

The Persistence of Gender Discrimination within the Households-A Study

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Abstract

Gender-based violence as a significant social issue within Indian Society, primarily stemming from gender discrimination. The patriarchal structure prevalent in India exacerbates violence against women. The various forms of gender-based violence can profoundly influence children's perspectives and personalities. Children exposed to gender-based violence often suffer emotional harm leading to issues such as depression, anger, introversion and anti-social behaviour. Providing a healthy environment to children without gender discrimination is immensely important for the development of positive personalities among them. In light of this, the present paper aimed to explore whether the respondents encounter gender discrimination at home regarding the provision of food, clothing, household facilities, education, career choices, the distribution of domestic tasks assigned to girls and external tasks assigned to boys, restrictions on socializing with peers, and the prioritization of marriage over education. Furthermore, it seeks to investigate the perspectives of adolescent girls on gender discrimination, with the goal of enhancing awareness of gender equality and identifying pathways for empowerment, as well as fostering awareness of their rights. It is crucial to change parents' views regarding the upbringing of their daughters, ensuring they are treated on par with boys, irrespective of gender. The Socialization process for children plays a vital role in shaping the personality development of girls, enhancing their self-esteem and steering them towards empowerment. Participating in interactive sessions with teenage girls and their parents will promote changes in attitudes and help the girls realize their goals.

Keywords: Gender-based violence, Gender discrimination, Depression, Healthy environment, Gender equality, Positive personalities

1.1. Introduction

Gender discrimination against girls is a global problem, rooted in patriarchal norms that devalue women from birth. This systemic bias limits girls' potential through harmful attitudes and practices that impact their health, education, safety, and future. In societies where boys are prioritized, discrimination against girls often begins before they are born. Many cultures favor boys for economic, social, and religious reasons, resulting in an increase in sex-selective abortions and, in some cases, female infanticide. Even if the girls survive, they are at high risk of being ignored. Research shows that in rural India, girls are more likely to be malnourished and less likely to receive adequate health care than boys, especially in households with multiple girls or with limited resources.

Education is an essential tool for empowerment, but gender bias severely limits girls' access to school. Cultural norms often force girls to shoulder the burden of housework and care giving from an early age, leaving them with little time and energy to attend school. In poor families, limited funds such as school fees, books, and uniforms are often allocated to sons, who are considered the family's main economic assets. Concerns about the safety of routes to school and a lack of private menstrual facilities are

leading to lower enrollment rates and higher dropout rates among adolescent girls. Gender imbalances in food distribution result in girls receiving less nutrition than boys, making them more likely to suffer from moderate to severe malnutrition.

Gender discrimination contributes to a culture in many parts of the world where violence against girls is widespread and often tolerated, where girls are seen as economic liabilities or commodities, and which leads to the harmful practice of child marriage. This violates their rights and, exposes them to exclusion, violence and exploitation. Girls are disproportionately exposed to all forms of violence, including sexual violence, exploitation and trafficking, particularly in conflict zones where their vulnerability is heightened. Continued devaluation, neglect, and exposure to violence and abuse can have a severe impact on girls' mental and emotional health, leading to low self-esteem and worsening depression.

In this context, the current study sought to investigate whether the respondents experience gender discrimination at home in terms of providing food, clothes, facilities at home, education, choosing career, allotment of domestic works to girls and outside works to boys, limitations on socializing with friends and prioritizing marriage over education.

1.1. Aim

The present research seeks to investigate the gender discrimination of adolescent girls at home and mitigate the potential consequences of gender discrimination by raising awareness regarding equal treatment pertinent to this adolescent stage.

1.2. Objectives

1. To examine the socio-economic and educational background of the respondents' parents
2. To assess the gender discrimination faced by the respondents within their households.

1.3. Research Methodology

1.3.1. Selection of Study area

The state of Andhra Pradesh comprises 29 districts within which 16 Municipal Corporations are spread over these districts. Among these municipal corporations Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) which is the largest municipal corporation has been chosen for the purpose of the study.

1.3.2. Data Collection

Primary data has been collected from adolescent respondents aged 10 to 19 years. A well-structured questionnaire is used to collect the data.

1.3.3. Sampling

A random sampling technique has been employed to select the respondents for the study, which seeks to gather data from a total of 369 respondents from 6 GVMC schools in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

1.3.4. Tools of Analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) is used to analyze the data. The Chi-square test is applied to investigate the relationship between the variables, while correlation analysis is employed to examine the relationship between continuous variables through the correlation coefficient.

