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TO STUDY THE REASONS FOR DISCRIMINATION BY PARENTS AND TEACHERS

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Abstract

This paper examines gender-based discrimination by teachers and parents in schools and at home. The main conclusion from here is that girls are discriminated against to some extent, and this is a serious problem. The purpose of this study is to provide an overview of recent developments in sexism and to remind people that the existence of sexism affects women's rights and interests and leads to social injustice. There is a conventional notion that women are less capable than men in the family. Therefore, men play a more important role in house as head of the family, which negatively affects women. To solve this problem, women must learn to protect their assets through legal channels and appropriate committees. In schools, sometimes girls face inequality, as boys receive more attention and preference from teachers. The purpose of this brief is to raise public awareness for the importance of addressing gender discrimination. If there are laws that can limit sexism, the atmosphere of sexism will weaken and fade until it disappears. It makes a lot of sense to help women recognize that sexism exists and learn how to deal with it.

Keywords: Gender Discrimination, Schools, Teachers, Parents and Inequity

Introduction

Gender Discrimination is the practice of treating a person or group of people unfairly because of their gender. Girls' and women's health, education, reputation and safety are adversely affected by gender discrimination throughout their lives. Despite recent improvements, there are still significant gender disparities in India. In the long run, gender inequality may be reduced by gender sensitization and empowerment programs focused at young people, precisely at the time when they are developing their gender attitudes.

India ranks 135 out of 146 in Global Gender Gap Index 2022. India ranks 146 in health and survival, 143 in economic participation and opportunity, 107 in educational attainment and 48th in political empowerment.

The index, covering 85 percent of the global population, reveals that close to 9 out of 10 men and women hold fundamental biases against women.

South Asia is also home to 42% of all child brides worldwide with one-third of child brides being from India. India also records a crime against a woman every two minutes.

In an effort to promote the health and wellbeing of girls and women, more and more efforts are being made to address gender inequities by changing gender norms and attitudes among parents, teachers, and community leaders. Understanding teenagers' attitudes about gender discrimination and perceptions of it, as well as whether changing those attitudes could result in long-lasting, sustainable change, has received little attention to far.

Gender norms are viewed as culturally accepted expectations regarding the traits and behaviors that men and women should exhibit.

Examples of Gender discrimination

At homes: Discouraging girls from going to school, differential behavior between children (pocket money, freedom to decide, choose or live, clothing rules etc.) and dominating treatment towards one gender at home. Following religious and social beliefs blindly at home.

In schools: Preventing or discouraging girls and young women from participating in traditionally male-dominated fields, such as science, math, and sports, is an example of gender discrimination. Schools may also enforce gendered dress codes, punish those who do not conform to gender norms, or fail to punish bad behavior on the basis that "Boys will be boys."

Adolescence is the time when gender attitudes and gender norms are constructed, and early adolescence is the time when a person's ideas of gender norms start to form and are still pliable. Adolescents are under increasing pressure to conform to the socially acceptable gender roles as they become more conscious of the expectations placed on them as men or women. . Young adolescents actively alter gender norms by embracing, rejecting, or challenging them, and this process is susceptible to modification. During this time teachers and parent's actions, thinking, behavior towards them impact drastically on the adolescents and their thinking, behavior, life and the future society.

Reasons for discrimination intentional / unintentional in adolescents

According to various studies reasons for discrimination intentional / unintentional:-

Parents

Various social beliefs (women are considered 'Burden', 'Paraya Dhan')

Indian society is a *male dominated society* in which a girl is considered to be a 'Burden' and 'Paraya Dhan'- a property of the other house. Due to such beliefs parents, voluntary or involuntary tend to discriminate between their kids. This behavior is so common in Indian household that it is considered normal and nothing wrong or no injustice is seen in such kind of treatment.

Various religious beliefs (women are considered inferior to men)

As per various Indian religious beliefs, women are considered inferior to men. Due to such beliefs men in India, a Patriarchal society, tend to overpower and dominate women in their house and in the society. This practice is as old as time and is not considered as something unusual.

Family traditions

In India, being a male dominated country, the family head has always been considered as the eldest male member of the family and following the similar family traditions, parents knowingly or unknowingly practice injustice among their kids.

Their own upbringing and mentality

Every person has their own individual thinking, separate upbringing and various experiences which they have faced in life. This also matters in their treatment towards their children.

Orthodox thinking

A country full of religions, traditions and male dominating mindset tend to intentionally or unintentionally perform the act of discrimination in the family.

Society (Male dominating society)

The form of society, a person lives in matters a lot in the way, a woman is treated in the house and outside the house. E.g.; - In the matriarchal society, women are considered to be given much more respect, independence and importance as compared to the women living in the patriarchal society.

Physical factor (women are considered weaker than men)

If compared physically, women are considered weaker than men, and thus this fact can be the reason for discrimination amongst the two genders in some families.

