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GIRL CHILD EDUCATION IN RURAL RAJASTHAN

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Abstract

In today's competitive world education is a necessity. Education for women is even more significant as she plays a crucial role in nurturing the society. While checking the data of literacy rate in India (74.04%), women scores only 65.46% (census, 2011). Girls tend to show higher dropout rates than boys. School dropout rate among adolescent girls is also high (63.5%) (MoSPI, 2012). Rajasthan is known for low girl child enrolment and retention in all levels. Especially in the state of Rajasthan, the birth of girl child not welcomed as it does with boys. Discrimination on the basis of gender is common in school and home. Keeping the above context in perspective, the present study tries to identify the available institutional mechanism for promoting girl child education in rural Rajasthan and factors that contribute to dropping out of a girl child at the secondary or higher secondary level. The study is descriptive in nature focusing on girls who are enrolled in govt. schools of the villages in secondary or higher secondary level especially in Kishangarh block of Ajmer district. The Findings clearly indicates discrimination faced by girls in getting quality education at all levels.

Keywords

Institutional Mechanism, Girl Child Education, Poor Literacy Rate, Gender & Discrimination

1. Introduction

Education plays very important role in development of human being, because it increases the knowledge of person, help them to know about their fundamental rights and duties, encourage them to fight for these rights, help to deal with the traditional barriers and it is also powerful tool to overall development of any country. In India, the general economic condition of female is worse than male in areas of education, nutrition, health, family support, freedom, life expectation etc. keep in mind this view Indian Government has launched many special programmes and policy for female viz., five-year plans, national policy on education (World Bank, 2012). Although constitution of India gives assurance free and compulsory primary education for children up to 14 age group but still the goal is not achieved (Karlekar, 1995 and Kumar, Rustogi and Subrahmaniam, 2015). There is no incertitude that the progress in female literacy increasing, but this change is slow (Bhadra, 1999). And there is need to change the strategy for better result. Literacy is the key to measure the socio-economic progress of any society, and in the case of India the literacy rate only able to grew 74.04% in 2011 from 12% at the end of British Rule I.e. in 1947. Although Schooling is free in government schools or taking minimal charge to children of 6-14 years of age, the facilities are deficient.

1.1 Educational Status of Girl Child in India

The current educational status of girl child education in India is –

Table 1: Literacy Rates (Age Group 7+) (In Percentage)

	2001			2011		
	Total	SC	ST	Total	SC	ST
Total	64.8	54.7	47.1	73.0	66.1	59.0
Male	75.3	67.0	59.0	80.9	75.2	68.5
Female	53.7	42.0	35.0	64.6	56.5	49.4

Source: *Educational Statics at a Glance, GOI (2014)*

Above table indicates the literacy rates of age group of more than 7 years. The data shows that in 2001 total literacy rate was 64.8, it increased in 2011 to 73. Table 1 indicates the big difference of among male and female literacy whether it is SC/ST or total. Above data of 2011 shows difference of 16.3 in total, 18.7 in SC and 19.1 in ST among male and female literacy.

Table 2: *Girl's enrolment in Schools in India (In Lakhs)*

Year	Primary Class I-V	Middle/Upper Primary class VI-VIII	High/Sr. Secondary (Class IX-XII)	Total Class I-XII
1950-51	54	5	2	61
1960-61	114	10	7	131
1970-71	213	39	19	271
1980-81	285	68	34	387
1990-91	404	125	63	592
2000-01	498	175	107	780
2001-02	503	187	121	811
2002-03	573	206	137	916
2003-04	599	215	144	958
2004-05	611	227	154	992
2005-06	616	233	161	1010
2006-07	626.32	246.22	169.50	1042.05
2007-08	643.84	261.54	193.19	1098.54
2008-09	644.72	260.47	199.52	1104.72
2009-10	648.24	275.92	215.35	1139.52
2010-11	648.48	292.48	228.94	1169.91

Sources: *Statically of School Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development (2015)*

