

A Study of Discriminatory Practices Based On Gender Perceived By Secondary School Students of Agra District

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Abstract

Gender discrimination means any distinction, exclusion or discriminating on the basis of person gender. The present study was designed to achieve following objectives; To identify the level of discriminatory practices in secondary schools and to study the perception of gender discrimination among male and female students. The Descriptive Survey method was used for the achievement of objectives. Random sampling technique was used in selection of five UP Board Schools. 200 male and female students were selected from classes 9 and 11. A Self made questionnaire was used to collect data on gender discriminatory practices in schools. Findings reveal that above Average Discrimination is evident in secondary schools and there is no difference between the perception of gender discrimination among male and female students of secondary schools. The paper also discusses the varied types of discriminatory practices prevalent in secondary schools.

Keywords- Gender discrimination, discriminatory practices

1.0 Introduction

Gender discrimination is a common phenomenon of all societies but very predominant in male dominated societies like India. Discrimination based on gender is evident not only in other spheres of life but also in the area of education. Ranging from access to education, to practices in schools, attitudes and perceptions, administrators and teachers differ in their treatment of both genders. According to UNICEF (2002), girls formed the majority of the 120 million children who never go to school in the developing world. Basic education for all is a human right and a social development issue that is fundamental to gender equality and women's empowerment in all societies. However, girls continue to suffer from discrimination in access to schooling in most developing countries.

Gender discrimination means any distinction, exclusion or discriminating on the basis of person gender. Gender discrimination is not biologically determined but it is determined by society. According to Cambridge Dictionary- "Gender Discrimination refers to a situation in which someone is treated less well because of their sex, usually when a woman is treated less well than a man."

1,1 Objectives of this study

The present study was designed to achieve following objectives

1. To identify the level of discriminatory practices in secondary schools.
2. To study the perception of gender discrimination among male and female students.

1, 2 Hypothesis of this study

Ho1 Gender discrimination practices do not exist in secondary schools.

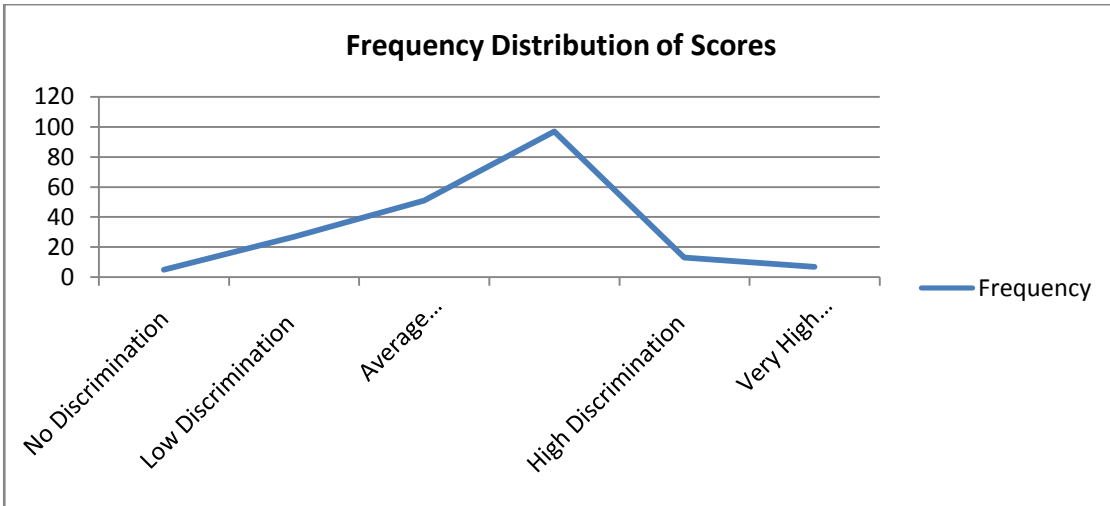
Ho2 There is no significant difference in perception of discrimination between male and female students of secondary schools.

1.3 Method

The Descriptive Survey method was used for the achievement of objectives. Random sampling technique was used in selection of five UP Board Schools. 200 male and female students were selected from classes 9 and 11. A Self made questionnaire was used to collect data on gender discriminatory practices in schools.