Forms of discrimination by parents:-

Discrimination in treatment – rules, pocket money, food, education etc.

Parents can discriminate between the kids on the basis of different rules set for their children, different amount of pocket money given to the children, different kinds of food served to the kids and different kinds of schools and different levels of education is provided to the kids.

Discrimination at the time of marriage (child marriage, early marriage, dowry etc.)

At the time of marriage as well, parents might discriminate by doing child marriage of a girl, early marriage of a girl or giving or taking dowry at the time of a girls' marriage.

Sexual harassment

It has been observed that different kinds of sexual harassment incidents have taken place in houses, whose majority of victims are girls and offenders are the male members of the house (fathers, uncles, brothers, servants etc) and in such cases girls are often pressurized to keep their mouth shut or not to file any complaint.

Teachers

Teachers' expectations

Teachers may have certain expectations which can lead to gender discrimination in the schools. They do treat girls and boys differently due to their gender e.g.:- Boys might be allowed to play '*rough sports*' while girls are not, girls might be told to '*behave in a certain way*' while boys are not, focus more on boys as they are considered to be the '*future breadwinner of the family*' and supposedly girls have to '*take care of the house*', which may make girls often feel *de-valued* and *discouraged* which can have negative effect on their *academic performance and self-confidence*.

Stereotypes- ethnic and racial biasness/ disparity

Teachers may have certain ideas or stereotypical thinking which further lead to gender discrimination in the schools. Girls may be treated unfairly in school in terms of curricular choices, classroom activities and basic things like school uniform. Boys are allowed to be '*rowdier*' and '*more active*' in school than girls. Girls on the other hand are expected to be '*quieter*' and '*well behaved*'.

Lack of access to certain opportunities or resource based on gender. This might mean that girls are less likely to be given leadership roles in school or vice a versa.

Forms of discrimination by teachers:-

Preference / biasness

Some teachers favor students who are the same gender as them. E.g.:- Girls are often not given the same opportunities as boys in the name of safety, manners, traditions etc., which might make them feel inferior and less capable.

Differential treatment

Boys and girls may be treated differently in terms of discipline, curriculum, or even just the way that instructors and staff interact with them.

Sexual harassment and assault

This is a serious problem in schools and one that disproportionately affects women and girls. It can include things like unwanted touching, comments or jokes about someone's body or sexual activity, and rape or attempted rape.

Impact on adolescents after facing discrimination:-

- 1. Poor health conditions:** - According to the UCLA researchers, people who faced any discrimination had a 26% greater risk of poor health than those who said they hadn't faced any.
- 2. Psychological & Mental health Problems:-** According to the UCLA researchers, young people who faced frequent discrimination, which was defined as at least a few times per month, saw a roughly 25% jump in their likelihood of being diagnosed with a *mental illness* over those who had faced little or no discrimination. They were also twice as likely to develop severe *psychological stress*.

Facing discrimination can also result in *anxiety* and *psychological trauma*.

The authors of a research paper argue that discrimination plays a key role in the “gender gap” in rates of mental illness. Women experience higher rates of the most mental health conditions, including:

- Depression, which is twice as prevalent among women
- Anxiety
- Post-traumatic stress disorder, which is often called PTSD
- Eating disorders, which are 4–10 times more prevalent in women

Women are also 1.5 times more likely to attempt *suicide* than men.

3. Being the target of discrimination can also cause:-

- a) Physical Problems- e.g.:- Obesity, mal-nutrition etc.
- b) Behavioral Problems- e.g.:- anti-social personality, low self-esteem and confidence etc.
- c) Adjustment issues- e.g.:- submissive and fearful in nature etc.
- d) Routine dysfunctions e.g.:- random sleep cycle etc.

Importance of the study

This study will help the

Society:-	To understand the present situation and work in future by keeping the needs and requirements of the present scenario of the population in mind.
Schools/ Teachers:-	To tackle the situations in the school if any, try and know the mind set of the students and improve their own treatment/behavior with students in school, making them feel equal and appreciated.
Parents:-	To try and understand the psychology and feeling of the child and balance their conduct with their children and communicate better with them for more understanding between them.
Adolescents:-	To be more aware of the treatment they are receiving in the surrounding.
Future researchers:-	To understand the basic condition of the situation as of now and work further for the betterment and improvement of the society.

Summary/ conclusion

Gender discrimination has an international impact. This prejudice has a negative impact on both mental, emotional and physical health, contributes to poverty, establishes and maintains cycles of abuse and violence, and limits access to medical care. Making laws and upholding them is not sufficient; there must also be a societal awakening and a change in the general public's mindset in order to eradicate gender discrimination and grant women equal rights. Their life belongs to them alone. The time has come for women to take charge of their own lives. Eliminating prejudice based on gender can support the empowerment of women.

Learning about the causes, signs, and impacts of gender discrimination will help us to take action and stop it. No discrimination will lead to a happier, healthier, peaceful and wealthy nation.

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