



Women Empowerment & Gender Discrimination

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Abstract: *Gender discrimination is a curse in society. However, we still see these in society. These malpractices can easily hinder the growth of a country in society. In the 21st century, we still divide work according to gender. As a country with a very long and rich civilization, India worships women as goddesses. However, there are discrimination, bias, and stereotypes against women in our society from a very early age. While we tell ourselves that our society is modern, we still see female infanticide, dowry, and early girl marriage. This study tried to determine what kinds of gender discrimination were found based on women's perceptions. It will be a comparative study that will help us know why gender discrimination still exists in society and the possible solutions to these problems.*

Keywords: *Gender, Gender discrimination, Gender stereotype, gender bias, women empowerment.*

Introduction:

India is a very old civilized country. India is a country where we worship women as goddesses. However, we see gender discrimination, gender bias, and stereotypes in society very early. We tell ourselves modern, but we still see female infanticide, the dowry system, early girl marriage, etc., in our society.

We call our society male dominant society. We often see gender discrimination, gender bias, and stereotypes in our society. Nevertheless, what women think about gender discrimination, gender bias, and stereotypes is the primary topic for discussion in this study. In this study, the investigator tried to find women's perceptions of gender discrimination, biases, and stereotype in the 21st century based on their responses.

Conceptual framework:

Gender: Gender can also be defined by social constructs such as gender roles and norms. These are the roles, behaviours, and values that a society considers appropriate for men and women.

Gender discrimination: Generally, gender discrimination refers to the unequal or disadvantageous treatment of an individual or group of individuals since it relates to gender. It may involve academic programs, discipline, and class assignments in the classroom that treat an individual differently based upon their gender.

Gender stereotype: Associating specific characteristics, behaviours, or roles to a woman or a man based solely on the fact that he or she belongs to a particular social group implies gender stereotypes.

Gender bias: In general, gender bias refers to favouring one gender over another, for example, preferring men or boys to women or girls. It is a tendency to prefer one gender over the other.

Women empowerment: The term female empowerment can refer to many things, including accepting women's viewpoints or looking for them and increasing the status of women through education, awareness, literacy, and training.

Objectives:

- To study the perception of women regarding the perfect age for marriage based on their types of children, age and educational qualification.
- To Study how women perceive who can look after their parents better before and after marriage based on their type of children, age, and education.
- To study the perception of women regarding the fascination of a male or a female child based on their type of children, age, and education.
- To study the perception of women regarding studies and jobs of their children based on their type of children, age, and education.

Common gender discrimination, gender bias and gender stereotype in school and society:

- Often, male teachers spend more time interacting with boys.
- Often, teachers are harsher on boys than girls when they commit similar mistakes.
- In a school program, girls are often encouraged to sing; dance and, boys are encouraged to participate in aggressive sports and girls in soft sports.
- In a school function, boys are encouraged to do hard work and girls to do soft work.
- Often, teachers encourage boys to choose science and girls to choose arts.
- Female teachers get priority to teach in primary school.
- Females are seen as the ones who take care of the house from the inside, and boys are the ones who take care of the house from the outside.
- Females are expected to be soft-hearted and males are rough and tough.
- Females are expected to wear Shari, Churidar, and Bangles; males to wear shirts and pants.

Methodology:

In a nutshell, the research method is the science of researching how research is conducted. Above all, it refers to a systematic method of exploring the research problem. To conduct the research efficiently, the researcher must be familiar with both the research method and the research methodology, determining the steps they take.

Method: The research method used in this study was a descriptive study.

Sampling: Stratified random sampling and judgemental sampling were used for collecting the data.

Sampling size:

Women having children or no children	Sample Size
Women having only male child/children	8
Women having only female child/children	8
Women having both male and female children	16
Women having no children or unmarried	9

Sample distribution based on types of children

Age of the women	Sample Size
<35	18
35-55	16
>55	7

Sample distribution based on age

Educational Qualification	Sample Size
School-level education	22
Graduation-level education	14
Master or Higher-level education	5

Sample distribution based on educational qualification

Data collection tools: A non-standardized researcher-made tool used for data collection. Data was collected through the interview schedule method.

