25
		SC	113	28.25
		ST	68	17

## 6.0. Data Analysis and Interpretation

To find out the barriers of Socio-Economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities. The scale, having 41 items, was administered to a sample of 400 post graduate stockholders from two universities. The data were further categorized and analyzed concerning the overall opinion towards barriers of Socio-Economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities. The mean scores of barriers of Socio-Economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities were further analysed based on gender, locality and social group using various statistical techniques.

### Hypothesis Testing

**6.1. Main hypothesis-01: There is no significant difference between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities with respect to Gender.**

The objective of the study was “To compare the mean score of Socio-Economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for post graduate stockholders with request to Gender.”

#### Sub-hypothesis

**6.1.1. There is no significant difference between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of male post graduate stakeholders.**

To find out the extent of differences between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for Postgraduate Stakeholders, the scores of

Variables	Gender	Mean	S.D.	t-value	p- value	Remark
Socio-economic Factors	Male N=200	3.98	0.51	9.984	0.000	Significance
Institutional Factor	Male N=200	3.58	0.53			

Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of the Male sample of postgraduate stakeholders was subjected to Paired t-test analysis. The results are given in table 2 below.

**Table 2.** Results of the t-test between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for male Postgraduate Stakeholders.

The Paired t-test between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for male postgraduate stakeholders is 9.984, and p value is 0.000. The obtained t' value is 9.984 which is greater than the table value 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, null hypothesis reject. It suggests that there is a different between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of male postgraduate stakeholder's barriers to equal access to higher education opportunities.

#### 6.1.2. There is no significant difference between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of female post graduate stakeholders.

To find out the extent of differences between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for Postgraduate Stakeholders, the scores of Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of the female sample of postgraduate stakeholders was subjected to Paired t-test analysis. The results are given in Table 3 below.

**Table 3.** Results of the t-test between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for female Postgraduate Stakeholders.

Variables	Gender	Mean	S.D.	t-value	p- value	Remark
Socio-Economic Factors	Female N=200	4.05	0.509	12.384	0.000	Significance
Institutional Factor	Female N=200	3.58	0.525			

The Paired t-test between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for female postgraduate stakeholders is 12.384, and p value is

0.000. The obtained t' value is 12.384 which is greater than the table value 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, null hypothesis reject. It suggests that there is a difference between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional factors of female postgraduate stakeholders' barriers to equal access to higher education opportunities.

**6.2. Main hypothesis-02: There is no significant difference between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities with respect to Locality.**

The objective of the study was “to compare the mean score of Socio-Economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for postgraduate stockholders with request to locality.”

**Sub-hypothesis:**

**6.2.1. There is no significant difference between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of rural post graduate stakeholders.**

To find out the extent of differences between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for postgraduate stakeholders, the scores of Socio-economic Factors and Institutional factors of the rural sample of postgraduate stakeholders was subjected to Paired t-test analysis. The results are given in Table 4 below.

**Table 4.** Results of the t-test between socio-economic factors and institutional factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for rural postgraduate stakeholders.

Variables	Gender	Mean	S.D.	t-value	p- value	Remark
Socio-Economic Factors	Rural N=290	3.98	0.511	12.360	0.000	Significant
Institutional Factor	Rural N=290	3.57	0.515			

The Paired t-test differences between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for rural postgraduate stakeholders is 12.360, and p value is 0.000. The obtained t' value is 12.360 which is greater than the table value 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, null hypothesis reject. It suggests that there is a different between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of rural postgraduate stakeholder's barriers to equal access to higher education opportunities.

**6.2.2. There is no significant difference between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of urban post graduate stakeholders.**

To find out the extent of different between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for postgraduate stakeholders, the scores of Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of the Male sample of postgraduate stakeholders was subjected to Paired t-test analysis. The results are given in Table 5 below.

**Table 5.** Results of the t-test between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for male postgraduate stakeholders.

Variables	Gender	Mean	S.D.	t-value	p- value	Remark
Socio-Economic Factors	Urban N=110	4.10	0.514	10.236	0.000	Significant
Institutional Factor	Urban N=110	3.60	0.565			

The Paired t-test between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for urban postgraduate stakeholders is 10.236, and p value is 0.000. The obtained t' value is 10.236 which is greater than the table value 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, null hypothesis reject. It suggests that there is a different between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of urban postgraduate stakeholder's barriers to equal access to higher education opportunities.