Above table shows that girl's enrolment in education at differential levels class I-V, class VI-VIII and class IX-XII in India, girl's enrolment in school education has been increased from 61 lakhs in 1950-51 to 1169.91 lakhs in 2010-11. After republic period the primary class I-V girl's enrolment in school education has been increased from 54 lakhs in 1950-51 to 648.48 in 2010-11. Overall middle/upper primary class VI-VIII girl's enrolment in school education has been increased from 5 lakhs in 1950-51 to 292.48 in 2010-11. And high/sr. Secondary class IX-XII girl's enrolment in school education has been increased from 2 lakhs in 1950-51 to 228.94 lakhs in 2010-11. It is general observation from the table indicates girl's enrolment school education has been raised from 1950-51 to 2010-11 at differential levels in primary, middle/upper primary and high/sr. Secondary in India. During 2007-08 to 2008-09 period girl's enrolment in school education slowly increased at different class levels, but middle/upper primary enrolment was declined from 2007-08 to 2008-09.

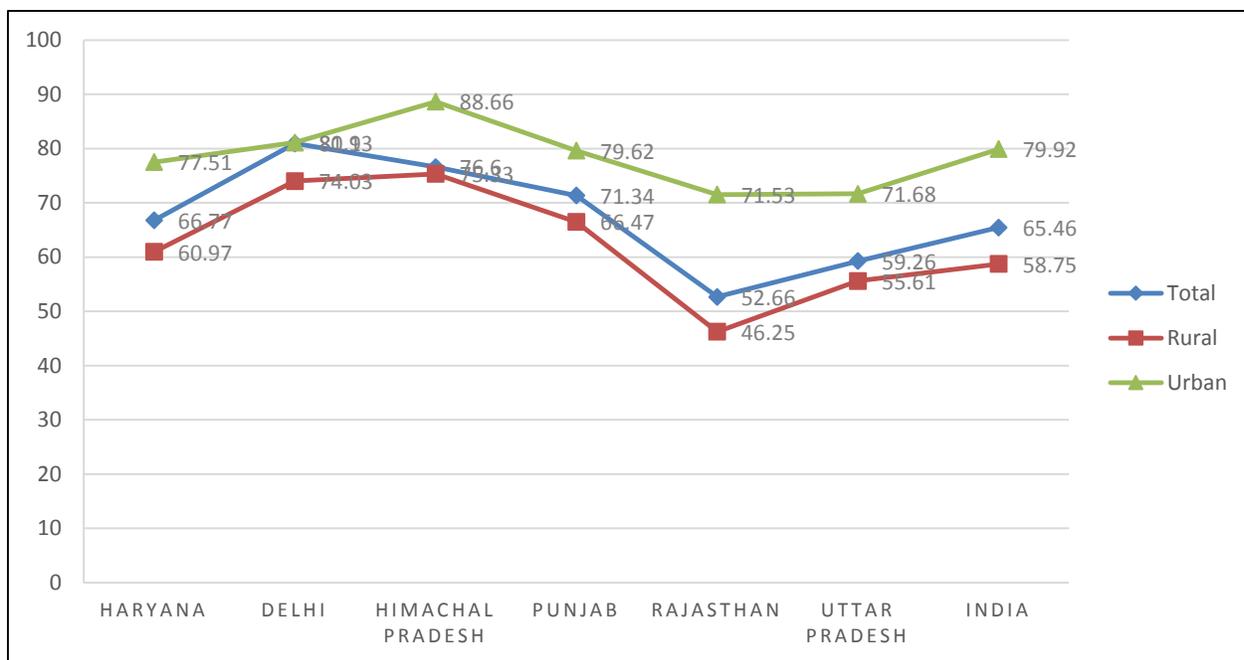


Figure 1: Female Literacy Rates of India & Major States

Source: Rural Urban Distribution of Population - India, Census of India (K & H, 2012)

A study (Gupta, 1987) conducted in 6 states of India – Haryana, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh., Punjab, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh to know about the facts of female literacy. It was a comparative study of these states. The above table demonstrates the female literacy rates in these 5 states and India. Among the all states it’s clearly reflecting that Rajasthan have alarming situation in female literacy. Among these states Himachal Pradesh has better female literacy so it reflects that how govt. doing for betterment of education of girls.

