

## Education and Gender Equality

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**Abstract:** Women are thought to be at the forefront of struggle for gender equality in patriarchal societies, around the globe. However, there is a *perception* of decadent silence on the part of male fraternity when it comes to the fight for gender equality. Do we need to relook into the issue of gender equality with male population also as a stake holder? Is there any relation between the occurrence of gender discrimination and educational backgrounds? Is there a solution available with the educational evolvement for the issue concerning gender parity? This article discusses various aspects of the gender equality issue and analyzes the effect of male and female gender and education on the same. Statistical analytical tools are used to assess the response of male and female respondents from the urban centers of Rajasthan, India. Our analysis shows that education of parents is the most significant factor for girl child's future progress in Indian urban society. Our analysis also demolishes the often perceived notion of gender bias in a girl child's overall growth in Indian urban families. It is found that in urban India, an educated father is as much progressive about his daughter's future growth as an educated mother. The difference in outlook towards girl child's future is associated with the education level of the parents and is not gender specific

**Keywords:** Education, Gender, Inequality, Gender Sensitization, Girl child.

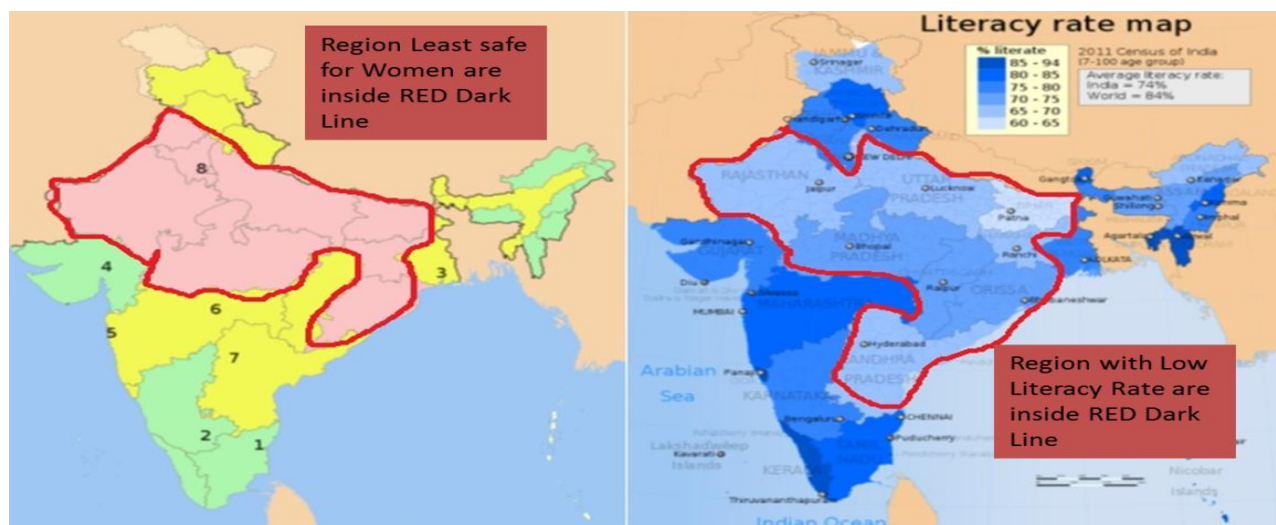
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### 1. Introduction

"You can tell the condition of a Nation by looking at the status of its Women." Jawaharlal Nehru, Leader of India's Independence movement, and India's first Prime Minister. [Jawaharlal Nehru Quote ....]

