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VOICES OF LEADERSHIP: WOMEN ADMINISTRATORS SHAPING INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

In Indian higher education, women's leadership is still an important but underrepresented domain. With an emphasis on leadership styles, obstacles to development, and institutional regulations, this literature review examines women leaders' roles, difficulties, and contributions in higher education institutions. The review examines recruiting procedures based on rotation and selection, the impact of these procedures on gender inclusion, and the underrepresentation of women in key administrative positions like deans, directors, registrars, and vice-chancellors of Higher Education Institutions. The review highlights developments in women's national and international leadership while exposing the policy-driven, cultural, and structural hurdles that keep women from succeeding in their careers. Institutional obstacles, work-life conflicts, and societal expectations prevent women from assuming leadership positions in higher education. These obstacles, which include discouragement and lack of motivation, problems with work-life balance, a lack of mentorship opportunities, and gender bias, prevent women from pursuing leadership positions. Moreover, these issues are made worse by institutional barriers including the glass ceiling effect, wage inequality, and gender insensitive laws. Even though the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 seek to advance gender parity, there is a long way to go. Future studies should examine the obstacles women face in higher education, evaluate the efficacy of policies, analyse the influence of mentorship, and pinpoint methods to improve gender inclusion in academic administration.

Keywords: Women Administrators, Indian Higher Education, Leadership, Gender Equity, Diversity, And Inclusion.

1. INTRODUCTION

“Women don’t need to find a voice, they have a voice, and they need to feel empowered to use it, and people need to be encouraged to listen.”- Meghan Markle.

This quote effectively conveys the crucial role and importance of women's empowerment in society, and this empowerment can be gained through leadership positions in every field. This quotation emphasizes the significance of enabling women in academic settings— professors, administrators, or students—to get involved in leadership and decision-making.

Higher Education Administration refers to the management of higher educational institutions such as colleges and universities, having the responsibility of overseeing curriculum, programs, staff, students, and educational progress (Cook and Suthon, 2014). Higher education administrators are essential to the operational success of colleges and universities. They ensure the efficient functioning of educational institutions while developing settings that support learning and personal growth (Quance, 2022). Higher education administration staff include the following various types of posts: Chancellor, Vice- Chancellor, Registrar, Proctor, Dean of Academic Affairs, Dean of Student Welfare, Dean of Colleges, Controller of Examination, Dean of Faculties, Dean of International Affairs, Dean of Research and Development, Director of the Departments, Dean of Departments, Chief Vigilance Officer, Public Information Officer, Nodal Officer, and any more such on academic positions (Botes, 2024).

In higher education, the selection policies for administrative roles like Directors, Deans, and Vice Chancellors (VCs) can differ significantly. Selection-based methods and rotation-based selection are two prominent approaches (Van Vulpen, 2024). In higher education, rotation-based selection is an administrative approach where faculty members rotate between



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different leadership positions, like directors or deans, regularly. This approach prioritizes participation and skill development by allowing all faculty members to gradually acquire administrative experience (Barraiser, 2022).

A more traditional and organized procedure is used in selection-based procedures to assign people to administrative roles in higher education institutions. Candidates apply for positions by sending in their qualifications and vision statements. A selection committee then conducts an extensive assessment process that includes reference checks and interviews (Travis, 2019). Sometimes, faculty members need not apply. All the eligible faculty members are automatically considered by the selection committee, and the decision is made based on many objective as well as subjective criteria (Jalote, 2023).

Rotation-based selection gives faculty members—including women—a variety of administrative experiences, it fosters inclusion and skill development. Women may find it simpler to hold leadership positions if this strategy is adopted to boost participation and create an atmosphere of shared governance (Beaman et al., 2012). However, if implemented equally, selection-based approaches, which prioritize qualifications and meritocracy, can result in effective leadership. This approach ensures that the top candidates are considered. But if it wasn't designed to work well with other systems, it might unintentionally strengthen existing biases. Therefore, to increase women's involvement in higher education administration, both approaches need to be implemented with careful thought (Walsh, 1996).

