

A STUDY ON STUDENTS PERCEPTION TOWARDS GENDER RELATED ISSUES

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Abstract

An essential social determinant of population is student's perception towards gender related issues. There aren't many research on this topic specifically in the Indian scenario, and even fewer on the variety in both backward dominant and non-backward areas. The goal of the current study was to examine and evaluate the perceptions of students attending particular secondary schools in India that were both backward and non-backward dominant. In an effort to put the students' perceptions into context, it also examined the gender related issues.

The study explores how students in India perceive gender-related issues. To ensure fair and equitable treatment of women, numerous policies have been established and implemented in addition to the constitution. If pupils don't learn what gender equality means, all of their efforts can be for naught. The survey was done to find out how the students felt about gender equality. For this investigation, a qualitative methodology was adapted. Convenience sampling was employed to select the participants, rather than probability sampling. 100 students from the first to the last level of study made up the sample, 50 of each gender from different schools of India. Data from a focus group was gathered using a focus group, and data from semi-structured interviews was gathered using a focus group. Themes were used to analyze the data. The results of the study showed that although most students comprehend gender equality, they do not practice it, as evidenced by the answers they provided throughout the interviews. In order to exhibit equity among students, the researcher advises that students should inform them of all options available to first-year female students and motivate them to engage. Maintaining awareness efforts and having conversations about gender equality are also vital.

Keywords: Students, Perception, Gender, Women, Policies, Awareness

Introduction

Researchers' focus has gradually shifted to the idea of gender equity, which is a crucial socioeconomic factor of population health. The concept of "gender" refers to the distinctions in social roles and how they are played. Gender inequality, which is strongly influenced by prevailing social beliefs and normative behaviors, is frequently reinforced by gender discrimination in a variety of settings despite the absence of any convincing evidence for biological differences between the sexes. It is widely believed that the rising burden of infectious and non-communicable diseases is a result of gender inequality, which is exacerbated by gender discrimination. Backward, difficult to reach, and neglected areas, such as some tribal-dominated regions, are thought to have deep-rooted and ingrained inequities. Poor population health and limited access to healthcare are frequently present in addition to this.

Population health research in India has not been as extensive on the topic of gender equity as it may be. The majority of talks are theoretical, and there aren't many research that assess the empirical data on gender equity as a social determinant of health. The findings of these studies, however, point to a scenario that is everything but equitable and is rooted in poverty, social discrimination against women, and unjustly curtailed healthcare behavior. According to the most recent data from the National Family Health Survey 5 (NFHS-5), one-fifth of rural women had employment over the previous year and owned property, and nearly one-third of women who had ever been married reported having experienced spousal violence. Nearly half of the young married women surveyed

were married before turning 18 years old. Literature on gender equity is hard to find in Telangana espitethis difficult circumstances.

Particularly when compared to non-marginalized areas, the situation in marginalized or backward areas, such as the tribal belt, calls for in-depth study. Search for potential future interventions to address this pervasive social issue in order to better understand the differences and do so in a precise and thorough manner. The perspectives of school-age children, and in particular, late adolescents, are crucial, especially when compared to how their teachers see the same problem. A thorough understanding of gender equity among teenagers was built on concerns of independence, decision-making roles, access, competence in various roles, dominance and control, and the notion of family sustainability, informed by past studies.

Based on the delicateness and complexity of the subject, an integrated approach combining a quantitative evaluation of student perception with a thorough qualitative investigation of the teacher's viewpoints can successfully produce the desired result by combining the advantages of both methodologies. Thus, the current study's objective was to evaluate and compare adolescents' opinions of gender equity in rural Telangana in India, from tribal and non-tribal communities who attend specific schools. In an effort to place students' perceptions in a broader context, this study also examined teachers' perspectives on gender equity.

Literature Review

The literature goes on to say that developing students' perceptions towards gender related issues is necessary to improve learning outcomes (Kaur, 2015). Numerous demographic factors, including gender, residential background, academic stream, family type (nuclear/joint), school type (government and private), and parental education, have been shown to influence the students perception towards gender related issues, according to studies by Gakhar and Bains (2011), Rajakumar and Soundararajan (2017), Chand (2019), and Promila (2020). The results showed no discernible differences in secondary school students' general and specific student's perception between those from nuclear and joint families. Government school students in secondary education perform significantly better than students in private schools in terms of home environment, planning of work, and planning of subjects, but private school students perform significantly better than government school students in terms of the preparation for exam component of student's perception towards gender related issues. In both the Arts and Sciences, female students had higher study skills than male students (Promila, 2020). However, according to a study by Promila (2019), there were no appreciable differences in students perception between children in the IX grade with regard to their gender related issues, school administration, location, and parental education. More than 400 international reports from the previous 30 years have urged us to improve the way we raise our children as parents and educators (Hawley, 2012; Hurd, 1994). These studies place a strong emphasis on teaching students regarding gender related issues, particularly in secondary school.

