



International Journal of Home Science

ISSN: 2395-7476
IJHS 2018; 4(2): 04-07
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www.homesciencejournal.com
Received: 03-03-2018
Accepted: 06-04-2018

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Gender discrimination among adolescent girls in Rajput community of Gurgaon

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Abstract

The present study entitled “Gender Discrimination among adolescent girls in Rajput community of Gurgaon” with an aim to assess the prevalence of gender biased among adolescent girls. Questionnaire was used to collect the information. Data was collected from Rajput adolescent girls of Gurgaon. After the collection of data, analysis was done systematically. Results reveal that not only parents but teachers are also biased towards girls as few of them favour boys and ignore girls in different aspects.

Keywords: Gender discrimination, biased, masculinity, femininity

Introduction

WHO has defined Adolescent as a person aged 10-19 years; make up 20% of the global population. It is characterized by physical, psychological and social change transformation and maturation that takes place during this period. The term “adolescence” literally means “to emerge”, “to achieve identity”. Adolescence in human life is the stage when rapid changes take place. The individual’s physical, mental social, moral and spiritual outlooks undergo revolutionary changes.

Adolescence is the invention of technological, industrial society that is marked by a discontinuity between childhood and adulthood (Saraswati, 1999). According to Saraswati, puberty is a distinct physiological landmark across cultures and in almost all cultures the social transition from childhood to adulthood has some observable markers. But whether this is necessarily accompanied by intermediate phase of adolescence, that links childhood to adulthood, is a matter of cultural construction. The greater the continuity between childhood and adulthood and greater the similarity in life course and continuity in life expectations from childhood to adulthood the greater the possibility of the absence of the distinct phase of life stage called “adolescence”. Adolescence is a period of stress and storm, a period when society sends mixed signals to its youngsters which results in confusion, frustration, despair and risk taking behaviour.

Adolescence is a period of exploration and experimentation but young people often lack the knowledge, experience and maturing to avoid the grave risks that confront them. In both developed and developing countries adolescents can face overwhelming problems. Among them, early pregnancy, high school dropout rates, substance abuse and violence making them more vulnerable to life threatening disease and conditions.

What Is Gender?

Gender refers to the social differences and relations between men and women which are learned vary widely among societies and cultures, and change over time. The term gender does not replace the term sex; which refers exclusively to biological differences between men and women. For e.g. Statistical data are broken down by sex. The term gender is used to analyze the roles, responsibilities, constraints, opportunities and needs of women and men in all areas and in any given social context.

Gender roles are learned behaviour in a given society, community or other social group. They condition activities, tasks and responsibilities are perceived as or female. Gender roles are affected by age, class, race, ethnicity and religion, and by the geographical, economic and political environment.

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Gender Discrimination

The girl child often faces discrimination from the earliest stages of life, through childhood and into adulthood. Her low status is reflected in the denial of fundamental needs and rights and in such harmful attitudes and practices as a preference for sons, early marriage, female genital mutilation, domestic abuse, incest, and sexual exploitation, discrimination, less food and less access to education. In recognizing of the fact that in many countries, both developed and developing, the status of the girl is significantly worse than that of boys, the fourth World conference on women, held in Beijing in 1995, identified the persistent discrimination against the girl child and the violation of her rights as one of the 12 critical areas of concern requiring urgent attention by government and international community. Girls are often treated as inferior to boys, both within the homes and by society- at- large. They are socialized to put themselves last, which in turn undermines their self-esteem and their ability to reach their full potential as human beings. When a girl is prevented from going to school or is too exhausted to pay attention in class because of her work load at home, she is being denied her right to education. When a girl carries the bulk of responsibilities for the housework while her brother studies, plays or attends to his interests and hobbies, she is being discriminated against.