The constitution of India gives the women's rights of equality, dignity, and freedom from discrimination [Parihar2011, Rao2008]. On the face of it, in modern India, women have held high offices including that of the President, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Leader of the Opposition, Union Ministers, Chief Ministers and Governors. Unfortunately, the political empowerment does not necessarily relate to actual women empowerment at ground level. In 2014, India ranked at 127 out of 152 countries in the UNDP's gender inequality index, while in world economic forum's global gender gap index-2014; India was ranked at 114 in the list of 142 countries. [http://www.indiacelebrating.com]. A literature review by authors brings out following significant cause of gender discrimination prevalent in Indian society:

- I. The root cause of gender inequality in Indian society lies in its patriarchy, where the system of patriarchy may finds its validity and sanction in our religious beliefs[<http://saarthakindia.org...>].
- II. The supposed sanction from religious and cultural beliefs leads to a socio-cultural conditioning, where women have accepted their subordinate position to men, so much so that there is a general perception of women being enemy of women in domestic setups [<https://www.huffingtonpost...>].
- III. There is lack of opportunities, exposure, access, independence, inheritance, education among women due to gender discrimination, and this leads to poverty among women. It is also well established that women get unequal pay for equal or more work and are offered only low skill jobs for which lower wages are paid [Srivastava 2016].
- IV. There is a perception that in rural India, the male child would get all the nutritive and prime foods while the girl child gets whatever is left behind which is low in both quality and nutrition [<http://www.unscn.org/...>]. Apart from being discriminative on the face of it, this would lead to make her faultily assume that this is normal domestic practice which she would implement on her future family and become a tool of sustained gender discrimination.
- V. The societal hypothesis that women are housekeepers and should be limited to the four walls of the house is perceived normal [<http://www.womensweb.in.../>].
- VI. The gender discriminatory practices that persist in our family and society are thought to be normal by women, largely due to their ignorance and lack of awareness [<http://www.dnaindia.com...>].
- VII. There is a perception among Indian society that educating girl child is a bad venture because she would be married one day and have to leave her parents' house. Figure 1 show that the regions which score low on Literacy rate are more prone to gender discrimination and/or least safe for women [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women...>].



A lot of reported literature is available on the issue of parents' attitude towards girl child's education [Iqbalet. al.2013, Mekonenn 2014, Samal 2012, Kamaldeen. al.2012, Khattak 2013]. However, there is no systematic research to date on the effect of education vis-à-vis gender sensitization of the male and female parent towards their girl child in India. This paper seeks to test the hypothesis if there is any difference in father's and mother's outlook towards their girl child? We have also analysed the impact of education on the progressive outlook of male and female parent towards their girl child. The conclusions of this study may be very significant for understanding the cause of gender inequality. In authors' opinion, understanding the real cause behind non-progressive outlook towards girl child in the family could be the major stride towards curbing the gender sensitive crimes in society.

## 2. Data and Research Methodology

### *Sampling Adequacy and Questionnaire Design:*

The study is based on primary data that is collected from respondents in urban area of Rajasthan, India. The respondents are selected from low income community (comprises mostly of housewives or maids and labours) and middle class people. The statistical analysis software program used in present study is SPSS [IBM SPSS]. The questions were framed so that they are easy to comprehend and straight forward (given in Table 1). The motive of the questions asked is to assess the educational and economic background of a respondent and his/her views about girl child education, awareness about gender inequality, independence and job security of girl child and a daughters place in society as compared to male child.

Table-1 Questionnaire Construct

Respondent's Name
Respondent's Age
Residing in District
Respondent's Gender
Respondent's Education
Respondent's Occupation
Respondent's Spouse age
Respondent's Spouse Education
Respondent's Spouse Occupation
Do you have a daughter?
Are you aware of the educational gender inequality issues in Rajasthan?
Are you economically sound to furnish your child's education?
What according to you is the ideal level of qualification for a girl child?
Will you like your girl child to work as an employee after her studies?
What level educated girl do you think will live happily after marriage?
Would you rather ask for financial help from your son or daughter?

***Framing the Hypothesis:***

The present work uses the Chi Square statistic [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chi-squared...>], to test the relationships between response variables, as mentioned in Table 1. Pursuant to the purpose of this study, we have stated following null hypotheses:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is No difference in awareness about the gender inequality issues, vis-à-vis difference in education of a respondent.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is No difference in thinking about son and daughter's social status, vis-à-vis difference in education of the respondent.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is No difference in Awareness about the gender inequality issues, vis-à-vis difference in respondent's gender.

**H<sub>04</sub>:** There is No difference in person liking their daughters to get a job, vis-à-vis difference in respondent's gender.