Sharma, K. (2021) carried a research on secondary school, students perception towards gender related issues and home environments. The study's main goals were to identify the variations in family environments and students perception among secondary school students as well as to examine the connection between these factors among students attending State Board schools in Maharashtra. The results showed that males and girls' home environments and study habits regards to student's perception differ significantly. The study's findings showed a strong positive correlation between elements of the home environment and student's perception towards gender related issues.

The academic performance of senior secondary students in connection to student's perception towards gender related issue was examined by Upadhyay, S.K. (2017). Student's perception regarding gender related issues were regarded as an independent variable, but academic performance was treated as a dependent variable. For this investigation, a descriptive survey method was employed. For this investigation, the sample was chosen using a stratified random sampling technique. The study's conclusions showed that there was no discernible difference between male and female senior secondary school students' academic performance. Additionally, there was no discernible difference between male and female senior secondary school students with respect to gender related issues. Additionally, a strong correlation between senior secondary school pupils' academic success and study habits was discovered.

Objective of the study

- To study students perception towards gender related issues in India.
- To study male and female participation with respect to gender related issues.
- To analyze challenges faced by male and female in the gender related issues
- To suggest reformative measures for better cooperation between genders related issues

Research Methodology

From August 2019 to January 2020, a mixed-methods study using a parallel convergent design was carried out to collect data from different colleges of India. Both the qualitative and quantitative portions' data were gathered at the same time. The study was carried out in higher secondary co-educational institutions in India on behalf of student's perception towards gender related issues.

This cross-sectional survey included all eighth- through twelfth-grade students, ages 14 to 19, who were enrolled in the research area's chosen school, had parental consented, and had given their assent to participate. Students who missed the survey day were not included in the study.

Population of the Study: All the students of higher secondary level of different secondary colleges of India which are recognized by Secondary education considered as the population of this study.

Sample Structure

Table 1: Sample Structure

Category	Sub Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	50	50
	Female	50	50
Total		100	100

Descriptive Statistics of raw data collected:

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Statistics	Students Perception
Mean	123.39
Median	149.00
Mode	113
Std. Deviation	13.368
Variance	213.547
Skewness	-.133
Kurtosis	.125
Range	48

Questionnaire and Data collection Method

Utilizing a predesigned, pretested, validated (Cronbach's alpha: 0.86) questionnaire, the quantitative portion of the study involved assessing the attitudes of the school children about gender equity. The Gender Equitable Men Scale and the International Men and Gender Equality Survey questionnaire were both taken into consideration when creating the survey. Twenty Likert-type questions were included in the questionnaire, each with three response options: agree, neither agree nor disagree, and disagree. The questionnaire was divided into three domains. There were ten questions in the "Gender restrictions" area. Six of the questions measured 'Gender Attributes,' and the final four questions assessed 'Gender Domination. In a classroom context, the quiz was distributed to the students, who were instructed to mark their answers.

Analysis of Data with respect to Male and Female Students regarding Gender related issues

Groups: Male and Female Students

Table 3: Group Statistics: Students Perception

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Students Perception	Female	50	110.50	12.907	0.439
	Male	50	110.50	12.897	0.534

Table 4: Independent Samples Test of Students Perception

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Study Habits	0.621	0.327	1.318 [#]	99	0.113

(# not significant at 0.05 level of significance)

Interpretation: From the analysis in Table 3 and Table 4 it is seen that in case of Levene's Test for equality of variances the calculated p value is 0.327 ($p > .05$). So, equal variance can be assumed. Table 3 also shows that in case of comparison of mean scores of Study Habits between male and female students of higher secondary level the calculated $t(99)$ value is 1.318 and 'p' value is 0.113 ($p > .05$). Hence, t is not significant at 0.05 level. So, H_{01} is not rejected and it can be inferred that male students and female students of higher secondary level do not differ significantly in respect to student's perception towards gender related issues.

Analysis of Data with respect to Gender related issues entire Sample:

Table 5: Status of Students Perception Entire Sample

Variable	Mean	SD	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	No. of sample above Mean	No. of sample below Mean
Students Perception	110.49	12.383	86	179	153	97

Interpretation: From the Table 5, it is shown that mean score of student's perception towards gender related issue of 50 higher secondary school students was found 110.49 and Standard Deviation (SD) was 12.383. The minimum score of Lajwanti, Chandel and Paliwal's Students Perception Inventory (SHI) was 49 and maximum score of this scale was 51. The number of higher secondary students above means score was found 153 and the number of higher secondary students below means score was found 97. From the Table 5 it is shown that, 50 (24.5%) higher secondary students have low level of perception towards gender related issues, 50 (24.5%) higher secondary students have moderate level of perception towards gender related issues.

