

Gender Discrimination Underlying in Higher Education in Universities

Liangfei Liu¹

¹ Hunan Normal University, Changsha 410081, China

Correspondence: Liangfei Liu, Hunan Normal University, Changsha 410081, China.

Received: March 4, 2021

Accepted: April 5, 2021

Online Published: April 25, 2021

doi:10.5430/irhe.v6n1p30

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5430/irhe.v6n1p30>

Abstract

Since ancient times, sexism has existed in all aspects of people's lives. Women have always been at the bottom of society. Even upper-class women also have to abide by the principle of "obeying father at home, obeying husband after getting married, and obeying son after the husband died" as the social ethics. After the founding of new China, the idea that "women hold up half the sky" gradually spread. On the whole, the social status of Chinese women has been greatly improved. But sexism is still rife. Especially in colleges and universities, the underlying sexism on campus, in its "normal" form, is ignored. In view of this phenomenon, the author conducts in-depth exploration in the hope of attracting people's attention.

Keywords: colleges and universities, sexual discrimination, equality

As for gender discrimination, the patriarchal ideology inherited in China's long feudal times and thousands of years of feudal culture has been deeply branded in the blood of every Chinese. This thought went from the Han Dynasty Dong Zhongshu's "only women and small people are difficult to support" to the later "women without talent is virtuous", and then to "women should not intervene in politics". Though it evolved several times, it only legitimized the patriarchal society in which men were inferior to women. In the long feudal history, although there were also stories of "Mulan in the army for her father", "Mu Guiying several times in charge", and "Liang Hongyu beat the drum to return to the Jin army", but for the thousands of Chinese women in a humble life of in the long history, they were just a legend. Chinese women have been playing the role of accessories in the long history.

1. The Concept of Sexism

For gender discrimination, relevant scholars give the following definition: Gender discrimination refers to all discrimination, elimination or restrict based on gender in political, economic, social, cultural, or all the other fields, regardless of marital status, on the basis of equality between men and women". From the point of view of scholars, sexism is reflected in many aspects. It forms language sexism when it is reflected in language, and it forms word sexism when it is reflected in writing.

At present, gender discrimination is generally concerned by the society, mainly for those women with relatively low education level who lack basic awareness of rights, and those who have received higher education but suffer unequal treatment in employment and career development. That is to say, people have noticed the phenomenon of gender discrimination on female college students, especially the unequal treatment they encounter in the process of employment due to gender discrimination.

However, with the change of China's demographic structure in the period of social transformation, especially the change of the gender ratio in colleges and universities, people seem to ignore the gender inequality in college campuses around them, which are higher education training bases. In addition, because gender discrimination in colleges and universities is different from gender discrimination in a general sense, it usually appears in a more hidden way, with a deeper latent state. In addition, some phenomena that people seem to take for granted are full of the shadow of gender discrimination. However, because of its high concealment, it does not seem to have attracted widespread attention.

2. The Status Quo of Gender Discrimination in Colleges and Universities

On October 8, 2007, the China Youth Daily published a report called "Obvious 'Female more than Male' among Anhui examinees including girls (85%). After the admissions in the college entrance examination this year, news from Anhui TV: the rate above college (vocational) this year is 85 girls among every 100 students and 15 boys. The

data set a new record for gender imbalance in such statistics in China. Data from the China Education Statistics Network shows that female students accounted for 3,732% of students in regular colleges and universities in 1997, and the figure rose to 4,708% in 2005, with an increasing trend. In normal colleges and universities, the gender imbalance is even more pronounced. However, with development of this phenomenon in accordance with the traditional concept of "scarcity is precious", there are fewer and fewer male students in colleges and universities, which makes male students have advantages over female students in many aspects. Relatively speaking, they are more likely to become the focus, and their achievements are more likely to be noticed and even magnified. That is, they are more likely to be recognized by teachers and favored by classmates.

For now, the majority of resource holders in universities are still male. A professor at Huazhong University of Science and Technology once mentioned that some of the hardware facilities in most universities were built according to the ratio of male and female students in the 1980s. From student dormitories to recreational facilities, most of the facilities are designed to meet the needs of male students. There are few facilities suitable for women's extracurricular activities. "College girls go to the library or go shopping, and there is no recreation to speak of." As for college girls who are the "mass" in the school, this life needs naturally not so much attention.

The ratio of men and women is very different even in the majors of science and technology, not to mention the majors of liberal arts. Most of the classrooms are presented such a situation: at a glance, only the last two rows are boys in such a large classroom. Because there are more women than men, men are more visible, which puts women who make up the majority of the college population, in a marginalized position.