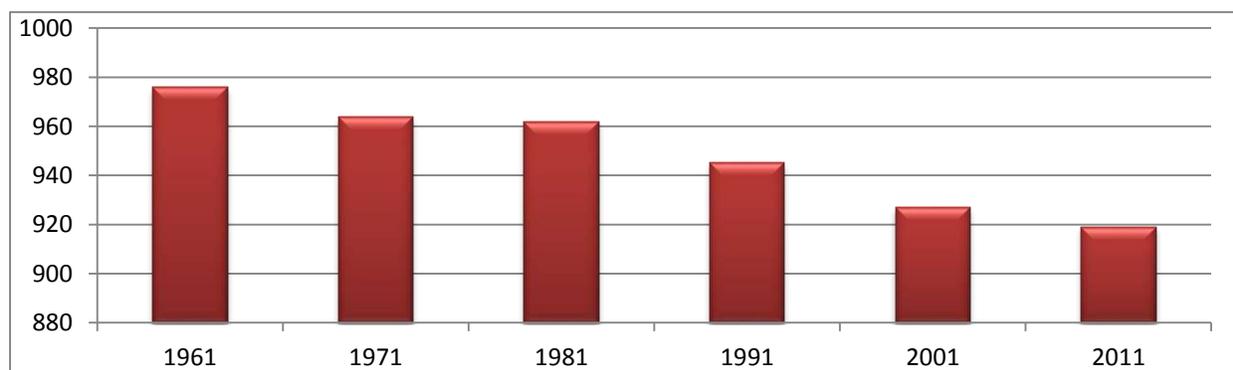


Figure 2: Child Sex Ratio Scenario in India

Source: Ganguli (2015) Empowering Women and Girls through Education

The above table has been taken from a study of Ganguli (2015). According to him child sex ratio (CSR) can be defined as number of girls per 1000 of boys between the age of 0 to 6 years. As the table is showing the decline is clearly visible from 976 in 1961 to 927 in 2001 and further to 919 in 2011. The finding of this study and author's observation concluded that the decline in CSR reflects the discriminatory attitude of society in general and parents in particular.

1.2 Educational Status of Girl Child in Rajasthan

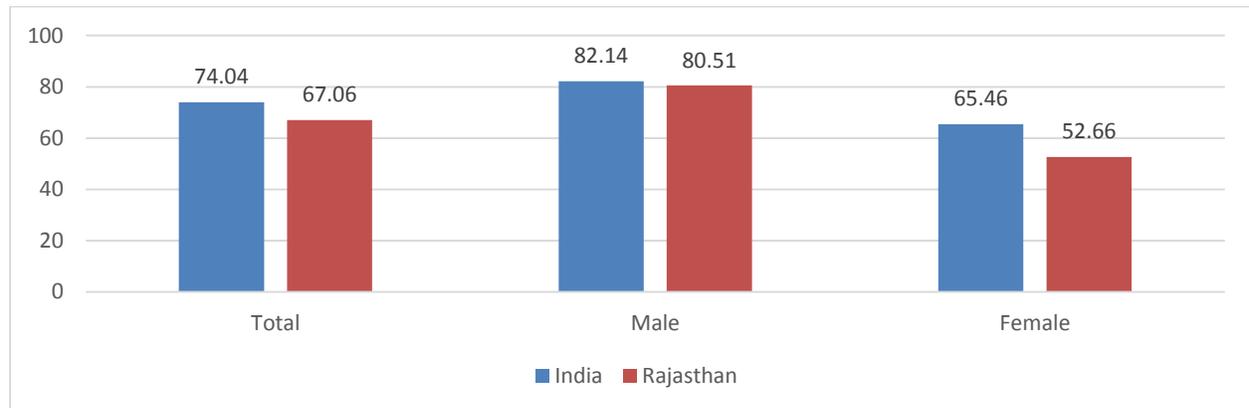


Figure 3: Literacy Rates in India and Rajasthan by Gender, Census 2011

Source: Census of India, 2011 (Provisional)

Above table shows total literacy rate in India is 74.04%, whereas in Rajasthan is 67.06%. Male Literacy rate in India is 82.14 %, whereas in Rajasthan is 80.51. Female Literacy rate in India is 65.46%, whereas in Rajasthan in Only 52.66%. It is showing that in Rajasthan the very less women are literate.