Women's presence in leadership roles is essential for empowerment. Women in higher education are economically empowered and highly educated, making it a distinct setting. The presence of women leaders in higher education significantly contributes to the empowerment of other women in several ways. These leaders serve as role models, demonstrating that women can achieve higher levels of leadership, which inspires and motivates others to pursue similar paths (Alotaibi, 2020). The presence of women leaders not only enhances the representation of women in decision-making positions but also contributes to a culture of empowerment and support for future generations of women in higher education (Kapoor, 2022).

Globally, the position of women in higher education administration represents a complicated environment characterized by notable inequalities and enduring difficulties. Even while more women are enrolling in undergraduate programs, this progress has not been reflected in leadership positions; as of 2019, women only held 19.5% of the top 200 higher education institutions. There are noticeable regional differences: involvement is significantly lower in China, the Arab world, and places like Hong Kong and South Korea, while higher in Scandinavia, Australia, and the United Kingdom (Helms et al., 2021). Women now lead 50 of the world's top 200 universities as of 2023, up from 48 the year before. Thus, esteemed establishments like MIT and the University of Oxford are included. Although the increase shows that women are increasingly accepted as leaders in academia, it also emphasizes the necessity of ongoing efforts to achieve gender parity (Gill, 2024). Only 9.55% of Indian higher education institutions had women leaders in 2023, indicating a large gender disparity in academic leadership. Stronger gender equity activities are required in India to bring the country up to international norms and encourage inclusive decision-making in higher education, as this number falls short of the global average, where women occupy about 20% of leadership positions (Mayya et al., 2021).

Despite a significant number of women entering academia, their representation declines sharply as one moves up the academic hierarchy from lecturer to professor. This indicates that while women are present in large numbers at the base, they face barriers that hinder their advancement to leadership positions (Banker, 2023). The well-documented underrepresentation of women in higher education management shows that each nation's managerial talent pool is not being used to its maximum potential. To understand the hurdles to women's advancement and to develop strategies for achieving a more equitable gender balance based on professional equality, a thorough examination of present recruitment and promotion procedures is important (Ghara, 2016).

The existing literature showed that many obstacles prevent women in higher education from moving up to administrative positions (Emory, 2013). These include institutional barriers like discriminatory hiring practices and gender-insensitive organisational policies, which frequently cause women to forfeit their chances for advancement in the workplace (Beaman et al., 2012). It is hard for women to succeed in leadership jobs because of cultural expectations and gender stereotypes that



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create a hostile work environment, the prevalence of sexual harassment, and a patriarchal culture in situations where men dominate (Kapoor, 2022).

The present paper looks to explore various aspects related to women administrators in higher education.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Concept and Background

In many institutions, women were underrepresented in senior positions in the early 2000s, and they accounted for a minimal portion of leadership posts (Global Education Monitoring Report Team and UNESCO, 2018). Significant underrepresentation and structural obstacles defined the situation of women in higher education administration in India (Ghara, 2016). Women constituted a minority in administrative roles, frequently encountering institutional and cultural barriers that hindered their progress (Arya, 2001).

Various socio-political initiatives that supported gender equality caused the landscape to slowly change, although the progress was uneven and gradual. Since its founding in 1927, All India Women's Conference has operated as a non-governmental organization devoted to empowering women through leadership growth and educational opportunities. It seeks to increase women's involvement in all areas of life, including the administration of higher education (Joseph and Joseph, 2022).

The University Grants Commission established in 1956 has implemented several key policies to enhance women's participation in higher education administration, including the Capacity Building for Women Managers and the UGC (Prevention of Sexual Harassment) Regulations, 2015. Additional initiatives like the Saksham Portal and targeted scholarship schemes aim to create a safe, supportive environment that empowers women to pursue leadership roles in academia. It has initiated programs aimed at breaking societal stereotypes, particularly in the Sciences, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics fields, to foster an environment conducive to women's advancement (Nazi, 2024).

The National Commission for Women was founded in 1992, which was a significant turning point in addressing issues related to women, such as their participation in the workforce and the educational system (Ghara,2016). The Gender Inclusion Funds, a component of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, provide funding and resources to increase women's involvement in higher education, particularly in administrative roles, to address gender inequities in education (Association of Indian Universities et al., 2023).