**6.3. Main hypothesis-03: There is no significant difference between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities with respect to social group.**

The objective of the study was "To compare the mean score of Socio-Economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for post graduate stockholders with request to social group."

## Sub-hypothesis

### 6.3.1. There is no significant difference between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of OC post graduate stakeholders.

To find out the extent of different between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for postgraduate stakeholders, the scores of Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of the OC sample of postgraduate stakeholders was subjected to Paired t-test analysis. The results are given in Table 6 below.

**Table 6.** Result of the t-test between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for OC Postgraduate Stakeholders.

Variables	Gender	Mean	S.D.	t-value	p- value	Remark
Socio-economic Factors	OC N=200	4.11	0.542	6.248	0.000	Significant
Institutional Factor	OC N=200	3.63	0.473			

The Paired t-test between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for OC postgraduate stakeholders is 6.248, and p value is 0.000. The obtained  $t'$  value is 6.248 which is greater than the table value 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, null hypothesis reject. It suggests that there is no different between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional factors of OC postgraduate stakeholders' barriers to equal access to higher education opportunities.

### 6.3.2. There is no significant difference between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of OBC post graduate stakeholders.

To find out the extent of different between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for postgraduate stakeholders, the scores of Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of the OBC sample of postgraduate stakeholders was subjected to Paired t-test analysis. The results are given in Table 7 below.

**Table 7.** Results of the t-test between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for OBC Postgraduate Stakeholders.

Variables	Gender	Mean	S.D.	t-value	p- value	Remark
Socio-economic Factors	OBC N=161	4.02	0.553	9.267	0.000	Significant
Institutional Factor	OBC N=200	3.61	0.527			

The Paired t-test between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for OBC postgraduate stakeholders is 9.267, and p value is .000. . The obtained t' value is 9.267 which is greater than the table value 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, null hypothesis reject. It suggests that there is a different between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of OBC postgraduate stakeholder's barriers to equal access to higher education opportunities.

### 6.3.3. There is no significant difference between in Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of SC post graduate stakeholders.

To find out the extent of different between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for postgraduate stakeholders, the scores of Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of the SC sample of postgraduate stakeholders was subjected to Paired t-test analysis. The results are given in Table 8 below.

**Table 8.** Results of the t-test between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for SC Postgraduate Stakeholders.

Variables	Gender	Mean	S.D.	t-value	p- value	Remark
Socio-economic Factors	SC N=113	3.99	0.438	9.401	0.000	Significant
Institutional Factor	SC N=200	3.53	0.548			

The Paired t-test between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for SC postgraduate stakeholders is 9.401, and p value is 0. 000.. The obtained t' value is 7.72 which is greater than the table value 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, null hypothesis reject. It suggests that there is a different between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional factors of SC postgraduate stakeholders related to Socio-economic Factors and Institutional factors of equal access to higher education opportunities.

**6.3.4. There is no significant difference between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of ST post graduate stakeholders.**

To find out the extent of different between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for postgraduate stakeholders, the scores of Socio-economic Factors and Institutional factors of the ST sample of postgraduate stakeholders was subjected to Paired t-test analysis. The results are given in Table 9 below.

**Table 9.** Results of the t-test between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for ST postgraduate stakeholders.

Variables	Gender	Mean	S.D.	t-value	p- value	Remark
Socio-economic Factors	ST N=68	3.96	0.510	6.095	0.000	Significant (0.05 level)
Institutional Factor	ST N=68	3.56	0.548			

The Paired t-test between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for ST postgraduate stakeholders is 6.095, and p value is 0.000. The obtained t' value is 6.095 which is greater than the table value 1.96 at 0.05 level of significant. Hence, null hypothesis reject. It suggests that there is no different between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of ST postgraduate stakeholder's barriers to equal access to higher education opportunities.