The present study is important in the context of Rajasthan because this is one of the States wherein the girl child faces number of problems in education. The researcher himself has experienced many incidents with regard to girl child biasness in education especially in rural areas of Rajasthan. A preference for sons over the daughters is a dark reality at the ground in rural India. A girl child lives a life as a burden in the family and as an object outside the family. Child marriage is also a ground reality that restricts the educational opportunity of girl children.

2. Review of Literature

According to Holt (1975) Children and childhood can be seen as golden age group of any individual and this golden age has connection with innocence, freedom, joy, play and the like. It is the age where individual feels free from the rigors roles of adult life. But slowly when they become adult they become more responsible. And as the age grows they becomes vulnerable

because they have more roles and less freedom (Holt, 1975). Childhood is not a world of freedom and opportunity but one of detention and restriction in which children are wholly subservient and dependent on adults in family. This being so, childhood is nothing but a world of isolation, sadness, exploitation, oppression, cruelty and abuse (Bhakhry, 2006).

Gender discrimination is major issue in our society. Gender discrimination means to do biased or discriminate with girls by their parents or other persons only because of their sex. This issue is existing in every strata of society it may be poor or rich family, in poor or middle-class families having more sex discrimination than the rich families, the main reason of this contradiction is education because people who are educated they don't believe in sex discrimination. Traditional thought of people is core cause of problem so they think that girls are only burden on them and they should marry as soon as possible (Gandhi Kingdon, 2002).

2.1 Governmental Policies & Programs Related to Girl Child Education

The Government of India has taken a number of initiatives for the universalization of education and also to promote girl child education. The Government of India has been adopted an integrated approach initially for implementation of various schemes but gradually it implemented group specific policies and programs that directly helped to increase the literacy among deprived section of the society. The common objectives are to enhance access through the expansion of quality school education; to promote equity through the inclusion of disadvantaged groups and weaker sections, and to improve the quality of education.

Policy documents like the report of the Kothari Commission (GoI, 1964-66) and the National Policy on Education 1986 (GoI, 1986) and its POA in 1992 (GoI, 1992a) have put enormous emphasis on promotion of gender equity in education by reducing the gender gap in access, retention and transition from one stage to other. However, despite such policy recognition of the importance of female education, dedicated programmes within Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), and efforts at 'gender mainstreaming' within the District Primary Education Program (DPEP), data shows a continuing gender gap in relation to attendance and drop-out (Bandyopadhyay and Subrahmanian, 2008).

2.1.1 National Policy on Education, 1986

The Government of India implemented The National Policy on Education in 1986, the policy is mainly followed by the Jomtien Declaration (1990), which contributed towards a significant increase in domestic and international investment in primary education. Many new programmes and schemes were initiated during this period. As the decade progressed there was a

realization that primary education is not merely about formal access and literacy rates and that the central issue was “removal of disparities and to equalize educational opportunity by attending to the specific needs of those who have been denied equality so far” (NPE, 1986).

2.1.2 Beti Padao Beti Bachao

“*Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao*”, is a nation-wide effort to gain awareness on the Girl Child & enabling their education. The Government of India has announced *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao* program to address the issue of Child Sex Ratio (CSR) through a mass campaign & Multi-Sectoral action in over 100 gender critical districts across the country. The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (DAVP) has been entrusted with the responsibility of developing a Media Campaign in consultation with Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) & Ministry of Women & Child Development (M/o WCD). The main thrust areas of this campaign is to prevent gender based discrimination, to ensure the educational, health and protection rights of girl child and to ensure participation of girl child in short term and long term employable opportunity.

2.1.3 PRAGATI - Scholarships for Girl Child

The Government of India started PRAGATI scheme with aims to give encouragement and assistance to girl child to engage in technical education. The scheme conceive of providing a scholarship of Rupees 30000 and tuition fees 2000 month for 10 months throughout the course. With this scheme around four thousand girls will be benefited every year, the only limitation of this scheme is that one girl per family can be consider as beneficial.