3. Manifestations of Gender Discrimination in Colleges and Universities

First, the unequal enjoyment of university infrastructure resources is reflected in the recruitment of university associations. Every year, the beginning of the semester is the "recruitment" peak for major associations among the colleges and universities. Usually, recruitment of even a club with small scale has to go through the two processes of a written test and an interview. In normal colleges and universities where the ratio of male and female is unbalanced, female students all almost look the same in the face of "numerous" female students. If there's a guy suddenly, the senses are different in the first place, and therefore, they're more likely to choose the guy, not to mention the advantage of the guy being equal.

Second, the "glass ceiling" phenomenon is serious for the development of female students in college associations. The term "glass ceiling" originally refers to the obstructed career development of women in economic, political, cultural and other fields, namely, senior management positions, which seemed to have no special restrictions on women and seemed to be attainable through hard work. In fact, it is like a glass ceiling which is visible but invisible. This limits women's career advancement. In normal colleges, the "glass ceiling" permeates college life in another form. In order to balance the ratio of men to women (already unbalanced), societies also prefer male leaders. There is also the formation of one or several boys in the club with a majority of the members being girls.

Thirdly, gender inequality is also implied in various student competition mechanisms held by colleges and universities. According to some college students who often serve as judges of the competition (who are all the main persons in charge of an organization), "in fact, there are many girls who perform very well in the competition, but considering the effect of the whole activity, we have to tilt the score....." Perhaps, the proportion of female students in some universities is too much higher than that of male students, and female judges tend to favor male candidates under the same conditions.

Fourth, the intangible rules of the evaluation of college examination course exist. In the face of a class with more female students than male students, the teachers are also somewhat helpless. As a teacher said, at a glance almost all students are girls who are almost the same and there is no particularly deep impression. On the contrary, a few boys appear particularly prominent, also particularly easy to recognize, and the natural impression is also relatively deep. In the case of the examination class, this will directly affect the teacher's subjective impression of the grade. On the other hand, because of the large number of girls, "they all look the same" and "it is not easy to impress teachers," said one girl. It is understood that the absolute performance of boys is generally higher than that of girls based on the same base. "Non-success ban all sentient beings" girls, in the school social practice opportunities are much less than boys. It is generally believed that male students are more responsible and able to grasp the overall situation than female students. Therefore, male students are mostly selected as the responsible person in the social practice of college students, while female students are more defined as the helper.

Fifth, the gender orientation of teaching, entertainment and other resources and facilities in colleges and universities. At present, the hardware facilities in colleges and universities are basically designed for male students, such as

various courts, etc.. Elective courses of physical education are obviously reflected in the difference between male and female students. For example, in some well-known demonstration colleges, optional courses of physical education are basketball, football, volleyball and all sorts of ball game projects. However, courses in favor of girls such as dance, the courses relating with the body are rarely open. These recreational facilities enrich the extracurricular life of male students, while female students are either in the library or shopping, almost without other recreational projects.

4. The Roots of Sexism in Higher Education

4.1 The Influence of Consciousness of Gender Division of Labor

One of the inequities in female higher education is subject selection. Traditionally, femininity and science are mutually exclusive, because women are emotional and intuitive, and are good at thinking in images and words. While men are good at logic and abstraction. Thus, they are easier to get rid of the interference of subjective emotion and keep rational and objective. This concept has a profound impact on the traditional gender division of labor and seriously hinders the development of women in science, technology, engineering and related fields.

4.2 The Effects of Gender Stereotypes

Teachers hold different expectations and attitudes towards students of different genders in the educational environment. The prejudice caused by gender stereotyping will manifest itself consciously or unconsciously in their teaching and contact with students, which will have a significant impact on students' academic and career development.

4.3 The Impact of Conflict Between Family and Social Roles

Amid the increasingly fierce competition for jobs in the job market, the trend of thought that women should return to their families is quietly rising. The highly educated professionals, whether male or female, have the conflict between "settling down" and "establishing a career", that is, the conflict between family role and social role.

5. Countermeasures to Eliminate Gender Discrimination in Employment of Female College Graduates

5.1 Learn From Foreign Relevant Laws and Regulations and Improve China's Labor Laws and Regulations

The laws of many Western countries have clear stipulations on gender discrimination. (1) The United States is one of the countries in the world with more perfect legislation and effective relief measures to prohibit sex discrimination in employment. It has formed an anti-discrimination employment system centered on the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and supported by the Equal Pay Act of 1963, the Fair Employment Opportunity Act and local legislation. These laws provide detailed provisions against gender discrimination in employment. Employers are not allowed to ask job seekers about gender, age, personal physical quality and other aspects of employment, otherwise job seekers may take their employers to court. (2) The main laws relating to sex discrimination in the UK are: the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Directive 76/207 - Equal Treatment Directive (which only deals with sex discrimination). These laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex in hiring and hiring, including men, women and transgender people.