But despite these initiatives, women still faced challenges like discrimination based on gender, problems integrating work and personal obligations, and weak institutional support networks (Son Hing et al., 2023). Moreover, pay differences were common, with women frequently receiving less than men in equivalent roles. Current statistics show an average inequality of 14.2% in the UK and 23.1% in private colleges in Jordan (Hawatmeh et al., 2024)The gender wage gap in higher education institutions is still an important global issue. Although making up an important portion of the academic workforce, women hold just 28% of leadership positions, underscoring structural obstacles to promotion (*The Gender Pay Gap*, 2018). Disparities still exist, with some institutions showing discrepancies as high as 41%, despite certain nations reporting progress, such as the UK, where the median gender wage gap in higher education is 11.9%. In STEM sectors, where women have greater pay gaps than men, the situation is made worse (Abdel-Raouf & M. Buhler, 2021).

According to research, women in academia often earn less money than men do, and the underrepresentation of women in prominent positions in India makes the disparity worse. According to one study, for example, women only make up around 30% of university teachers, and even fewer hold leadership positions, which contributes to the pay gap (Burkinshaw, 2015). Furthermore, compared to subjects like the arts and social sciences, engineering and management fields tend to have wider pay disparities,



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and private organisations tend to emphasise these kinds of pay scale disparities more than public ones. These disparities are further maintained by the lack of transparency in pay scales and advancement procedures (Gamage et al., 2020). The difficulties faced by women aspiring to administrative positions were made worse by the dearth of professional development options and mentorship opportunities (Mondal, 2021).

2.2 Current status of women in academia leadership

The data concerning the proportion of presidencies occupied by women in higher education worldwide has indicated a steady rise over the years. Across all institutions, women held 21.1% of the presidency in 2001. The total percentage increased to 23.0% by 2006. In 2011, women accounted for 26.4% of all presidencies, continuing the trend. As of 2019, women only held 19.5% of the top 200 higher education institutions, compared to 30.1% of leadership posts across all institutions by 2016. Women led 32% of institutions in 2021 (Johnson, 2017). By 2024, women in higher education will have made significant progress toward global leadership positions. Women currently control 25% of these esteemed posts, with 50 of the top 200 colleges in the world being run by women, according to the most recent data from Times Higher Education. This represents continuous growth since data gathering started in 2015, when only 14% of these institutions were managed by women. This is up from 48 in 2023 and 43 in 2022 (Gill, 2024).

The percentage of women working in higher education administration increased from 43% to 51% of the existing women administrators between 2002 and 2022. This increase suggests a substantial movement in administrative jobs toward gender diversity, especially in roles where there was previously little representation of women, including deans of law, medicine, and veterinary medicine (Fuesting, 2023).

In 2023, there were 110 out of 1151 Indian higher education institutions led by women, accounting for only 9.55% of all institutions. In comparison to polls done in 2015 and 2018, for example, only 6.67% and 6.25% of institutions were led by women, respectively. This represents a minor rise over previous years. Approximately 89.57% of institutions are run by men, indicating a significant gender gap in leadership positions within this sector (Banker, 2023). Women are still underrepresented in leadership roles, but their enrollment in higher education has increased dramatically. Women made up 49% of all students enrolled in higher education, according to the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) for 2019–20. This number, however, conceals differences between various institutions and geographical areas; for example, women's involvement is noticeably lower in some states and among particular educational programs (Mondal, 2021). At the university level in India, the percentage of women teachers in senior positions is reported to be 36.65% (Venkat et al., 2022).

The Indian government has implemented several measures to support gender parity in education, including programs to increase access to higher education and scholarships for women students. Still, the efficacy of these interventions varies considerably throughout socioeconomic categories and geographical areas (Farooqui, 2024). Even though more women are enrolling as students in higher education, their participation in leadership positions is still greatly insufficient. Around 18.2 million women students were enrolled in higher education overall, while 42.2% of faculty members were women. However, women dominate the workforce in lower-level roles, and their presence at the university level has decreased significantly, accounting for only 36.65% of all posts (Venkat et al., 2022). Women represented about 42.6% of assistant professors and 42.9% of lecturers as of the 2019–20 academic year, while the proportion of women declined significantly at more senior positions, with only 37.1% serving as associate professors and 27.5% as full professors. This pattern suggests that women's advancement into top managerial positions is restricted by a persistent glass ceiling (George, 2011).