Gender Issues

While discrimination of girl children in the specific area of child labour does exist, it is often studied only as a part of the overall pattern of discrimination as against girls. The fact that there is gender discrimination in almost every aspect doesn't need to be especially established. Irrespective of the index chosen to measure discrimination, it is fairly clear that in almost every state bearing the notable exception of Kerala, the girl child suffers in comparison to boys.

Studies have revealed that in the Indian context, girl children are largely engaged in running the household from a very early age, even before they are capable of wage earning activities.

Education

Overall, girls, school attendance still lacks severally behind that of boys. One of the major reasons why so many girls don't attend school is because of their work load, both within and outside the household. Daughters are often kept at home to help the family because the social and economic value of educating girls into recognize. It is a little known fact that among the worlds exploited child workers, girls outnumbers boys.

Without access to education, girls are denied the knowledge and skills needed to advance their status. By educating girls, societies stand to gain economically. In addition, educated mothers usually have smaller families, with healthier and better educated children.

In recent years, many governments have reported action taken to create a positive environment for girls so that they as citizens can reach their fullest potential.

- Through legislation, Nigeria prohibits the withdrawal of girls from schools in order to ensure that they can continue and complete their education.
- Zambia has begun to provide scholarship s to girls.
- Bhutan, the Czech Republic, India, Myanmar, Nigeria, Portugal, St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago and Uganda, among others have provided opportunities for vocational and professional training for girls.

Health

In times of diminished food resources, girls and their mothers are often last to be fed resulting in a diet low in calories and protein. An estimated 450 million adult women in developing countries are stunted as a result of childhood protein-energy malnutrition. Iodine and iron deficiencies also have significant consequences for pregnant women and their off springs.

In the new millennium, the issues of health, well-being and survival of people have acquired centrality, particularly in view of the rapid developments in the field of medical science and technology and the establishment of a vast network of health institutions. Yet the declining sex ratio, high female infant mortality rates, malnutrition and anaemia afflicting women are reflective of a social inequality which impacts women's health.

Objectives

To assess the gender discrimination among adolescent girls regarding

- A) Health
- B) Education
- C) Social aspects

Research Methodology

Basic outline for Research Methodology is presented as under

Locale of the study - The present study will be conducted on adolescent girls (12-19 years) of Rajput community of Gurgaon city.

Sample Description

Sample- Adolescent girls in the age group of 12-19 years.

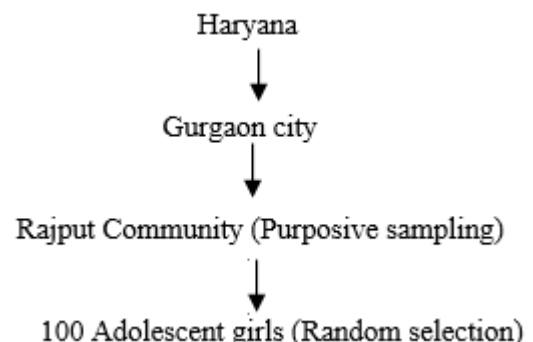
Sample size- The sample will be comprised of 100 girls from Rajput community.

Sampling Technique- Purposive Random sampling technique will be used for the sample selection.

Criteria for sample selection

- Only those girls who are in the age group of 12-19 years will be selected as a sample.
- Only Rajput girls will be taken as a sample

Showing Sampling Framework



Tools Used For Data Collection: Questionnaire/Interview Schedule will be used for the collection of data. It will be comprised of 2 sections:

Section 1: includes background information of the respondent like age, sex, class in studying and number of siblings.

Section 2: will be comprised of opened ended questions

regarding gender discrimination.

Data Collection: Data will be collected from adolescent girls (selected randomly) of Rajput community of Gurgaon by using an open ended questionnaire.