2.1.4 Early Child Care Education Centers

The Government of India set up Early Child Care Centers in the primary school to guarantee better enrolment and retention of girl child. These educational centers are set up throughout the country so every child especially girl child can get formal education. The present scheme also ideates the stipulation of good quality education to girl children. The main thrust area of these centers are work on physical, psychological and intelligent development of all children who are in the age group of 3-6 years. The education department at the district level has the responsibility for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Department of Social Welfare (through the Integrated Child Development Services Program) has the responsibility for running the ECCE Centers (Sharma, 2015).

2.1.5 Indira Gandhi Scholarship for Single Girl Child

According to the research studies in the field of gender discrimination the number of girls as against to the boys in certain states is declining. A girl born with no rights in our society. In this situation only education can help to make these girls life better and make them empowered about their rights. The attitude of parents in Indian society especially in rural areas are very negative and that is why girls are behind against the boys in every sector whether it is education, health or employment. The Govt. of India declared elementary education as a basic human right of every child.

Present study was important in the special context in Rajasthan because these are the state where girl child is facing a problem in education. The literacy rate and child sex ratio of these states itself reflects that how is the situation. Researcher himself has been experienced many examples with regard to girl child biasness in education special in rural area of Rajasthan. A preference for sons over the daughter is dark reality at the ground in rural India, girl child lived life as a burden in family and as an object in outside the family and girl child marriage is also a ground reality that restricts the educational opportunity of girl child. Lack of education is the main reason for female enslavement and subordination. It hinders that the ability of a girl child to socialize, have intellectual stimulation and have their own identity. Everything is changing so as society also but still there are some problems for which our girl children are not able to cross the gate of school.

3. Methods and Material

3.1 Background of the Study

This study conducted on identifying institutional mechanisms and potential barriers in promoting girl child education and to know what people think about girl child education and how they do discrimination on the basis of gender. Generally, in India we see that girls are vulnerable section of the society so universal organizations and Indian constitutions and many other organizations trying to bring equality in gender but even gender discrimination still exists in every section of the society (Agarwal, 2007). It is assumed that educated and rich families are not believed or not do gender discrimination but in rural areas, uneducated or poor people believes in traditional thought and they believe girls as burden on family and gender discrimination. Parents think that if they educate their son, it will benefit them in their future and if they educate daughter, it is simply a waste because daughter will leave home after her marriage so why to spend money

on girl's education. This is therefore study designed to identify the parent's attitude towards education & their support through government.

3.2 Objectives of the Study

- To understand the institutional mechanisms and services available for promoting girl child education in rural Rajasthan.
- To identify the potential barriers of girl child education in rural Rajasthan.
- To examine the reasons behind the girl child dropouts at secondary and higher secondary level in Government schools of Rajasthan.
- To suggest policy initiatives for promoting girl child education in rural Rajasthan.

3.3 Research Design

Descriptive research design was used for getting new knowledge about particular phenomena. This design was based on What, Why and How. The researcher used this because he wants to know more about existing institutional mechanisms for promoting girl child education especially in context of rural areas and to identify potential barriers in promoting girl child education.

3.4 Universe of the Study

This study was conducted in two villages of Ajmer District of Rajasthan. The villages are namely Patan and Nalu from Kishargarh Block. Both the villages are typical rural settings where people are traditionally engaged in agriculture and diary work (animal husbandry). Total populations of Patan and Nalu are about 2750 and 3100 respectively. The main religion of people in these villages are Hindu and Islam, Only Patan village has Muslim population and the major caste of people in these villages are Jat, Gurjar, Kumhar, Rajput, Muslim etc. Other Facilities like drinking water, electricity, schools and public health care services are available in both the villages.

3.5 Sampling Technique

Researcher adopted simple random sampling for data collection.

3.6 Pilot Study and Pre-test

Pilot study was conducted by researcher in different village than the universe of the study to Pre-test the tool and to understand the reaction and acceptance of questions by respondents. Pre-test means researcher went into the community and collect some sample to understand that these questions are relevant or not, do people will response to these questions or not. So, pre-test was important in collecting the relevant and appropriate data for the study.