Additional efforts are required to tackle cultural obstacles and improve support networks that enable women to advance into administrative roles in higher education establishments (Alshdiefat et al., 2024).



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2.3 Barriers to leadership

As leaders, women encounter numerous hurdles. When taken as a whole, these obstacles make it difficult for women to pursue leadership roles and call for focused initiatives to advance inclusion and equity in businesses. Here are some of the difficulties that are mentioned:

- **Personal Barriers-** Women often internalise inhibition and adopt more masculine behaviours in an attempt to fit in with the predominantly male workforce. The process of internalisation may limit their authentic voice and leadership style. Women's limited career advancement is also largely caused by personal challenges, such as juggling duties to one's family and professional objectives (Khan et al., 2024). Women frequently suffer from a lack of self-confidence, which can impede their desire to take on leadership positions. In contrast to the idea of healthy competition among men, the competitive climate among women is frequently perceived negatively, which can worsen feelings of inadequacy (Yahya et al., 2024).
- **Invisible Barriers-** The "Glass Ceiling," which describes the invisible barriers that keep women from rising to the top academic positions, is one example of the many invisible barriers that women experience and how they hinder their ability to advance professionally. This issue is especially noticeable in settings where men predominately hold decision-making positions, which makes it challenging for women to fully engage in research and leadership roles (Meza-Mejia et al., 2023). The traditionally male characteristics linked to leadership positions are something that women frequently struggle against. One leader, for example, said that it was difficult to not match the pattern of a traditional leader since, instead of genuinely fostering relationships, leadership is frequently rewarded for using certain buzzwords and connections (Bowen, 2024). Women administrators see positions such as director, dean, registrar, and vice chancellor as chances to make a big difference, but they frequently encounter gender biases that undermine their confidence and authority (Johnson, 2024). Due to their tendency to understate their qualifications, many people are hesitant to apply for these roles. They may feel overwhelmed and undervalued as the outcome of engaging in additional responsibilities to foster diversity and inclusion (Bhattacharya & Bureau, 2024). However, as they understand how crucial diverse viewpoints are to sound decision-making, women in leadership have grown more committed to eliminating obstacles and promoting equitable legislation that encourages diversity in educational leadership (LeanIn.Org and McKinsey, 2019). Gender biases that reflect mistrust of women's capacities for leadership frequently impact how male employees view women in higher education administration. Despite facts indicating that women administrators tend to possess comparable or better talents, many males may still believe that women are less capable of holding leadership positions (Dear, 2016). The contradiction that prevents women from being accepted in leadership roles is also created when aggressive behaviour in women is frequently criticized while similar traits in men are praised. Promoting gender equality and recognizing the vital contributions that women provide to leadership in higher education necessitates recognizing and addressing these biases (Williams et al., 2017).
- **Organizational Barriers -** The advancement of women in higher education to senior leadership positions is hampered by many organizational hurdles. The lack of appreciation and support for their achievements is a major problem that many face. This makes women feel excluded and unsupported by their male co-workers, which deters them from aiming for leadership roles (Avolio et al., 2023). It is particularly challenging for women to manage work and personal obligations when there are rigid work schedules, lengthy work hours, and insufficient leave policies (Mayya et al., 2021). Women in higher education frequently experience harassment and inequality at work, which impedes their ability to advance in their careers. These problems are made worse by cultural norms and the increased duties that women have in comparison to men (Bowen, 2024).