Data Analysis: Content analysis using quantitative as well as qualitative approach will be done to understand the research study. It will be scrutinized and analyzed, keeping in mind the objectives of the study.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Showing Gender Discrimination in the family

Variables	No-100 (%ages)
Do you think gender discrimination is existing in our society?	
Yes	100
No	-
Do you feel any gender discrimination in your family?	
Yes	78
No	22
Do you feel any gender discrimination in your family with regard to your education?	
Yes	38
No	62
Do your family members think that girl education is not good for our culture	
Yes	36
No	64
Are you discouraged by any of your family members from participating in co-curricular activities	
Yes	77
No	23
Did any of your family members deny your opportunity to participate in the same	
Yes	70
No	30
Did your family members discourage you from participating in extracurricular activities	
Yes	77
No	23
Did your parents give more pocket money to your brother?	
Yes	100
No	-
Do your family members feel that money spent for girls in Education is a waste? Yes No	
Yes	50
No	50
Do you get liberty the way your brother gets in the family?	
Yes	-
No	100
Are you allowed to go out with your friends for movie?	
Yes	-
No	100

It is evident from the table 1 that 100% of the respondents stated that “gender discrimination exists in our society”; 78% believed that this discrimination exists in their family as well but still majority of them does not feel discriminated with regard to education. When asked 50% of the sample stated that their family believe that giving education to girls is share a wastage of money as one or the other day, they have to get married and move to some other family but still they provide them education as insisted by girls and society they live in

whereas 50% of them consider education as an important factor in one’s life. They realize that if girls are educated, they can earn their livelihood in case they find themselves in trouble after marriage. Majority of the respondents (77%) mentioned that though the family members allow them to study but they are always discouraged by the parents to take part in co-curricular activities. Apart from education, 100% of them always feel discriminated with regard to pocket money, liberty given to boys, social gatherings, movies etc.

Table 2: Showing Gender Discrimination in the School

Variables	No -100 %ages)
Do you think gender discrimination is existing in your school?	
Yes	54
No	46
Do you feel any gender discrimination in your class?	
Yes	50
No	50
Does your teacher pays more attention to boys than girls?	
Yes	49
No	51
Have you ever been discouraged by your teacher regarding participating in extracurricular activities?	
Yes	36
No	64

Does your teacher encourage boys only in the class?	
Yes	51
No	49
Does your teacher ever gave you words of appreciation?	
Yes	58
No	42
Does your teacher ever ready to help you in your studies?	
Yes	61
No	39
Does your teacher allow you to sit with boys?	
Yes	13
No	87
Does your teacher allow you to play with boys?	
Yes	13
No	87

Table 2 depicts that more than 50% of the students believed that this gender discrimination exists not only in families but also in schools as well as class. Almost equal percent of the total sample stated that “teachers’ pay more attention to boys whereas rest of the sample doesn’t believed in the same”; 36% of them stated that they were discouraged by their teachers while participating in extracurricular activities; almost 50% of them stated that “teachers’ pay more attention to boys than girls”; 58% of the sample mentioned that ‘their teachers gave them words of appreciation’ while studying in the class and are ready to help them when needed. But surprisingly the qualified teachers hardly allow them to sit and play with boys of their class.

Discussion

The girl child often faces discrimination from the earliest stages of life through childhood to adulthood. Her low status is reflected in the denial of fundamental needs and rights and in such harmful attitudes and practices as a preference for sons, early marriage, female genital mutilation, domestic abuse, incest, and sexual exploitation, discrimination, less food and less access to education.

Girls are often treated as inferior to boys, both within the homes and by society- at- large. They are socialized to put themselves last, which in turn undermines their self-esteem and their ability to reach their full potential as human beings.

The ramifications of gender bias are not limited to the educational arena. Researchers have shown that in most cultures the lack of decision-making power among females regarding sexual and economic matters contributes to population growth and confines women to subservient roles to men—usually their fathers, and later, their husbands

Many research studies Bhogle, (1996) ^[1] and Gawali and Kamle, (1999)] have revealed that girls and women have always faced challenges from male dominated societies. Earlier it was women’s place in a male dominated societies and the perception of women as reproductive instruments, today the challenges are intellectual, educational, nutritional, and vocational, health etc.

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