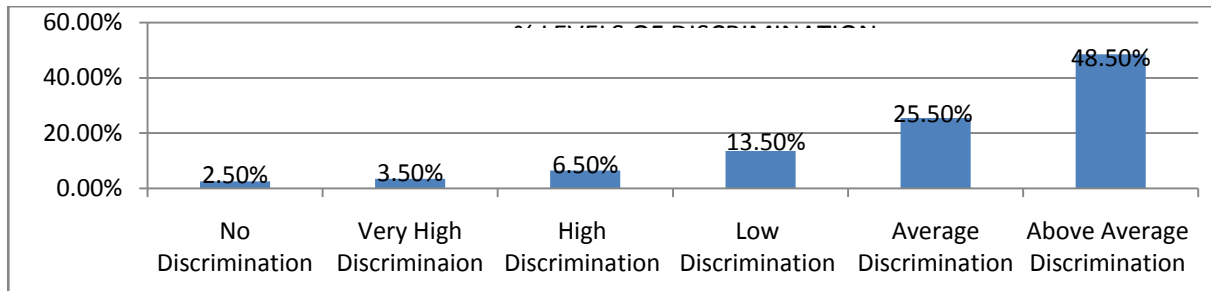
2.0 Data Analysis and Interpretation

Fig 2.0 Description of scores



Graphical representation of data reveals unequal distribution of scores .The calculated skewness is 0.111. Positive skewness indicates that the graph is inclined the above frequency graph shows that most of the scores are inclined towards above average discrimination, high discrimination and very high discrimination levels. (The calculated skewness is 0.111)

Fig2.1 Description of scores



The perusal of the above figure 1.0 indicates that above 48.5% students report above average discrimination 25.5% students report average discrimination ,13.5% report low discrimination,6.5% and 3.5% respondents report high and very high levels of discrimination respectively while only 2.5% students report no discrimination..

Table 2.0 showing the difference in perception of gender discrimination between male and female students of secondary schools

	N	Mean	SD	Critical Ratio	Significance Level
Male	123	7.95935	3.8544	0.886	<0.05
Female	77	7.428	4.286		

The above Table represents the perceptions of male and female students regarding gender discrimination in schools. The CR value of male and female students was found to be insignificant at 0.05 level of significance. So, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in perception of gender discrimination between male and female students of secondary schools was accepted by the researcher.

2.1 Detailed Analysis

2.1.1 Individual discrimination

Table 2.1 Perceived Individual discrimination by boys and girls

Item	Boys			Girls		
	Yes	Uncertain	No	Yes	Uncertain	No
Teachers pay more attention complaint by boys in comparison to girls.	45.53%	6.50%	47.97%	27.27%	7.79%	64.94%
More strictness on girls on the issue of individual cleanness	34.96%	5.69%	59.35%	41.56%	5.19%	53.25%
Insult of girls for misbehavior	27.64%	31.71%	40.65%	35.08%	12.98%	51.94%
Boy or girl preference to be selected class monitor	74.79%	4.07%	21.14%	18.18%	6.49%	75.33%
During the group activity, girls are given less important work than boys	36.59%	18.69%	44.72%	33.77%	16.88%	49.35%
Teachers deny the girls opportunity to play games generally played by boys alone	11.38%	5.69%	82.93%	10.39%	5.19%	84.42%

1. 45.53% boys report that teachers pay more attention to complaint by boys rather than girls. While 47.97% boys perceive that more attention is given to girls complaint .This may be

due to the societal conception that girls need more protection and home teachers are more over protective and sensitive towards their complaint.

2. Dress is another aspect of foundation of attitude towards girls- Hence about 41% girls report that teachers and school management show strict attitude towards them with respect to dress while boys report that there exists no differential attitude towards girls.

3. Important Roles are accorded to boys-74.79% boys prefer that any be it girl or boy could be class monitor .However, 75.33% girls respond that equal opportunity for being class monitor is not accorded to both genders. They opined that the teachers her \himself decided that more intelligent students easily handle the classroom in every situation and boys perform better than girls as they have bold personality and more leadership qualities than girls.Connell (1995) stated that hegemonic masculinity as the configuration of gender practices which embodies the current legitimacy of patriarchy that involved the dominant position of men & the subordination of women.