2.4 Gender-Based Leadership

A vital field of research that shows significant variations between the approaches adopted by male and female leaders in carrying out their jobs and interacting with their teams is the effect of gender on leadership style. Research revealed that gender has an impact on leadership styles; women tend to be more participative and collaborative, while men tend to be more directive and authoritative (Chari and Lundblad, 2021). Gender stereotypes cause obstacles for women in leadership roles because they link powerful managerial skills to masculinity. Because of this dilemma, women who display



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stereotypically feminine patterns risk being viewed as ineffective leaders, and those who embrace masculine characteristics risk facing criticism for breaching gender norms. In addition, there is a conflict between the stereotypes of the "ideal" mother and the "ideal" leader, which makes it difficult for women to balance their obligations to their households and their professions. This can lead to prejudice during the hiring and promotion processes (O'Connor, 2020). Open communication and collaborative work can be promoted by the more inclusive and participative communication techniques used by women leaders. In contrast, male leaders tend to have a more directive communication style, which may result in distinct team dynamics and decision-making procedures (Diehl and Dzubinski, 2016).

The relationship between gender differences in self-perception accuracy and the underrepresentation of women leaders in academia is a critical area of study. The degree to which an individual's perception of their talents aligns with the perceptions of others is known as self-perception accuracy (McLendon, 2018). Research suggests that women frequently perceive themselves less accurately than men do, which adds to a confidence gap that may impede women's ability to grow in their careers (Herbst, 2020). Male and female leaders are regarded as equally effective by their peers, but a study by Fischer et al. (2018) on academic managers in South Africa discovered significant gender variations in self-perception accuracy. The difference implies that women's diminished self-assurance could result in an underestimate of their potential, which could hinder their advancement into positions of higher authority (Fischer et al., 2018).

2.5 Work-life Balance

The equilibrium between one's personal and professional obligations—including those related to family, health, and leisure—is known as work-life balance (Hreha, 2023). For academics' general well-being, work satisfaction, and productivity, this balance must be reached. This balance becomes more difficult in higher education, where demands can be great and complex (Douwes et al., 2023). The general well-being, job happiness, and productivity of academics in higher education all depend on striking a balance between work and home life. However, several issues specific to the academic setting have made this balance more difficult to achieve. Because of increased workloads, project demands, and an overworked culture brought about by the neoliberalization of higher education, academics find it challenging to balance their personal and professional obligations (Sikandar & Sikandar, 2023).

Academics are required to manage several duties and responsibilities at once as a result of the modernisation of higher education, which has escalated work (Clark et al., 2024). Often referred to as "work-work balance," this phenomenon emphasises the challenge of juggling competing demands from several projects and jobs in academia. Because of social expectations about gender roles, women academics may face additional constraints that make it more difficult for them to manage work and life successfully (Griffin, 2022).

For women administrators, striking a healthy work-life balance is made more difficult by the demands of their jobs, which include long work hours and extra academic obligations. These positions frequently include working on projects like lesson planning and grading after hours, which can make it difficult to distinguish between work and personal life (Tang, 2024).

To establish a more accommodating atmosphere, the study (Cicero, 2024) supports necessary institutional reforms, such as implementing flexible work arrangements and offering childcare support. It also emphasises the significance of individual tactics, advising women to prioritise self-care, establish boundaries between work and family life, and look for mentorship and support systems (Cicero, 2024). The ability of women administrators to manage their work-life balance is greatly impacted by the existence or lack of support networks. Empirical evidence suggests that individuals with strong support networks, including formal mentorship and informal social support, are more adept at overcoming obstacles (Yücedaşlar et al., 2024).

2.6 Career Advancement and Equity

Significant trends in diversity and pay equity have evolved in higher education over the period spanning from 2002 to 2022, especially about career development and equity for different demographic groups. There are still income differences



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between various demographic groupings even with improvements made in diversity (Brennan and Naidoo, 2008). Higher education institutions' gender pay gap is a reflection of larger social problems with occupational segregation and gender discrimination. Even if the disparity is lower in public institutions than in private ones, there are still notable differences in both that require focused initiatives to advance equity and just compensation policies for every educator (Amman, 2013).