In China, in order to eliminate employment discrimination, we must start from strengthening legislation and regulation, and formulate a special anti-employment discrimination law or revise and perfect the provisions on employment discrimination in China's current labor laws and regulations. Synthesizing a few practices abroad, we think we should proceed from following a few respects:

5.1.1 Clarify Its Judgment Rules in Accordance With the Employment of Gender Discrimination in the Law

Substantive difference between employment discrimination and reasonable selection is that employment discrimination refers to the fact that the employment units deprive some competitive opportunities when they choose and employ female college graduates applying for the position with reasons not related with work. By contract, reasonable selection is to select and sift out female graduates applying for a position under the premise that they enjoy equal opportunities and by observing their capacity and characteristics related to the work. The judgment rules of employment discrimination against the natural factors of female college graduates can be transformed into the judgment of the special industry, and the determination of the standard of the special industry is the general recognition standard of the college graduates. For this, the employer bears the burden of proof, and the judge is the judge. According to the principle that the social factors of female college graduates are proportional to the internal needs of the employment position, the judgment rules of employment discrimination should be based on the social factors of female college graduates.

5.1.2 Expand the Scope of Legal Aid

Paragraph 5, Article 10, Chapter 2 of China's Legal Aid Regulations stipulates that: citizens who request payment of labor remuneration and who do not have an agent due to economic difficulties can apply for legal aid to legal aid institutions. As for discrimination in employment, if it involves the loss of employment opportunities due to discrimination, especially for female graduates who have just graduated from colleges and universities, if they can't obtain an agent due to economic difficulties, it is suggested to expand the judicial interpretation to stipulate that victims have the right to apply for legal aid.

5.1.3 Local Legislative Departments and Governments at All Levels Should Strengthen Relevant Employment

Enterprises that refuse to hire female workers will be fined 500 to 5,000RMB, according to Zhejiang Province's Female Labor Protection Regulations. A draft regulation on the job market in Gansu Province raised the penalty to 2,000 to 10,000RMB. Since the refusal to recruit female graduates is driven by interests, it should take measures on the interests and punish the employing units to dare not move this idea. Other provinces and cities without relevant supporting regulations should strengthen the legislative work in this area as soon as possible. In addition, the employment non-discrimination Act should provide for the employer's responsibility and relief methods in the employment discrimination disputes involving female college graduates.

5.2 Perfect Our Employment Discrimination Relief Way

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) was established under the Civil Rights Act of 1964 in order to fully implement the provisions of Title 7. It is an independent Federal agency that is responsible for the elimination of discrimination in hiring, hiring, promotion, firing, pay and benefits, testing, training, and other conditions of employment, including any discrimination on the basis of gender, race or age. The commission consists of five members nominated by the President and appointed by the Senate with the approval of the Senate for five-year terms. In addition to its headquarters in Washington, D.C., the council has 50 regional organizations in major regions and key states to work with their own state-level fair Employment agencies to eliminate employment discrimination, including against female college graduates.

At present, China does not have a special agency to guarantee equal employment opportunities, and only a labor administrative department is set up to undertake the functions of enforcement and supervision of the national labor law. Due to the numerous and complicated issues, the issue of discrimination cannot be taken into account, and generally does not take the initiative to ask about it. China can also learn from the practice of the United States, the United Kingdom, the establishment of a special agency, specializing in anti-employment discrimination.

In mainland China, the All-China Women's Federation is the bridge and link between the party and the government and the women masses. It has a complete organization throughout the country, and almost every university also has an organization. One of the tasks of the Women's Federation is to participate in the democratic management and supervision of state and social affairs on behalf of women, to participate in the formulation of laws, regulations and rules related to women, and to safeguard women's legitimate rights and interests. In the current situation that female college graduates suffer from employment discrimination, women's federations can expand their social functions and play their due role in the anti-employment gender discrimination work according to the law.

Drawing on foreign experience and combining with China's national conditions, the author believes that a special commission on fair employment under the State Council can be considered to be set up, under which there will be an Anti-gender discrimination Department and other departments. The committee has set up branches in various places, which are administrated vertically, and are responsible for coordinating and dealing with employment discrimination issues mainly based on gender discrimination. The personnel of the Anti-gender Discrimination department in the agency can adopt a tripartite mechanism, consisting of representatives of the labor administrative department, representatives of the women's federation and representatives of the employing units at the corresponding levels, and involve relevant experts in various forms, such as hiring them as consultants. At the same time, the agency is granted the right to bring a lawsuit directly on behalf of the victim of sex discrimination in employment if the victim is not a specific person, the right to investigate a specific person or matter, and the right to issue a notice of anti-discrimination or to limit employment discrimination through litigation.