4. Teachers deny right to girls to select their game of interest claiming it to be boys sport –A perusal of the above table indicates that 47% respondents perceive that gender discrimination exists with respect to sports. Boy’s sports are considered more competitive and girls are forced not to opt for sports exclusive for boys. Teachers claimed that boys perform better than girls, boys are more physically fit than girls.

2.1.2 Institutional Discrimination

Table 2.2: Perceived Institutional discrimination by boys and girls i.e. Teachers/ Management Attitude towards different Genders

Item	Boys			Girls		
	Yes	Uncertain	No	Yes	Uncertain	No
Some teachers like boys more than girls	28.46%	8.13%	63.41%	23.38%	9.09%	67.53%
High appreciation is given to boys on reply to questions in classroom	52.85%	6.50%	40.65%	28.50%	11.68%	59.74%
Girls are more often punished than boys	30.08%	21.14%	48.78%	9.09%	31.17%	59.74%
Teacher talks in uncivilized manner with girls than boys	20.33%	4.88%	74.79%	16.88%	10.39%	72.73%
Teacher shows biased attitude towards specific gender in use of teaching material	36.59%	22.76%	40.65%	29.87%	19.48%	50.65%
Examples delivered by the teacher are gender specific	39.02%	14.64%	46.34%	51.94%	10.39%	37.67%
Do teachers focus on values and responsibilities based on gender	31.71%	30.89%	37.40%	37.66%	22.07%	40.27%
Teachers frequently use sentence like- boys don't cry or girls don't shout.	47.15%	6.51%	46.34%	49.35%	12.99%	37.66%

1. High appreciation is given to boys on reply to questions in classroom - table 2.2 reveals that most of the boys 52.85% perceive boys and 59.74% girl perceive that teachers insist on boys to answer in their class. They motivate the boys to be high achievers and actively participate in class room discussions. Thus girl feel neglected and discriminated. 40.65% boys respond no and 6.50% boys respond uncertain although 28.58% girls respond no and 11.68% girls respond uncertain. The reason may be that teachers motivate boys for replying to questions in classroom they think that boys could perform better in their classroom and require more attention than girls. Parker (2007) investigated in his study gender differences in the motivation to learn. It revealed a strong relationship between motivation and learning, but only small, domain specific gender differences in motivation to learn. These findings indicated a need to use teaching strategies that promote the motivation to learn in both sexes. as a result of this kind of discrimination we find lowered self esteem in girls and as shown by Fagbemi (1996) the achievement motivation of females in higher education is lower than that of males while Oyedeki (1996) found that the general attitude that boys have to contribute to the world and society at large, makes the teachers show discriminatory behaviour in classroom situations. Oluwagbohunmi (2014) recommended that teachers should ask higher order questions, initiate interactions and distribute questions evenly in order to encourage equal participation of the two sexes in classroom interactions.

2. Majority girls reported that most examples quoted by the teacher in the classroom are gender based. They are more concerned with males and their functionary in society. This indirectly accords a feeling of insecurity and inferiority among girls.

Table 2.3 Institutional Discrimination regarding Participation in Activities

Item	Boys			Girls		
	Yes	Uncertain	No	Yes	Uncertain	No
Lesser opportunity to girls for participation in games/sports and athletics meet than boys	47.97%	7.31%	44.72%	61.04%	2.60%	36.36%
During assembly in school, girls only participate in gender specific activity like singing prayers	62.60%	10.57%	26.83%	31.17%	12.98%	55.85%
Various programs/events organized by the school provide equal opportunity to participation for boys and girls	73.98%	6.50%	19.52%	77.92%	11.69%	10.39%
Boys or girls are both permitted to go on educational excursion outside the school	43.09%	30.89%	26.02%	61.03%	14.28%	24.69%

1. During assembly in school, girls participate in gender specific activity like singing prayer, etc- The above table reveals that 62.60% boys report yes, 26.83% boys report no and rest

10.57% boys report uncertain. Therefore it is asserted that gender bias is common practice in schools.