Reports reveal that women and minorities generally earn less than their male counterparts, even when accounting for equal degrees and employment titles (Kochhar, 2023). This shows that these groups' prospects for job advancement are still hindered by systemic inequalities (Tight, 2023). The study by Hernandez (2024) underlines that the payment negotiation procedure at the time of hire greatly affects women's career advancement in higher education. During conversations, women may experience pressure to maintain a balance between being polite and respectful and being aggressive, which may make it more difficult for them to obtain fair compensation and positions. It also advocates systemic modifications, such as adopting pay transparency and providing negotiating training, to support parity in career advancement. With all factors taken into account, resolving these problems is essential to creating a more equal atmosphere in higher education, which will ultimately benefit women and the organizations they work for (Hernandez, 2024).

The research by Bishu and Headley (2020) suggests that informal workplace norms and practices foster unequal experiences for women. The formal rules aimed at promoting fairness may be compromised by these informal procedures, which could put women at a disadvantage as they advance in their careers. The study also highlights the inadequacy of legislative and administrative remedies in eliminating gender disparities. A shift in organizational culture is necessary to establish an atmosphere in which women can flourish and grow in their careers. This calls for a dedication to investigating and changing the corporate culture at the core of gender discrimination (Bishu and Headley, 2020).

Achieving parity and professional development for women in higher education is crucial for promoting various viewpoints and improving institutional effectiveness not just for the sake of justice. Academic institutions can foster an environment that empowers women to succeed as leaders through the implementation of supporting policies, mentoring programs, and systemic hurdles that are addressed. In the end, a dedication to gender parity will result in more robust and creative educational establishments that serve the interests of all citizens (Parashar, 2024).

2.7 Well-Being of Women Administrators

Well-being is defined as a holistic state that encompasses multiple dimensions of health, specifically physical, mental, and emotional well-being (Shetty and Bhat, 2023).

Operational Definition by Vik & Carlquist (2020): Proposes that "well-being is a state of positive feelings and meeting full potential in the world," emphasizing that it can be measured both subjectively and objectively (Simons and Baldwin, 2021)

Well-being is a multifaceted concept that encompasses various dimensions of human experience and functioning. It can be broadly defined as the state of being happy, healthy, and prosperous, often referred to as welfare (*Well-Being*, 2025).

World Health Organization: Positive mental health is a state of well-being in which individuals realize their own abilities, cope with normal life stresses, work productively, and contribute to their communities (Ruggeri et al., 2020).

Well-being consists of five components which are as follows:

- **Emotional Well-Being:** This involves experiencing positive emotions such as happiness and contentment while managing negative emotions like anxiety and depression (Park et al., 2022).
- **Psychological Well-Being:** This aspect focuses on personal development, self-acceptance, purpose in life, and the realization of one's potential (Jarden and Roache, 2023).
- **Social Well-Being:** This includes having positive relationships and a sense of belonging within a community (World Health Organization, 2023).



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- **Physical Well-Being:** Feeling physically healthy and energetic is critical to overall well-being (*Well-Being Concepts*, 2022).
- **Life Satisfaction:** This refers to an individual's overall life quality assessment, which can be influenced by various factors including economic stability and social connections (Ruggeri et al., 2020).

Broader Perspectives of Well-Being:

- **Subjective Well-Being:** Often synonymous with mental health, this term emphasizes how individuals evaluate their lives based on their feelings and experiences (Park et al., 2022).
- **Eudaimonic Well-Being:** This term refers to a deeper sense of well-being that includes personal growth, purpose, and meaningful engagement in life activities (World Health Organization, 2023).

Improving life satisfaction, staying physically healthy, and building emotional strength all depend on well-being. When people focus on their well-being, they become more productive and creative at work and form stronger social connections, leading to a sense of support and belonging (Care In Mind, 2021). Also, when individuals take care of themselves, they can help and inspire others. In short, prioritizing well-being makes communities healthier and happier while also improving individual lives (Aldana, 2020).

A lot of important elements influence the well-being of women administrative staff members in managing roles at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Professional invisibility, a lack of empowerment, a rise in stress and strain, high standards with little funding, and serious difficulties juggling work and personal obligations are a few of these (Begum et al., 2024).

