A Study on Differential Socialization of Boys and Girls

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ABSTRACT

Government of India has been taking care to give equal status to women by enacting laws and by giving equal rights to women. But India is facing the severe problem of uneven ratio of male and female. A strong preference for sons is the root cause behind the uneven ratios, with some parents taking illegal gender tests to abort female foetuses. In much of India, a preference for male children is built into cultural ideology. Sons are traditionally viewed as the breadwinners who will carry on the family name and perform the last rites of the parents - an important ritual in many faiths. Girls are often seen as a burden that parents can ill afford, largely due to the dowry of cash and gold jewelry that is required in marriage.
The role of parents in upbringing their children and socializing them plays very important role in formation of strong society.
On this background, researcher felt necessity to examine the role of social institutions in building the attitude and beliefs, How children learn about gender role?. How child rearing and their socialization affects in understanding the gender differences?. The objectives set for the study are: 1. To understand the role of social institutions in child rearing and socializing. 2. To examine whether girls are getting equal treatment from their parents?. For the present study, both primary and secondary data are collected. 80 school going girls having one or more brothers are interviewed by adopting snowball sampling method. Simple statistical tool such as percentage is used to analyze and interpret the primary data.

Keywords: Differential Socialization, Equal status, Child rearing

INTRODUCTION:

Gender equality does not imply that women and men are the same, but that they have equal value and should be accorded equal treatment. The United Nations regards gender equality as a human right. Gender equality, also known as sex equality, sexual equality or equality of the genders, refers to the view that men and women should receive equal treatment, and should not be discriminated on the ground of only gender. Gender equality can be achieved when women and men enjoy the same rights and opportunities across all sectors of society, including economic participation and decision-making and when the different behaviors, aspirations and needs of women and men are equally valued and favored.

The expectations, roles, nature of work, restrictions etc differs from male sex and female sex in Indian society. The upbringing and socialization of children also have great impact on the gender differences. The child rearing style, behavior of parents, role of head of family, parental restrictions on female child, favoring the male counterpart in the family, role of teachers etc. plays important role in inculcation of the notion of gender differences. Gender role learning is done through the agents of socialization.

Socialization Process:
Socialization refers to the process whereby an individual learns the skills, attitude, values and disposition to function completely in particular society. The individual as a result of this process internalize the values and norms of the society or community and accepts them. As he or she grow up , they reflect the same behavior as they learnt from their parents or family members or other social institutions. I think basically, gender issues derive

from family structure, child rearing practices, cultural beliefs and gender roles. To understand it clearly, a mother or father keeps some restrictions on the female child because they observed and learnt from their parents.

Agents of Socialization:

It is generally argued that the most important agents of socialization are the family, the school, peer group and media. These social systems influence children's development in direct and indirect ways. Family is regarded as the most powerful socializing agents since it primary source of influence during children's formative and impressionable years. Family is the basic unit of society when it functions well and performs the socializing role adequately.

Gender role learning:

Parents play an important part in gender role learning, children learn about gender through observing and being influenced by the behavior and interactions of their parents and other adults in their immediate surroundings. If children observe sex typed behavior on a continuous basis, they begin to develop notions of what is and what is not appropriate for each sex. Children also learn about sex typed norms and expect through direct instructions or by acquiring ideas from adult conversations and from mass media. The family household is an important context of gender role, socialization. In two parents family the man and women are expected to do different roles.

The male role is convinced of primary as an economic one. On the other hand, the woman cares for children and the home. Women's role is that of nurture even though she may also be a significance provider in the home. Children learn gender roles through their keen observation and they may learn about gender discrimination from the roles in their parents assume in the home and in the society in general.

Review of Literature:

Government of India has been taking efforts to give equal status to women in Indian society, it has enacted various acts and undertaken various measures for women empowerment, then too we can observe the sever situation in India which is reflected from various research studies and surveys. In 21st century some of families are of notion that sons are the bread earners and they will support the parents in their old age. This notion resulted into imbalanced sex ratio in India.

"India has skewed child sex ratios that rights campaigners describe as alarming. The number of girls under six years old has fallen for the past 50 years and there are now 919 girls to every 1,000 boys, against 976 in 1961, according the 2011 census."[1]

The statistics say *"Twelve million Indian girls have been aborted in the last three decades, a 2011 study in the British medical journal Lancet found. Other girls die due to preventable diseases such as pneumonia and diarrhea, because they are sidelined in favour of their male siblings when it comes to access to health care and nutrition."*[2]

According to the latest U.N. Gender Equality Index, *"India has one of the worst gender differentials in child mortality of any country, ranking 132 out of 148 nations, worse than Pakistan and Bangladesh."*[3]

According to Sunita Kishore, *"A large difference in the mortality of female children indicates general discrimination in access to the right to live with dignity"* [4]

"The greatest challenges women face are the ones emanating from stereotyping and barriers in the form of discrimination and harassment. They have to face the traditional bottlenecks perceived in hiring women, such as lack of mobility or inability to work long hours. When organizations exclude qualified women from reaching top, women will find themselves unable to compete in an increasingly diversified marketplace and will lose talent, creativity and productivity".[5]