**6.4. Main hypothesis-04: There is no significant difference between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for postgraduate stakeholders in the whole sample.**

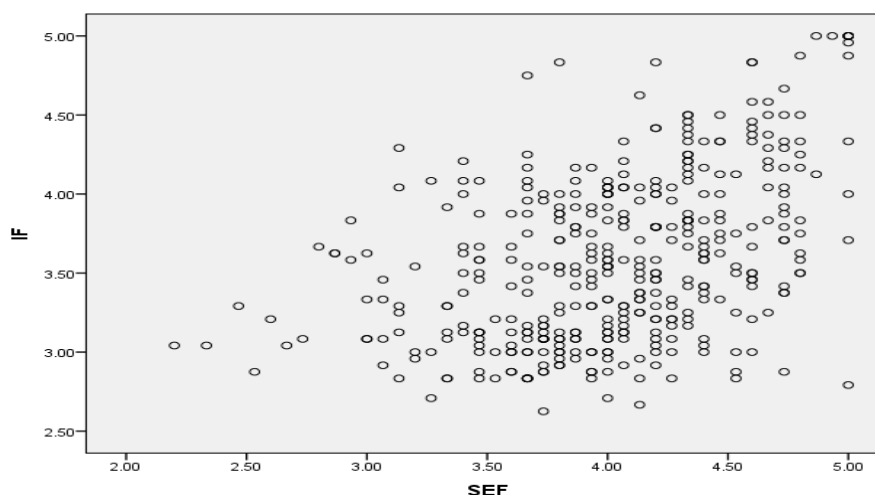
The objective of the study was “To study and find out the difference between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for postgraduate stakeholders in the whole sample”. The corresponding hypothesis was that “There is no significant difference between socio-economic factors and institutional factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for postgraduate stakeholders in the whole sample”. Here difference were found out for examining the degree of association between two variables such as socio-economic factors and institutional factors.

The mean scores of socio-economic factors and institutional factors the whole sample postgraduate stakeholders were subjected to Paired samples statistics to determine the extent of the difference between socio-economic factors and institutional factors of equal access to higher education opportunities. The results are given in Table 10 below.

**Table 10.** Data and results of the difference between socio-economic factors and institutional factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for postgraduate stakeholders of Telangana.

Variables	r value	Std. D	't'	P value	Remark
Socio-Economic Factors	4.0222	0.514	15.758	0.000	Significant (0.05 level)
Institutional Factors	3.5872	0.529			

The Paired t-test between Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for postgraduate stakeholders is 15.758, and p value is 0.000. The obtained t' value is 15.758 which is greater than the table value 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, null hypothesis rejected. It suggests that there is a different between Socio-economic factors and Institutional factors of postgraduate stakeholders related to equal access to higher education opportunities.



**Figure 1.** Difference between Socio-Economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities.

### Outcome of the Research:

This figure shows that Socio-Economic Factors more barriers of equal access to higher education opportunities for socio-economically disadvantaged groups in higher education institutions.

### 7. Findings of the Study:

The following are the findings of the present study:

**Objective -01: To compare the mean score of Socio-Economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for post graduate stockholders with request to gender.**

- The mean scores of Socio-economic Factors and Institutional factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for male postgraduate stakeholders were found to be

significant. The mean scores clearly showed that the Socio-economic Factors higher than that of Institutional factors. Hence, it can be concluded that Socio-economic factors have a high barrier than Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for male postgraduate stockholders.

- The mean scores of Socio-economic Factors and Institutional factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for female postgraduate stakeholders were found to be significant. The mean scores clearly showed that the Socio-economic factors higher than that of Institutional factors. Hence, it can be concluded that Socio-economic factors have a high barrier than Institutional factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for female postgraduate stockholders.

**Objective -02: To compare the mean score of Socio-Economic factors and Institutional factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for post graduate stockholders with request to locality.**

- The mean scores of Socio-economic factors and Institutional factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for Rural postgraduate stakeholders were found to be significant. The mean scores clearly showed that the Socio-economic factors higher than that of Institutional factors. Hence, it can be concluded that Socio-economic factors have a high barrier than Institutional factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for rural post graduate stockholders.
- The mean scores of Socio-economic factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for Urban postgraduate stakeholders were found to be significant. The mean scores clearly showed that the Socio-economic factors higher than that of Institutional factors. Hence, it can be concluded that Socio-economic factors have a high barrier than Institutional factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for urban post graduate stockholders.

**Objective -03: To compare the mean score of Socio-Economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for post graduate stockholders with request to social group**

- The mean scores of Socio-economic factors and Institution factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for OC postgraduate stakeholders were found to be significant. The mean scores clearly showed that the Socio-economic factors higher than that of Institutional factors. Hence, it can be concluded that Socio-economic factors have a high barrier than Institutional factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for OC post graduate stockholders.
- The mean scores of Socio-economic factors and Institutional factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for OBC postgraduate stakeholders were found to be significant. The mean scores clearly showed that the Socio-economic factors higher than that of Institutional factors. Hence, it can be concluded that Socio-economic factors have a high barrier than Institutional factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for OBC post graduate stockholders.