2. Socio-economic and educational status of the respondents and parents

To determine whether a sample accurately represents the target population and to facilitate appropriate generalization of findings, it is crucial to analyze the individual profiles of respondents. This examination also contributes to understanding the socio-economic and demographic factors, including age, education, occupation of family, as well as the attitudes and perceptions of respondents, along with the patterns and variations in their responses. Below is a comprehensive individual profile of each respondent, which encompasses details regarding their backgrounds and possible motivations for their answers.

The present study focuses on adolescent girls studying in Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) high schools located around the city of Visakhapatnam. The primary data pertaining to the age of the respondents and class of study has been collected to determine their educational status. The respondent's class-wise data reveals that the percentage of the respondents studying IX standard (69.7%) are more than the respondents studying VIII standard (29.8%). It is observed that majority of the respondents are between the ages of 13 to 14 years (47.4%), followed by the age group 11 to 12 years (30.1%) A considerable percentage of the respondents are in the age group of 15 to 16 years. (17.1%).

Socio-economic factors influence adolescent girls in the form of family income, and parental education levels which significantly impact their educational opportunities. Other factors which can determine gender inequality affects their over-all well-being and risk of violence. Girls from lower socio-economic backgrounds may face gender discrimination and a higher risk of violence and socio-economic pressures can lead to family concealment of such abuse. In this regard an attempt is made to know the socio-economic status of the respondents. It is observed that majority of the respondents belong to BC category (68.6%) followed by SC (16%) and OC (11.4%) categories. The percentage of the respondents belong to minorities and others is negligible. (2.2 % and 0.5 % respectively)

It is noted that the majority of these fathers have achieved only secondary education (44.7%) followed by those with primary education (33%). A notable observation is that a considerable proportion of the parents are illiterate (11.9%). The percentage of fathers who have attained higher education is in low proportion (10.3%). The data indicates that the educational level of the parents of respondents attending GVMC High Schools is predominantly below average, with majority having completed only secondary education and a substantial percentage being illiterate. It is noted that the majority of these mothers have achieved only secondary education (37.7%) followed by those with primary education (36.6%) . A notable observation is that a considerable proportion of the parents are illiterate (17.9%). The percentage of mothers who have attained higher education is minimal (7.8%). The data indicates that the educational level of the mothers of respondents attending GVMC High Schools is predominantly below average, with majority having completed only secondary education and a substantial percentage being illiterate.

The data indicates that the majority of the respondents' fathers are involved in the unorganized sector, primarily as daily wage workers (62.9%). An insignificant proportion of the fathers' work in the private sector (13.8%) followed by business (10%). A small percentage of them are engaged in conventional work (6%) Notably, an insignificant percentage of them are employed in government sector. (4.9%). It is also observed that the mothers of the respondents are involved in domestic work (27.9%), followed by those working as daily wage workers (10.8%). A small percentage of them are engaged in private employment (8.4%) followed by self-employment (6.8%) and business (6.5%). Interestingly it is noted that a significant percentage of them are home makers (34.4%). The data indicates that most of the parents of the respondents belong to the lower economic strata of the

population. This is due to the free education provided by the government, which allows them to educate their daughters without feeling financial burden.

It is observed that majority of them have both sisters (53.4%) and brothers. (86.7 %) The data helps in deriving the perceptions of the respondents with siblings, allowing for an understanding of whether residents experience gender discrimination within their households. The data indicates that most of the parents of the respondents belong to the lower economic strata of the population. Due to the free education provided by the government, allows them to educate their daughters without feeling financial burden.

3. 1. Assessment of gender discrimination in the home

It has been observed that a considerable percentage of the respondents faced gender discrimination at home. (20.1%). Notably a significant percent of the respondents reported discrimination in terms of food provision (20.6%), access to facilities at home such as studying, sleeping, washing, cleaning etc. (18.7%) , educational opportunities (22.7%) , and career choice (20.1%) . It was also found that a majority of respondents facing gender discrimination regarding the distribution of domestic tasks such as cooking, cleaning and washing assigned to girls (20.3 %) while tasks outside the home like shopping for vegetables and groceries are assigning to boys (16.3%)

A significant observation is that a considerable percentage of the parents of the respondents often restrict their daughters from going out with friends for shopping, movies, and parties (13.3%). A minimal percentage of parents treat their daughters as inferior to boys. (8.4%). It is noteworthy that a significant percentage of parents prioritize education over marriage (79.1%), sometimes a negligible percentage of the parents opined that education is solely for the purpose of marriage (9.2%).