Women administrative staff members' satisfaction with their work and recognition are lowered by their lack of visibility in the workplace and low levels of empowerment. Moreover, anxiety and fatigue are made worse by higher workloads and stress levels. The challenge in finding a balance between work and life, particularly for younger women with family responsibilities, emphasises the need for family-friendly, supportive policies. Enhancing their general well-being also requires sufficient organisational assistance, which includes resources and knowledge of their unique difficulties. Addressing these problems is essential to improving these workers' working conditions and job satisfaction (Sosnowska and Sulej, 2023).

The study by Uyeri (2024) suggests the adoption of all-encompassing well-being initiatives and programs that foster strong interpersonal bonds and social support. It also advocates for a comprehensive strategy to establish a helpful learning environment that benefits instructors as well as the general performance of educational establishments. Achieving long-term improvements in lecturers' productivity and well-being requires constant assessment and modification of these strategies (Uyeri, 2024).

2.8 Supportive policies to break the barriers

- **Involvement of policymakers:** The study by Vella (2020) highlights that active collaboration from legislators and government entities is necessary for any recommendations to be implemented effectively. This means that people in positions of authority must acknowledge the value of gender parity and take proactive measures to develop laws that assist women in holding positions of leadership. This could include introducing initiatives designed expressly to support women's leadership or amending the law (Vella, 2020).
- **Implementing Feminist Praxis:** By empowering leaders to participate in feminist praxis, organizations can encourage them to question established conventions and push for institutional reform. This entails taking the initiative to address concerns of inclusion and equity as well as modifying leadership techniques to better serve a range of communities (Channing, 2022).
- **Mentoring and Networking:** To help women in leadership roles, increasing the pipeline through professional networking and mentoring is a prominent suggestion. This entails setting up official mentorship programs that link prospective women leaders with accomplished professionals in related sectors. However, evidence suggests that these fixes may unintentionally



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cause women to devote more time to serving in academia, which could limit their chances for advancement and research (Norander and Zenk, 2023).

- **Training and Development Programs:** For women to overcome obstacles to leadership at Jordanian colleges, training and development are crucial. Institutions can support women's confidence and job advancement by offering focused programs that improve negotiation skills, self-advocacy, and leadership abilities. To further assist women's development, customized programs addressing regional cultural issues and networking skills are provided. In the end, funding these programs promotes a more diverse learning environment that is advantageous to individual women as well as the larger university (Alshdiefat et al., 2024).
- **Promoting Work-Life Balance:** In order for women in administrative services to succeed, it is essential that work-life balance be promoted. This can be accomplished by giving women the time management skills they need to successfully balance their personal and professional obligations. Furthermore, encouraging open dialogue about the difficulties women encounter within families can improve collaboration and understanding among family members, ultimately resulting in a supportive environment that enables women to succeed in their careers while successfully managing their home lives (George, 2011).
- **Scholarships & Financial Assistance:** Having in place women-focused financial assistance programs can help remove the financial obstacles that many women experience. Scholarships offered particularly for women students and conditional cash transfers can encourage families to place a high priority on their daughters' education (Lashari, 2023).

3. RESEARCH GAP

The literature now in existence lists a variety of obstacles that women administrators in higher education must overcome. These barriers include organisational, invisible, and personal ones, among many others. It recommended an abundance of measures to break down the obstacles, such as enlisting the help of policymakers, putting feminism into practice, networking and mentoring, training and development programs, encouraging work-life balance, offering financial aid and scholarships, and mentoring.

Further research is needed to determine how well women are represented in administrative positions in Indian higher education institutions. There are still large gaps that prevent women from rising to leadership roles, although considerable improvements. The following are the main areas of unfulfilled research needs:

In India, women make up about 35% of academics, but their representation in leadership positions is substantially lower. This disparity calls into question the structural obstacles that keep women from advancing to higher administrative roles like vice-chancellors or deans. There is now a clear dearth of women's representation at these levels, which suggests that specific research on the variables influencing this trend is necessary (Burkinshaw, 2015).

The career paths of women in higher education are frequently impacted by societal standards and biases. To figure out how these cultural elements affect women's experiences and opportunities in academic leadership, more research is required (Yahya et al., 2024). Gaining knowledge about how gender and cultural norms interact can help women better understand the obstacles they encounter in their professional advancement (Uyeri, 2024).