Data analysis and Interpretation:

A. Based on types of children:

- It is seen that 37.5% of women having only male children are fascinated with having a male or a female child before marriage. However, the fascination has increased to 62.5% after their marriage. It is seen that 50% of women having only female children are fascinated with having a male or a female child before marriage. However, the fascination has decreased to 25% after their marriage. The study found that 18.75% of women who had both male and female children had a fascination with male and female children before they married, but this fascination dropped to 0% after they married; 33.33% of women without children had a fascination with giving birth to a female child in the future.
- Women's ages tended to be lower than boys' ages in every response we got from them regarding marriage age. Women's average marriage age should be 24, 24.5, 23, and 25 based on the responses the investigator got from the women having only male children, only female children, male and female children, and no children, respectively. Moreover, men's average marriage age should be 29, 29, 27.5, and 28.5, based on the responses the investigator got from the women having only male children, only female children, male and female children, and no children.

- When asked what kind of characteristics they want to see in future children? There was no discrimination; they all agreed that children should be good humans. A few added, however, that women should have a soft heart.
- 50%, 62.5%, 68.75%, and 55.55% of women agreed that daughters looked after their parents better before their marriage based on the responses the investigator got from the women having only male children, only female children, both male and female children, and no children respectively. 0%, 25%, 12.5%, and 22.22% of women believed that sons looked after their parents better based on the responses, respectively. 25%, 12%, 18.75%, and 0% agreed that both sons and daughters could look after their parents well before marriage based on the responses, respectively. The rest of the women agreed that the sons want to look after their parents but cannot do so due to the immense pressures of work.
- Everyone having only male children agreed to send their children far away from home if they got an excellent opportunity for higher education or jobs. 50% of women with only female children wanted to send their daughters far away from home for studies if they had an excellent opportunity. However, the number increased to 75% when the women were asked if they allowed their daughters to get a job far away from home. 68.75% of women agreed to allow their daughters to go far away from home for studies and jobs, but 81.25% agreed to allow their sons to go far away from home for studies and jobs. Interestingly 12.5% agreed to allow their sons but not their daughters.

B. Based on age:

- Women were asked to respond about the perfect age for marriage. Women's average marriage age should be 24, 24.5, and 21 based on the responses the investigator got from the women aged less than 35, aged between 35-55, and aged greater than 55, respectively. And men's average marriage age should be 29, 28.5, and 26.5 based on the responses, respectively.
- Women were asked about a son or daughter who looked after their parents better before marriage. 77.78% of women whose age is less than 35 think daughters, and 14.28% think sons look after their parents better before the marriage. 62.5% of women aged between 35 to 55 think daughters, 18.75% think sons, and 18.75% think both look after their parents better before the marriage. 14.28% of women whose age is greater than 55 think daughters, 42.86% think sons, and 42.86% think both look after their parents before marriage
- A similar question was asked about a son or a daughter who looks after their parents better after marriage. 50% of women whose age is less than 35 think daughters, 22.22% think sons, and 27.78% think it depends on whether the daughters are employed, whether the house where they live after marriage is not very far away from their parents' house, whether the sons have well adjustable life partners. 25% of women between the ages of 35 to 55 think daughters, 18.75% think sons, and 50% think it depends on the issues discussed above. 100% of the women whose age is greater than 55 is believed that sons look after their parents better after the marriage of both sons and daughter.
- 83.33% and 88.89% of women whose age is less than 35 are happy to allow their children to go far away from home for studies and jobs, respectively. 68.75% and 75% of women aged between 35 to 55 are happy to allow their children to go far away from home for studies and jobs, respectively. 71% and 71% of women whose age is greater than 55 are happy to allow their daughters to go far away from home for studies and jobs. But the numbers increased to 100% when the same question was asked about their sons.