The data indicates that a considerable percentage of parents of the respondents exhibit gender discrimination towards their daughters in providing food clothing, or home facilities. It is also significant that they show gender discrimination in educational opportunities and career choices for the future. They do display gender discrimination in the allocation of domestic tasks to daughters and outside tasks to sons. On certain occasions, they restrict their daughters from going out with friends for shopping, movies and parties. It has been observed that a significant percentage of individuals occasionally treat their daughters as inferior to their sons. A notable percentage of the parents of the respondents prioritize marriage over education. Overall, there exists some degree of gender discrimination in certain areas. It is essential to alter the perceptions regarding distribution of tasks between girls and boys from their child socialization.

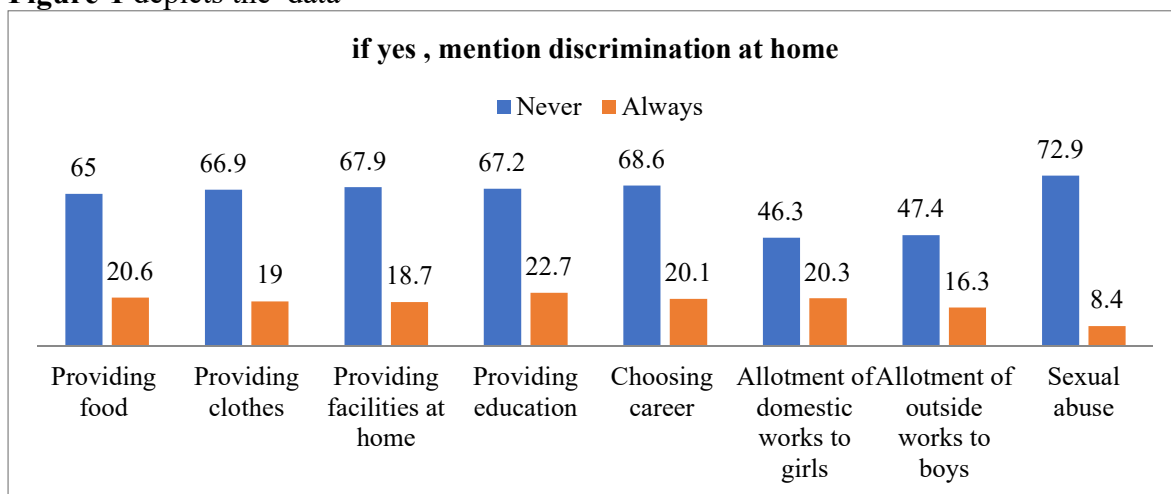
Table-1: Do you face gender discrimination at home? Put tick mark

Sl. No	Item	1 (Never)		2 (Rarely)		3 (Sometimes)		4 (Often)		5 (Always)	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Providing food (equal to your brother)	240	65.0	25	6.8	22	6.0	6	1.6	76	20.6
2	Providing clothes (equal to your brother)	247	66.9	18	4.9	24	6.5	10	2.7	70	19.0
3	Providing facilities at home (studying, sleeping, washing, cleaning etc.)	250	67.9	10	2.7	25	6.9	14	3.8	69	18.7

4	Providing education (school choice, medium of education etc. equal to your brother)	248	67.2	11	3.0	18	4.9	8	2.2	84	22.7
5	Choosing career (encouraging your career options)	253	68.6	13	3.5	23	6.2	6	1.6	74	20.1
6	Allotment of domestic works to girls (cooking, cleaning, washing etc.)	171	46.3	17	4.6	53	14.4	53	14.4	75	20.3
7	Allotment of outside works to boys (shopping for vegetables, grocery etc.)	175	47.4	22	6.0	50	13.8	61	16.5	60	16.3
8	Sexual abuse (treating inferior as you are girl)	269	72.9	27	7.3	25	6.8	17	4.6	31	8.4
9	Restricting going out with friends (shopping, movies, parties etc.)	183	49.6	23	6.2	65	17.6	49	13.3	49	13.3
10	Giving priority to marriage rather than studies (saying studies are for marriage purpose only)	292	79.1	22	6.0	13	3.5	8	2.2	34	9.2

*F-Figure **%- Percent

Figure-1 depicts the data



3.2. Chi-Square Test

Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit Test for Gender Discrimination at Home