3.7 Sample Size

Researcher used a sample size of 72 respondents including parents (32), girl child (32) and teachers (8) of government schools.

3.8 Method of Data Collection

Researcher used Interview as a method for data collection where a detailed face to face interview was carried out. Each interview took around 15 minutes to complete. An informed consent was taken from the respondent and assured that the data will be kept confidential and would be used only for the purpose of research.

3.9 Tools of Data Collection

Structured Interview schedules were used as a tool for data collection. Section wise schedule was prepared by researcher to get information from Girl Children, their Parents and Teachers of govt. school. So, in parents interview schedule sections were on socio-demographic profile, attitude on girl's education, health care and attitude on child marriage etc. and in girl's interview schedule sections were on socio-demographic profile, their knowledge and perception on higher education, health care, perception on child marriages, gender equity in home and in society etc. And in Teacher's interviews schedule sections were on perception on child marriages, views & reasons of girl's dropout from school and their observation on gender equity in school.

3.10 Sources of Data

Researcher used primary and secondary sources of data. Primary sources where researcher has collected through interview schedule that are taken from parents, girl children and teachers of govt. schools. Secondary sources are review of literatures and program & policies of government for promoting girl child education.

3.11 Data Analysis

Researcher used SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) for analyzing the data.

4. Results and Discussions

Present study conducted in rural areas of Rajasthan to understand the institutional mechanisms and potential barriers in promoting girl child education. 72 samples were collected including parents (32, both father and mother), girl child (32) and teachers (8) of govt. schools. The result found that parental attitude is negative towards girl child education but in some places their attitude is changing. In these villages, the parents' attitude towards their sons and daughters differ. They prefer to have a son rather than a daughter. Many parents think of their daughters as

a burden because at the time of marriage, a dowry amounting very largely has to be given to the girls and the girls do not earn money. The boys are given education as it is considered a sign of pride and prestige to educate the boys (Jangir and Azeez, 2017).

Table 3: Schooling of Children

Sex	Kind of School		Don't have Male Child	Total
	Govt.	Private		
Male Child	9.4	78.1	12.5	100.0
Female Child	87.5	12.5	0.0	100.0

Above table shows the schooling of children. As per the table 78% of respondents are sending their male child in private schools for study, whereas the 88% of respondents are sending their female child in government school for study. Parents discriminated girls on their schools because for better education they send their son in private school and to daughters in Government schools because they think that girls are not for education they are for house work only.

Table 4: Awareness about Carrier Opportunities

Responses	No. of Respondents	Percent (%)
Yes	10	31.25
No	22	68.75
Total	32	100.0

Above table shows the awareness about carrier opportunities among girl children. As per the table only 31% of girl respondents are aware about the carrier opportunities and 69% of girl respondents are not aware about the carrier opportunities, even they are not aware about the different streams in education. This is most important in choosing their field of carrier as per their interest.

Table 5: Difficulties in Getting Education

Difficulties	No. of Respondents	Percent (%)
School is far	10	31.25
Transportation Unavailability	5	15.62
Family Barriers	5	15.63
Early Marriage	12	37.50
Total	32	100.0

Above table shows the difficulties which are facing by the girl child in getting education. As per the table 30% of girl respondents said that school is far from their home, 16% of girl respondents are facing difficulty of transportation unavailability, 16% of girl respondents are

facing family reasons in getting proper education and as per the study majority of the girl child respondents are married before of the 18 years and which is one of the most important reason for the girls to being dropout from school.

Table 6: Absence of Children from School

Absence by gender	No. of Respondents	Percent (%)
Female Child	20	62.5
Male Child	4	12.5
Can't Say	8	25
Total	32	100.0

Above table is indicating the absence of children from school. As per the table 63% of girl respondents said that the parents prefer the female child to absence for the household works and other works that leads to girl child dropout from schools and also leads to poor academic performance of girl child in school.