In higher education, the gender wage gap still exists, with women frequently receiving lower compensation for equivalent work than males in private institutions. Developing methods to enhance pay equity among academic administrators requires examining the origins and consequences of this compensation disparity (Kumari, 2024).

Career advancement depends on having access to professional networks and mentors, yet many academic women report having little access to these resources. To find successful mentorship models that can assist aspiring women leaders, as well as to investigate how the lack of mentorship impacts women's advancement into leadership positions, more research is required (Dear, 2016).



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Women administrators' experiences are not all the same; they differ according to caste, class, and ethnicity. For instance, women from underrepresented groups could face extra obstacles that hinder their ability to progress in their careers. Future research should take an intersectional perspective to comprehend how different identities impact women's experiences in leadership roles in higher education (O'Connor, 2020).

Even if programs like quotas for women in leadership roles have been put in place to increase gender diversity, little is known about how effective they are. Examining how these policies affect women's representation and professional advancement might yield important information about the most effective ways to advance gender equity (Chari & Lundblad, 2021).

In order to address current gaps, additional research is needed in the essential subject of women administrators' well-being in higher education. Scholars can discover the complex issues these women face by concentrating on intersectionality, corporate culture, psychological well-being, work-family balance, and economic stability. Developing appropriate support networks and regulations that promote fair chances and improve general well-being requires an understanding of these processes (Shetty & Bhat, 2023).

To create a fair environment for women administrators in Indian higher education institutions, these research gaps must be filled. Researchers can provide important insights that guide institutional practices and policy changes targeted at advancing gender equity by carrying out thorough studies that examine these topics. In addition to helping women develop in their careers, this enhances the academic environment by guaranteeing that a range of viewpoints are represented at all leadership levels (Venkat et al., 2022).

4. METHODOLOGY

Discussing the current state of research on women administrators in higher education Relevant empirical and theoretical literature papers are gathered from notable publishing houses like Gender and Education, Journal of International Women's Studies, Science Direct, Taylor and Francis, SAGE, JSTOR, and Springer, as well as from Emerald, Elsevier, and Central European Management Journal. A variety of focused keywords, such "women administrators," "higher education", "women's empowerment", "leadership", "well-being", "gender", "leadership development", "institutional transformation", and "women enrollement" are utilized to find appropriate resources. In addition to compiling research papers from these sources, certain articles are hand-searched utilising the preferences of the gathered papers. 55 papers are included among the 80 wrapped-up articles for review.

5. CONCLUSION

Women's leadership in higher education institutions (HEIs) is a critical area that requires ongoing attention and action to achieve gender equality, as outlined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5). The bibliometric analysis conducted reveals a growing body of literature that underscores the importance of empowering women to take on leadership roles based on their merit and capabilities rather than gender stereotypes (Fauzi et al., 2024). The phenomenon of women's needs has a substantial impact on the experiences of women in leadership jobs, which increases feelings of burnout and compassion fatigue. Due to historical prejudices that have favored men in higher education, women continue to be underrepresented in leadership roles, even though they make up a sizable share of the educated workforce (Bradshaw et al., 2024).

The study by Abdullah Dahlan (2023) concludes that women in academia, especially those in leadership positions, incur considerable interpersonal and intrapersonal costs while navigating their careers. The pressures of bias and stereotypes often result in these costs being expressed as a loss of personal time, involvement in the community, and mental health (Abdullah Dahlan, 2023). The experiences that the women deans related, however, emphasise the vital role that institutional, social, and financial support networks have in easing these difficulties. Establishing fair and welcoming work environments,



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together with support systems, might enable women to follow their career aspirations without sacrificing their identity or enthusiasm for what they do (Ezenwa, 2022).

Organisations need to support women leaders in building resilience since it is essential for overcoming the challenges presented by higher education institutions. In addition, the research highlights the necessity of creative approaches to maintain women’s leadership and guarantee that gender parity is not just an objective but also a reality in academic environments. To promote a more equal academic environment for upcoming generations, it also highlights the necessity for HEIs to actively seek to create an inclusive culture that recognises and supports women leaders (Hagan & Olivier, 2022).

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