2. Various programs of school provide equal opportunity to participation for boys and girls - table 2.3 reveals that 75.95% respondents report in the affirmative clarifying that participation in activities outside the classroom involved more boys than girls.

2.1.3 Structural Discrimination

Table 2.4 Perceived Structural Discrimination in Schools

Item	Boys			Girls		
Counselor \ Nurses are available for specific needs of girls in school	29.27%	3.25%	67.48%	66.24%	2.60%	31.16%
Availability of counseling facility for gender based problems	38.21%	26.02%	35.77%	51.94%	14.28%	33.78%
Availability of separate washrooms for girls in school	85.37%	-	14.63%	94.81%	-	5.19%

1. Availability of counseling facility for gender based problems –The table reveals that 45.07% respondents report that gender based problems are sorted out by teachers of the school. Teacher may guide the students time to time but a trained counselor is a must for serious behavioral problems with children. No counselors or nurses are provided by the schools for auxiliary services which show the sheer neglect and insensitivity of the school administrators towards females.

2. Availability of separate washrooms for girls in school–The above table reveals that 90.09% respondents report yes, 9.91% respondents no. Hence it can be said that most of the school provide separate washrooms in their campus. Croghan, 2002 found that children frequently reported smelly, dirty and unpleasant toilets in their schools, inadequate supplies of toilet paper and soap, no hot water and no towels. They also commented on the lack of privacy and the problems associated with bullying (Vernon et al, 2002).

3.0 Interpretation of results and findings of the study

Findings of the study:

1. Above Average Discrimination is evident in secondary schools.
2. There is no difference between the perception of gender discrimination among male and female students of secondary schools.

The researchers observed Structural discrimination during data collection. They found that school management behavior for female students was totally rude and they show dominant attitude towards girls’ students. The enrollment ratio of girls students was less than boys. Teachers strictly behave with girl students and did not give full freedom for view of expression. Teachers arrange seats in class on basis of gender.

The researcher further found that gender discrimination in schools existed in the areas of-

- i. Participation in school activities, school assembly, sports, tours, etc. in which boys were preferred to than girls.
- ii. Boys were punished more after than girls for misconduct.
- iii. Delegation of Responsibilities- Boys were given more responsible functions than girls.
- iv. In-Classroom Situations- Male Teachers ask more questions to girls and sometimes gender specific teaching materials take pictures are used emphasizing gender roles. Female teachers after scold boys in class gender based sentences used- boys don't cry, girls don't shout are used by teachers in and outside class.
- v. Gender based attitudes- Girls were considered to be more serious in studies while boys were labeled as being naughty and careless.

As regards to structural discrimination- the researcher observed that all schools have separate washrooms for boys and girls but they were close together, reading to embarrassment for girls in some situations. No counselors or lady nurse are available in the schools for dealing with problems. Teachers of the schools had to be approach by the students. In case of any emergency the parents were called up to take their word home.

4.0 Conclusion

Gender discrimination is a problematic issue of our country. Every sector is influenced by this type of discrimination such as work place, wage rate, education, political, health, etc. Gender discrimination is one of the reasons for increased dropout rate in schools. The study on discrimination of the girl child in Uttar Pradesh conducted by Social Action Forum for ManavAdhikar, New Delhi (2009) attempted to identity all forms of discrimination against girl child. The study found that boys were given preference over girls in matter of education, primarily because they felt that there is no fear in allowing a boy to go outside his village/town to study. GOI Planning Commission (2008) indicated that discrimination against women and girls impinges upon their right to health and manifests itself in the form of worsening health and nutrition indices. Thus, India continuous to grapple with unacceptably high MMR, IMB, and increasing rates of anemia, malnutrition, HIV/AIDS among women. These type of discriminatory practices in schools are likely to affect students' perceptions which may result in different academic, psychological, and social outcomes.

4.1 Suggestions

1. Gender Discriminatory practices in schools should be discouraged by the school management by monitoring school activities to grant both boys and girls equal opportunity for participation and access to school resources.
2. Teacher behavior in and outside class needs mentoring in disallowing all sorts of abuse and discriminatory attitude.
3. Counselling services, medical aid and female nurses should be mandatory in all schools.
4. Community involvement should be promoted to assist in fostering healthy relations between school and community.