- The mean scores of Socio-economic factors and Institutional factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for SC postgraduate stakeholders were found to be significant. The mean scores clearly showed that the Socio-economic factors higher than that of Institutional factors. Hence, it can be concluded that Socio-economic factors have a high barrier than Institutional factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for SC post graduate stockholders.
- The mean scores of Socio-economic factors and Institutional factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for ST postgraduate stakeholders were found to be significant. The mean scores clearly showed that the Socio-economic factors higher than that of Institutional factors. Hence, it can be concluded that Socio-economic factors have a high barrier than Institutional factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for ST postgraduate stockholders.

**Objective-4: To study and find out the difference between socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for postgraduate stakeholders in the whole sample.**

- The mean scores of Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for postgraduate stakeholders were found to be significant. The mean scores clearly showed that the Socio-economic Factors higher than that of Institutional Factors. Hence, it can be concluded that Socio-economic Factors have a high barrier than Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for post graduate stockholders.

**8. Suggestions:**

The Indian higher education system is the largest in the world regarding the number of institutions and the second largest in enrolments. So, the following steps should be taken for SEDGs to increase opportunities for higher education.

- Caste-based reservation policies in admissions, reservation policy for disabled students and existing catchment area policies need to be strictly implemented and monitored in every higher educational institution.
- Colleges' web information should be updated and made clearly available to applicants; other types of information such as newspaper ad campaigns should also be managed.
- The admissions process should be more inclusive, especially for the most marginalized groups, with clear guidance in filling application forms, information on scholarships and direct assistance.
- Educators play an important role in promoting equitable access to HE in rural and marginalized communities and can be the 'guides and mentors' envisaged by the NEP.
- Outreach activities should be in colleges and communities and through enhanced role of faculty members. Coordinate with schools to do this.
- Institutions of higher education should play a more active role through outreach activities in increasing access to knowledge about the college-going process and informing communities about their educational offerings and services.

- Administrators at HEIs should identify underrepresented student groups on campuses and create access pathways for students from underrepresented groups, particularly public selective and prestigious higher education institutions.
- Students who are the first in the family to overcome many social barriers to access higher education are 'trailblazers.' These students are peer-mentors and important references and inspiration to young people in their family and community.

## **9. Conclusion:**

It is clear from the results that the barriers of Socio-economic factors and Institutional factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for post graduate stockholders. It was found from the research review that there were only few researches works where the Socio-economic factors and Institutional factors barriers of equal access to higher education opportunities for post graduate stockholders was assessed in India and Telangana. So, the findings have been supported based on these available research studies. Bhattacharya and Sarkar (2018) found that the intersectionality of caste, class, and gender in determining access to higher education in India. It highlights the barriers marginalized groups face and emphasizes the need for policies that address multiple dimensions of inequality. It analyses factors such as family income, parental education, and social background in determining access and suggests strategies to promote equal opportunities. These studies provide valuable insights into the challenges and dynamics of equal access to higher education in India. They highlight the importance of addressing socio-economic disparities, gender, locality and other educational factors that hinder equal access.

Further, barriers of Socio-economic Factors and Institutional Factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for postgraduate stockholders differed significantly when compared based on gender, locality, and social group. Socio-economic Factors were identified as barriers to higher education opportunities for postgraduate stockholders more than Institutional Factors barriers to higher education opportunities for based on gender, locality, and social group postgraduate stockholders were found to be Socio-economic factors and Institutional factors were hindering of equal access to higher education opportunities. It was also found, from the present findings that the mean scores of Socio-economic factors and Institutional factors of equal access to higher education opportunities for SEDG Post graduate stockholders towards culturally responsive higher education opportunities were found to differ significantly. From Socio-economic factors, post-graduate stockholders have highly hindered to higher education opportunities. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that involves multiple stakeholders, including governments, educational institutions, and civil society organizations. Some strategies that can be adopted to address these issues include improving financial aid, expanding access to technology and educational infrastructure, promoting diversity and inclusion, and implementing affirmative action policies that prioritize access for disadvantaged groups.

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