5.3 The Government Should Do Something and Establish and Perfect the Social Compensation System of Enterprise Workers' Birth Expenses

At present, many employers in China are discriminating against female graduates in the recruitment process, which is also a manifestation of the lack of government supervision. Under the current circumstances, the labor administrative departments of governments at all levels in China can completely limit gender discrimination in

employment according to the relevant provisions of the labor law. Employers are required to keep good records when hiring college graduates, so that government departments or related institutions (such as women's federations, trade unions) can check and supervise.

On the other hand, we should affirm the social value of female childbearing and not let women bear the cost of childbearing alone. It is this undue burden that currently results in discrimination against female graduates. To reduce this burden on women and enhance their competitive advantage, the cost should be socialized. Social security departments should establish a social security system for childbirth as soon as possible, provide social subsidies to women who give birth, and reform the wage payment method for female employees during childbirth and breast-feeding, so as to reduce the cost burden of employers and protect women's rights and interests in the social operation mechanism. On the other hand, the state can make up for the "gender loss" of enterprises through tax regulation. The state could levy taxes in proportion to the number of men and women employed, reducing the burden on companies with a large proportion of women.

At the end of April 2006, the author and other teachers conducted a survey on the graduates of a college in Shanghai, and the statistical results on "What do you think of gender discrimination in employment" were as follows: Those who believe that the state should strictly prohibit the use of laws account for 14.9%, those holding that it is inevitable account for 38.2%, those holding that discrimination is limited to special industries and is understandable account for 43.3%, and those who take the view that "discrimination" is one of enterprises' utilitarian considerations account for 10.4%. As can be seen from the statistics, 85.1 percent of college graduates do not realize that employment discrimination is illegal. In the process of job hunting, they did not take the initiative to protect their own rights and interests, but believed and accepted the discriminatory employment standards, and automatically gave up the pursuit of equal opportunities. In this respect, the employment guidance department of our colleges and universities should do something to improve and strengthen the rights protection education of college female graduates' employment through various forms, and the similar phenomenon can be reported to the regulatory department through appropriate channels.

At the same time, according to the author, in the face of employing units to hit the "recruit male" recruitment, there are a small number of girls who still advance even with difficulties. When they see or are told not to hire girls, these girls are not upset. On the contrary, they are calm, getting unremitting "dealing" with the employers. First of all, these girls asked politely why the employer only wanted male students, then they explained the reasons one by one, and carefully analyzed their own advantages to be more suitable for the job. Good demeanor and good strength finally make employers change their original intention, in the same cost on the basis of the final decision to hire female graduates. Therefore, in addition to learn professional knowledge, college graduates also pay attention to participate in social practice, strengthen the practical ability and social ability, especially the comprehensive quality of the cultivation.

6. Conclusions

With regard to gender discrimination, under the guidance of women studies and under the influence of feminist thoughts for many years, more and more problems of gender discrimination have been faced. To some extent, the problem of gender discrimination has been solved to some extent. This, however, in one thousand to "roles" erosion of traditional thought, the history of the brand mark to today's life, can't someone no one capable of turning the idea completely pulling away from the people's blood, and as a contemporary college students, can do now is to promote yourself, found around gender discrimination, at least, to confront the latent sexism in colleges and universities around you and add your own weight to the skewed gender balance.

Since modern times, women have successively obtained the legal right to receive higher education. On the surface, the society has a system of equal examination and admission for men and women, and the opportunity for men and women to receive public education should be said to be equal, but there is still discrimination in the education process and educational results. What is more important for women is that they can make a choice according to their own rational desires, and this choice can be recognized and respected by the society. This may be difficult for higher education itself to achieve, and the whole society needs to work together to create an atmosphere of respect for women, in which higher education bears a very important responsibility and mission.

References

- Chen, Y. (2002). The formation and education of gender self-discrimination tendency of female college students. *Journal of Guangxi Youth Institute*, 12(3), 39-40.
- Jiao, X.-K. (2000). Discussion on employment discrimination in China. *Essays on Labor Law*, (1), 549-551.

- Jiao, X.-K. (2015). Status and implementation of employment discrimination evaluation system in China. *Juristic Essays and Studies*, 31(2), 134.
- Liu, N. (2016). Social gender -- the central concept of western feminist theory. *Foreign Social sciences*, 52-57.
- Lorber, J. (1984). *Women Physicians: Careers, Status and Power*. New York Tavistock.
- Su, D.-J. (2005). "Three wishes of migrant farmers". *Chinese Social Security*, (3).
- Wang, F. (2006). *The history and future of social gender culture*. Beijing: China Social Sciences Press.
- Wang, Y.-Y. (2001). *Foreign labor laws and social security laws*. China Renmin University Press, 40-41.
- Wei, G.-Y. (2003). *Introduction to femaleology*. Beijing: Peking University Press.

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).