According to Doris Rajkumari John, Kiran Bedi and Indira Nooyi both have faced gender and racial stereotypes and they battled through them. This articles draws attention that how the diverse socio-cultural and economic environment affected and how they achieved a balance between family and work spheres.[6]

Statement of the problem:

Government of India has been taking care to give equal status to women by enacting laws and by giving equal rights to women. But India is facing the severe problem of uneven ratio of male and female. A strong preference for sons is the root cause behind the uneven ratios, with some parents taking illegal gender tests to abort female foetuses. In much of India, a preference for male children is built into cultural

ideology. Sons are traditionally viewed as the breadwinners who will carry on the family name and perform the last rites of the parents - an important ritual in many faiths. Girls are often seen as a burden that parents can ill afford, largely due to the dowry of cash and gold jewelry that is required in marriage. The role of parents in upbringing their children and socializing them plays very important role in formation of strong society. On this background, it is necessary to examine the role of social institutions in building the attitude and beliefs, How children learn about gender role?. How child rearing and their socialization affects in understanding the gender differences?.

Objectives:

1. To understand the role of social institutions in child rearing and socializing.
2. To examine whether girls are getting equal treatment from their parents?.
3. To give suggestions to improve the situation.

Data Source:

For the present study, both primary and secondary data are collected. Primary data is collected by interviewing the respondents who are the school going girls. Secondary data is collected through related web sites, online articles and books.

80 school going girls having one or more brothers are interviewed by adopting snowball sampling method. Snowball and convenience sampling method is used purposefully to take feedback of those girls who have brothers. Simple statistical tool such as percentage is used to analyze and interpret the primary data.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

Table No 1: Response about the presence of both parents in a family

Sr. No	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Both Mother and Father	56	70.0 %
2.	Only Mother	12	15.0 %
3.	Only Father	04	05.0 %
4.	With step Mother	06	07.50 %
5.	No Mother and father	02	02.5 0 %
	Total	80	100 %

The family household is an important context for gender role socialization. In two parents family the man and women are expected to perform different roles. The male role is convinced of primarily as economic one on the other hand the woman cares for children and the home. Hence parents play an important part in gender role learning. Children learn about gender through observing and being influenced by behavior and interactions of their parents. In a present study 70 % of children grow up with both mother and father. 15 % girls are reared by only mothers. 7.5 % girls are having step mother.

Table No 2: Response regarding the family having gender inclusive culture.

Sr. No.	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
1.	There is gender inclusive culture	58	72.5 %
2.	There is absence of discrimination	22	27.5 %
	Total	80	100 %

It is shocking to observe that more than 72 % girls responded that their family has gender inclusive culture. 27 % girl students feel that their parents behave indiscriminately with them in terms of work, diet, career, control etc.

Table No 3: Response regarding feeling of discrimination due to gender

Sr. No.	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
1.	I feel I am treated less favorably than my brother	62	77.5 %
2.	I am treated equally like my brother	18	22.5 %
	Total	80	100 %

When the girls are asked to express their feelings about their parent's behavior they responded that in some occasions they feel they were treated less favorably or discriminated against due to their gender. More than 77 % respondents are agreeing that they are treated differently by their parents. These girls responded that their parents favour their brother in terms of their career planning.

Table 4: Response regarding the different tasks to be done only by girls:

Sr. No.	Details of tasks done by Girls	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Helping mother in kitchen	42	52.5 %
2	Brooming and mopping	56	70.0 %
3.	Cleaning utensils	13	16.25 %
4.	Washing cloths	23	28.75 %
5.	Bringing water from public tap	08	10.0 %
6.	Other inside house works	18	22.5 %
7.	No any household work	12	15.0 %

In the present study, it is observed that some girls have to do many of the above mentioned tasks before or after the school. 70 % girls responded that occasionally they have to broom and mop the home but their parents never assign this work to their brother. More than 56 % girls responded that compulsory they have to learn and assist their mother in kitchen at least on holidays.

Their parents never assign these works to their male child. There is in fact, a stigma against boys performing domestic chores. There is a fear that boys will become or be seen as "sissies" if they are associated with domestic tasks. What I feel, consequences of differential socialization of boys and girls result bad. The girls who carry out household task under unequal circumstances and who are thus accorded subordinate status in the household relative to the male. Such situation will raise the question i.e. how girls come to define themselves as person?. What about their self esteem?.

Table 5: Responses regarding their feelings about treatment

Sr. No	Particulars	Yes	No	Percentage for positive response
1.	Regular school going in all situations	68	12	85 %
2.	Joined tuitions for all difficult subjects	52	28	86 %
3.	Same diet they get as boy is provided	76	04	95 %
5.	You are praised for your good performance	72	08	90 %

It is good sign that, more than 85 % of the girls responded that they get equal opportunity for school and tuitions as their brothers get. 95 % girls responded that their parents give equal importance to the diet and health, both male and female child in the family. It means parents do not discriminate their children in terms of education, diet and health. But they discriminate the sex in terms of work assigned and time constraints.