Table 7: Encountered Difficulties within School Premises

Kind of Difficulties	No. of Respondents	Percent (%)
Poor Infrastructure	9	28.12
Indifferent attitude of Teachers	7	21.88
Insecurity from opposite sex	10	31.25
Lack of Teachers	6	18.75
Total	32	100.0

Above table shows the difficulties of girl child which they are facing within the school premises. As per the table 28% of girl respondents said that the infrastructure of school is very poor, even there is not sufficient number of rooms for teaching. 22% of girl respondents said that they are facing difficulty as indifferent attitude of teachers especially with girl child in school. 32% of girl respondents are said that they feel insecurity in school with opposite sex and 18% girl respondents said that they have lack of teachers in school.

Table 8: Observations of Teachers in School

Kind of Observations	Frequency		Total No. of Respondents/Total Percentage
	Yes	No	
Girls live in Separate Groups	87.50	12.50	8/100
Uncomfortable with opposite Sex	50.00	50.00	8/100
Students have Respect for each other	75.00	25.00	8/100
Sharing Educational Difficulties	37.50	62.50	8/100
Friendly Environment in School	75.00	25.00	8/100

Above table illustrate the observations of teachers during school timing. As per the table 88% of respondents said that the children lives in separate groups during school time, separate group means groups of boys and girls separately. 50% of respondents were saying that the girls feel uncomfortable with opposite sex during school time and other 50% said that girls don't feel uncomfortable with opposite sex. 75% of respondents are saying that the children have respect for each other. 62% of respondents said that the children don't share educational difficulties with each other, and 75% of respondents said that they have observed friendly environment in their schools.

A majority of the (74%) parents think that girls are burden on family so they do not spend much money on girl's education. 76% respondents say that house hold work is primary responsibility of girls so they must be done that. So, it was the results of parents' attitude towards the girls. Researcher found that gender discrimination still existing and there are even positive signs too as girls are getting aware about their rights. Girls think that education is important for them as it for their brothers. Result shows 66% of girl child respondents are willing to continue their study further, whereas only 28% of parents are ready to send their daughters for further study. It shows the girl children are still promoting very less for higher studies. 60% girl child respondents are married and opined that child marriage is wrong practice and it is not good, it's because of they are facing that and how they are aware about harmful effects of child marriage. Teachers perception on girl child education, observations within the school premises and gender discrimination. Results shows 70% of teacher respondents says that they have seasonal dropout in their school, which means students use to being absence or dropout from the school in different seasons and it is just because of the children belongs from the rural backgrounds. Researcher found that Financial constraint, Long distance of the school from home, Early marriages, Safety of girl child, Poor infrastructure, Poor academic performance of girl child and Uneducated parents are the most reasons of girl child dropouts.

All the societal evils which exist in the form of gender disparity are the result of maligned attitude of parents and society towards girls and women. Child marriage, son preference, educational discrimination, neglect in health and nutrition are the direct results of rigid social mentality of the patriarchal social system. The changes that we would like implement and see on the dimensions of gender parity can be achieved only through sensitizing people, even women at gender aspects.

5. Conclusion

The present study is an attempt to understand the status of girl child education in India in general and rural India in particular. The study also attempted to understand to various initiatives started by the Government of India. The study used both primary and secondary evidences to understand the issue of gender discrimination in rural India. On the basis of findings of the study, conclusion can be made that parents have biased attitude when it comes to girl child education. Parents in rural India always carry a soft favour against their sons. The differentiation in terms of types of schooling, type of course and type of employment is visible if one looks through the lenses of gender. It has been observed that sons in the family are always welcome with cheers and celebrations, whereas daughters are always seen as burden over the family. The girl themselves perceived that they have more roles and responsibility towards the family and society in large. In rural India parents discriminate girl children even in feeding food, girls can have food after male child. Therefore, to assess the level of girl child education sample was collected from all the stakeholders responsible towards girl's education including girls herself, her family & school.

Rajasthan is a one of the poor State in India where sex discrimination existing. We see that sex ratio of Rajasthan is also less and child marriage is major problem here. In rural Rajasthan sex discrimination existing in every factor like education, health, nutrition etc. Study conducted in Villages of Ajmer district in Rajasthan and find out that gender discrimination still exists but now it is in downward mobility and People changing their traditional thoughts towards gender discrimination, they are sending their girls to schools and some parents also sending for higher education.

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