Test applied : χ^2 Goodness-of-Fit Test

Expected frequency per category: $369 \div 5 = 73.8$

Degrees of freedom (df) : 4

Critical χ^2 value at 5% level : 9.49

Table-2 : Chi-Square Test Results for Gender Discrimination at Home

Sl. No.	Item	χ^2 Value	df	Level of Significance	Result
1	Providing food equal to brother	512.4	4	$p < 0.05$	Significant
2	Providing clothes equal to brother	498.1	4	$p < 0.05$	Significant
3	Providing facilities at home	505.6	4	$p < 0.05$	Significant
4	Providing education equal to brother	544.2	4	$p < 0.05$	Significant
5	Encouragement in choosing career	580.2	4	$p < 0.05$	Significant
6	Allotment of domestic work to girls	216.8	4	$p < 0.05$	Significant
7	Allotment of outside work to boys	201.4	4	$p < 0.05$	Significant
8	Sexual inferiority / abuse	362.5	4	$p < 0.05$	Significant
9	Restricting mobility with friends	244.7	4	$p < 0.05$	Significant

The Chi-square goodness-of-fit test was employed to assess whether the responses of adolescent girls regarding gender discrimination at home were evenly distributed across the five response categories. The test results reveal that the calculated χ^2 values for all ten indicators range from 201.4 to as high as 631.9, which are far greater than the critical χ^2 value of 9.49 at 4 degrees of freedom and the 5 per cent level of significance. For instance, discrimination related to priority given to marriage over studies recorded the highest χ^2 value (631.9), followed by discouragement in choosing a career (580.2) and unequal access to education (544.2). These extremely high χ^2 values clearly indicate that the observed responses are not randomly distributed and that the assumption of no gender discrimination is statistically invalid.

An analysis of the observed frequencies further substantiates this conclusion. While 68.6 per cent of respondents reported that they were never discouraged in choosing a career, a substantial 20.1 per cent stated that they were always discouraged, and another 6.2 per cent reported sometimes facing such discouragement. Similarly, 20.3 per cent of the respondents reported that domestic work was always allotted to girls, while 14.4 per cent stated this occurred often. Restrictions on mobility were also pronounced, with 26.6 per cent of respondents reporting that they were often or always restricted from going out with friends. These figures demonstrate a clear clustering of responses at the extreme ends of the scale, reflecting persistent and patterned gender-based practices within households.

The consistency of statistically significant χ^2 values across all ten dimensions provides strong empirical justification for rejecting the null hypothesis and accepting the alternative hypothesis that gender discrimination within the family is significant. The presence of high proportions of respondents experiencing always or often discrimination in critical areas such

as career choice, domestic responsibilities, and personal mobility confirms that these are not isolated experiences but structural realities.

(4) Research findings

- It has been observed that a considerable percentage of the respondents faced gender discrimination at home. (20.1%) .
- Notably a considerable percent of the respondents reported discrimination in terms of food provision (20.6%) , access to facilities at home such as studying, sleeping, washing, cleaning etc. (18.7%) , educational opportunities (22.7%) , and career choice (20.1%) .
- It was also found that a notable percentage of respondents facing gender discrimination regarding the distribution of domestic tasks such as cooking, cleaning and washing assigned to girls (20.3 %) while tasks outside the home like shopping for vegetables and groceries are assigning to boys (16.3%)
- A considerable percentage of the parents of the respondents often restrict their daughters from going out with friends for shopping, movies, and parties (13.3%).
- A notable percentage of parents treat their daughters as inferior to boys. (8.4%).
- It is noteworthy that a significant percentage of parents prioritize education over marriage (79.1%), sometimes a negligible percentage of the parents opined that education is solely for the purpose of marriage (9.2%).
- The consistency of statistically significant χ^2 values across all ten dimensions provides strong empirical justification for rejecting the null hypothesis and accepting the alternative hypothesis that gender discrimination within the family is significant.

5. Conclusion

The hypothesis testing conclusively establishes that gender remains a decisive factor influencing intra-household treatment of adolescent girls, thereby reinforcing the study's objective of examining the extent and nature of gender discrimination within the family context. It is essential to alter parents' perceptions concerning the treatment of their daughters, ensuring they are regarded equally to boys, regardless of gender. The process of socializing children significantly impacts the personality development of girls, fostering their confidence and guiding them towards empowerment. Engaging in interactive sessions with adolescent girls and their parents will facilitate attitudinal shifts and assist the girls in achieving their aspirations.

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