Table 6: Response regarding the parental restrictions and control on girls

Sr.	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage

No.			
1.	Time Restrictions	78	97.5 %
2	Restrictions on Friendship	68	85.0 %
3.	Going to movies with male friends	72	90.0 %
4.	Restrictions on wearing modern cloths	56	70.0 %
5.	Other	-----	------

Indian culture believes that girls should not be outside for any reason after a restricted time. 7:00 p.m. is the time constraint for female counterparts. Parents have a fear that their daughters should come early in the home. 97 % girls responded that their parents have laid strict rules regarding time within which they must come home. 85 % girls responded that there is strict control on the friend circle. 70 % girls responded that they are not allowed to wear western style cloths.

Table 7: Responses regarding socialization in school

Sr. No	Particulars	Frequency	% of responses
1.	Sitting arrangement is different from boys	80	100 %
2.	First preference to girls to enter and exit	48	60.0 %
3.	Moral support from teacher	69	86.25 %
4..	No severe punishment from teacher	75	93.75 %
5.	Relaxation in tasks assigned by school	62	77.50 %
6.	Soft corner to girls than boys	68	85.0 %
7.	Assigning only works of feminine	72	90.0 %
8.	Restrictions on interacting with boys	18	22.5 %

School is the most powerful agent of socialization in society. Many school going children spend 6 to 8 hours per day in school. The school has the power and authority to give rewards and punishments that reinforce rules, standards, and values. Children develop some degree of affection, respect or admiration for teacher and thus want to live up to teachers expect. School represents certain values and beliefs that teacher brings to the school settings. These form the basis roles, expectations, interactions etc shape their thinking and behavior what children do in school not only affect academic achievements in short term but it also influences important attitude and dispositions for later life.

In India most of schools have separate arrangements for boys and girls in same class. 60 % girls responded that, teacher give preference to the girls to enter or exit first to avoid the trouble from boys. 86 % girls responded that, teachers show a soft corner and they do not punish the girls for small mistakes. 90 % girls responded that even teachers also assign the school works which are supposed to be done by girls.

1. 70 % of children grow up with both mother and father whose parents play a major role in gender role learning.
2. 72 % respondents replied that they face gender difference in their home.
3. More than 77 % respondents are agreeing that they are treated differently by their parents.
4. Family is important socialization agent through which children observe sex typed behavior on a continuous basis, they begins to develop notions of what is and what is not appropriate for each sex. Hence the family institution is an important context for gender role socialization.
5. Boys and girls are assigned different tasks. Girls are expected to help with domestic chores in kitchen and rest of the house. Boys are assigned duties such as bringing wood, bringing ration or grocery, bringing Cigar or panpatti for the father or many other things that are done outside of the house. This work differentiation may be due to the works are regarded as more appropriate for her/ him.
6. It is observed that, most of the girls are getting equal opportunities education, diet health. Parents are not discriminating their own children on the ground of only gender.

Findings:

7. 97 % girls responded that, there are strict rules regarding timings, male friends and wearing clothes on girls.
8. In school also, teachers assigns different tasks for boys and girls. Teachers avoid giving punishment to the girl students. they show a soft corner to the girls as compared to boys.

SUGGESTIONS:

1. There is a need to modify the traditional child rearing practices. Parents must. consider that their behavior, treatment will form their children's beliefs and attitudes.
2. Restrictions to some extent are good but too many restrictions on girls and more freedom to boys are not good.
3. Some household works have to be assigned to male also so that they will not regard themselves as superior to girls.
4. Specifically mother parent should take care in rearing the children and inculcating the values among them so that both son and daughter treat each other equally.
5. Involve the children in discussions, decision making and give equal opportunity to both. Time restriction is good but that should be for both sons and daughters. They should make aware about the consequences of remaining too late outside of home.
6. If such differential socialization continues, the imbalance between women and men continue to influence all works of life. So it is clear that new approaches, new strategies and new methods are needed to reach the goal of gender equality.
7. The people / parents/ teachers should understand the women competencies and remove the gender stereotypes while socializing the children/ students. Otherwise the perceived differences in social status between men and women, often rob the women competency.

CONCLUSION:

Differential socialization of boys and girls definitely affects directly or indirectly. Different tasks for females, less favour to girls, more restriction on girl children etc matters more in understanding their roles. But I take it positively, despite of any feelings about unfairness to many girls who carry out the household tasks on daily basis, learn many things that boys do not. A sense of responsibility, discipline, sincerity, patience, dispositions etc. There are fewer opportunities for boys to learn these skills and abilities. The concern is that boys are brought up to regard themselves as superior to girls. But girls are provided the experience that makes them in long term more competent and more able to cope up with the hard situations in their life.

It cannot be forgotten that, differential socialization results into different status for male and female. Family and schools are the important agents of socialization in the society. These institutions form basis for rules, expectations and they shape their thinking and behavior. What children do or experience in family and school affects on their academic achievement in short term and it also influences important attitudes and dispositions for later life.

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