C. Based on educational qualification:

- According to women with only school-level education, the ideal age for girls to get married is 23; for boys, it is 28. Women with graduation-level education thought it was 25 and 29 for girls and boys, respectively. The women with master-level education thought it was 24 and 30 for girls and boys, respectively.
- 68.18% of women having only school-level education thought that daughters could look after their parents better before the marriage; 13.64% thought sons and 18.18% thought both could look after their parents well before the wedding. 64.29% of women with graduation level education thought daughters could look after their parents better; 14.29% thought sons and 14.29% thought both could look after their parents well before marriage. 60% of women with master-level education thought that daughters could look after their parents better. 20% thought males and 20% thought it depends on circumstances when asked who can look after their parents better before the marriage.
- 27.27% of women having only school-level education thought that daughters could look after their parents better after marriage; 40.90% thought sons, 22.27% thought both sons and daughters could look after their parents better after marriage. 4.55% felt that it depended on circumstances. 50% of women having graduation-level education thought daughters could look after their parents better after marriage; 28.57 thought sons and 14.29% thought both could look after their parents well after the wedding. 7.14 % thought it depended. 20% of women having master-level education thought sons could look after their parents better. 40% thought both could look after reasonably, and 20% believed it depended on the circumstances.
- 63.64% of women having only school-level education agreed to allow their children to go far away from home for education or studies. 93.86% of women having graduation-level education decided on the same. The 80% of women having master-level education agreed on whether they would allow their children to go far away from home for studies or education.

Findings:

- The fascination with the girl-child is visible among women aged less than 35. Earlier, we saw the desire of the male child among women, but now the passion of the girl child has immersed among the young women rapidly.
- It is visible that women's ages tended to be lower than boys' ages in every response the investigator got from them regarding marriage age. It shows that gender bias, discrimination, and stereotypes still exist regarding marriage age. Women still believe that men's age has to be higher than women's age in marriage. But, one woman did not mention any age of male or female for marriage. She said that males or females should marry after standing on their own feet.
- Gender bias, discrimination, and stereotype are visible in the women's responses when asked who could look after their parents before and after marriage. A standard percentage of the women said that daughters could not look after their parents after marriage if daughters were housewives. A typical portion of women believed that women look after their parents better before the wedding because boys are busier outside and girls inside the house.
- Although most women agreed to allow their children to go far away from home for studies and jobs; however, a few women still were not ready to send their daughters to go far away from home while preparing to do so for their sons.

Role of Schools and society to avoid gender discrimination, gender bias and gender stereotype:

- **Providing equal opportunity** is a very important step to avoiding such issues. In family, school, college, and society we have to stop discriminating against males and females based on their gender.
- **Mandatory participation in a particular task** irrespective of gender can be very helpful. Sometimes, it is seen that
- **Using nonbiased language** is a helpful technique to avoid such issues. We use such biases in our day-to-day life; like- girls have less intelligence, men cannot cry, women should be soft-hearted, etc. We need to avoid such language.
- **Providing nonbiased books** can be helpful in fighting against these problems. Often, we see in books that male farmers are working in the field, while women are doing household work. These need to be stopped.
- **Parents-Teacher meetings** should be organised to discuss these issues so that they do not show such behaviours which promote gender biases.

Importance of women empowerment to Eradicate such issues:

Empowering women can be very helpful to solve many social problems, like:

- **Increasing Girl's education:** Often parents see their male children as the earner of the future. But an empowered woman can also run a family. In this study, many women believed that empowered women can look after their parents better.
- **Increasing female marriage age:** Very often we see women getting married at 18. Empowering women will make the parents realize that it is a very early time for marriage. It will help to minimise the fertility, and childbirth mortality rate.
- **Erasing dowry system:** Empowering women will help to erase the dowry system. The government is trying to abolish the dowry system for a long time, but it exists in society. Empowering women is the only way forward to stop the dowry system.
- **Establishing equality in society:** A society cannot run properly without empowering women. We shout for equality in society, but without empowering women it is not possible.

Conclusion:

A standard percentage of women believe that gender discrimination and gender biases still exist in this study because girls are not empowered. So, it is very much important to empower women. Only it is the way to eradicate these practices from society. With that, we need to spread awareness for girls' education. Some old laws regarding girls' marriage need to be changed. We need to encourage girls to participate in those activities where society thinks girls cannot succeed.

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