Perceptions of the Students regarding Gender Related issues

Table: 6 Students Perception

Statement	Comparison among boys				Comparison among girls	
	Mann-whitney U*	p-value	Mann-whitney U*	p-value	Mann-whitney U*	p-value
Privilege of independence	101.00	0.433	335.50	0.26	790.5	0.045
Students Perception Towards Gender Related Issues.	105.00	0.896	349.50	0.52	835.5	0.328

Table 6 compares the scores of the students for each item and domain, broken down by male and female. Overall, respondents from male and female communities reported a higher score when it came to opinions of the luxury of independence and decision responsibilities. However, there was a statistically significant difference in the females' assessments of decision-making positions and family sustainability. In these domains, the girls from backward areas performed better than those from non-

backward areas. Respondents in general and boys in particular had relatively poorer scores, indicating poorer perception about these issues.

Qualitative Measurement of Students Perception related to Gender Issues

The primary informants among the chosen male and female students in different parts of India were the subjects of 26 in-depth interviews (IDIs) for the qualitative component. Thirteen instructors from non-backward areas and twelve from backward areas participated in the interviews. The two researchers who had prior expertise and training in qualitative research methods conducted the IDIs, which lasted 35 to 40 minutes and adhered according to the interview guide created beforehand. With the help of three subject matter experts, the IDI handbook was created. Five specialists from the fields of psychology, sociology, and public health (two each) further backed it up. The interviewing process yielded questions about things like "access and freedom disparities between genders," "practice of domination and compulsions," "roles and responsibilities associated with each gender," and "unequal privileges among the genders." In addition to taking field notes and documenting the interviews, we also recorded them. When the interviews produced no fresh data, data collecting was continued until data saturation.

Students' perception on gender related issues consciousness

The analysis of the qualitative portion of the study, derived from the students' IDIs, focused on instructors' perceptions of gender related issues and students' awareness of this issue. The results were examined in terms of three dimensions, such as student awareness of gender equity, how gender disparity negatively affects community health, and strategies for achieving gender equity. The main themes that emerged were male dominance in the home, health and financial decision-making, the existence of overt or covert gender inequality, the need for female to have economic independence through independent work, and awareness raising as a way to improve the generally unsatisfactory status of female.

Key Findings of the Study

Boys from non-backward areas had more favorable perceptions of girls' access to education than did boys from backward areas. Overall, respondents who were non-backward had less favorable perceptions of women's limited roles. Comparatively lower overall and across genders was the mean score for role competence. Overall, the respondents were favorable toward the idea of gender equality. In backward regions, girls' perceptions of how equally important each gender is to supporting a family were more favorable. The view of the respondents toward girls enduring violence to protect the family was more favorable. The responses of the boy's students were contextualized using the teacher's perceptions. With a few exceptions, for example, addressing issues of violence and dominance, the teachers' perceptions differed from the students', who had better perceptions. Overall, they were concordant in nature.

Limitations of the study

The research environment seemed to call for a mixed-method approach, which strengthened the reliability of the findings. It is also possible to have a comprehensive understanding of the prevailing perceptions inside the educational system by incorporating both students and teachers.

Despite the mixed-method design's robustness, the possibility of social desirability bias in individual replies cannot be discounted. In addition to this, a general response bias may have developed throughout the survey's mass delivery. The outcomes merely display the local situation. The findings don't hold up to scrutiny. Although observations on the relationship between age and equitable attitude are legitimate, the study's cross-sectional design prevents determination of the age effect's causality.

Conclusion

The study's findings showed that girls had a tendency toward liberation and gender parity, which was very different from the attitude of their male counterparts. It may be thought of include conversations about gender equity and its impacts in the curriculum. Focus should also be placed on raising awareness of how the applicable laws pertaining to gender dominance and violence in tribal regions are being implemented. Gender has been identified by researchers in recent decades as a complex health variable. A crucial step in enhancing gender equity and addressing women's health rights is to take action. Doing so will ensure that health resources are used effectively while also enhancing

society's health. The development of a gender-equitable society is crucial for the success of universal health coverage.

Gender has been identified by researchers as a complex health variable. A growing gender gap in health risks has been projected by Connor et al. in light of the COVID-19 pandemic's difficulties, which could bring society to the point of being extremely vulnerable (Connor et al., 2020). Therefore, addressing gender equity is a strategy to address the right to health of women, which can enhance society's general health through the efficient use of healthcare resources. Improved tribal perceptions present a chance to advance gender equality even further. However, policymakers need to concentrate on boys' relatively unfavorable perceptions of equity for women's participation in decision-making, freedom to work outside, and roles other than childrearing and family care, etc., as this can only worsen gender discrimination in a future society. Thus, it is encouraged to develop gender-sensitive socially implementable policies.

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