**H<sub>05</sub>:** There is No difference in thinking about societal position of son and daughter, vis-à-vis difference in respondent's gender.

### 3. Analysis and Results

The descriptive analysis is shown in Fig. 1. Respondents are from the urban areas of Rajasthan, India with bulk of them from Ajmer district. We have chosen the Rajasthan in our study as this state ranks at 24<sup>th</sup> place in sex ratio (out of 29 states and 7 union territories of India). Rajasthan male to female ratio of 928 females per 1000 male is worse than the Indian national average of 940 females per 1000 males[[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_states...](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_states...)]. Total of 116 respondents with average age of 43.61 were interviewed, where minimum age was 23 and maximum age was 65 years. There were 64 women and 52 male in respondents. Education level of respondents and their spouse were categorized in 4 types; “Below 10<sup>th</sup>” , “10<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup>”, “Graduate” and “Postgraduate”. Occupation of respondent and their spouse was categorized into 5 categories; “Business”, “Private Employee”, “Government Employee”, “Housewife” and “others”. Ideal Education levels of girl child were categorized in 4 types; “Below 10<sup>th</sup>” , “10<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup>”, “Graduate” and “Postgraduate”. Ideal Education levels of girl child to live happily after her marriage were categorized in 4 types; “Below 10<sup>th</sup>” , “10<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup>”, “Graduate” and “Postgraduate”.

**Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Age	116	42	23	65	43.61	8.103	65.666
Gender	116	1	0	1	.55	.499	.249
Educational Qualification:	116	3	1	4	2.75	1.110	1.233
Occupation	116	4	1	5	2.57	1.174	1.378
Husband/Wife's Age?	116	46	24	70	44.10	8.518	72.563
Husband/Wife's Educational Qualification?	116	3	1	4	2.54	1.153	1.329
Husband/Wife's occupation?	116	4	1	5	2.66	1.201	1.443
Do you have a daughter?	116	1	0	1	.92	.269	.072
Are you aware of the educational gender inequality ratio in Rajasthan?	116	1	0	1	.53	.501	.251
Are you economically sound to furnish your child's education?	116	1	0	1	.69	.465	.216
What according to you is the ideal level of qualification for a girl child?	116	3	1	4	3.53	.704	.495
Would you like your girl child to get a job after her studies?	116	1	0	1	.86	.346	.120
What level educated girl do you think will live happily after marriage?	116	3	1	4	3.36	.762	.581
Would you rather ask for financial help from your son or daughter?	116	1	0	1	.52	.502	.252
Valid N (listwise)	116						

Figure 1. Descriptive Statistics for the various variables used in the Ananalysis.

We have used the Chi-square test to assess the various findings. The results of statistical analysis are given in Table 2.

Table-2 Statistical Analysis

Variable 1	Variable 2
<b>Educational qualification of respondent</b>	<b>Awareness about the Gender Inequality issues</b>
<b>H01:</b> There is No difference in awareness about the gender inequality issues, vis-à-vis difference in education of a respondent.	
$X^2(df) = X^2(3) = 14.357, p = 0.002$ (Less than 0.05), so our result is Statistically Significant.	
There is sufficient evidence to Reject the null Hypothesis H01.	
<b>Inference:</b> Awareness about Gender Inequality is associated with Educational Qualification of Respondent. More educated respondents have more awareness about the gender inequality issues in Rajasthan. Out of 23 respondents having education below 10 <sup>th</sup> class, only 5 were aware of the gender inequality issues while out of 37 Postgraduates interviewed, 26 were aware of the plight of girl child in Rajasthan.	
Variable 1	Variable 2
Educational qualification of respondent	Would you rather ask for financial help from your son or daughter
<b>H02:</b> There is No difference in Thinking about son and daughter, vis-à-vis difference in education of the respondent.	
$X^2(df) = X^2(3) = 17.736, p = 0.000$ (Less than 0.05), so our result is Statistically Significant.	
There is sufficient evidence to Reject the null Hypothesis H02.	
<b>Inference:</b> Progressive Thinking is dependent on Educational Qualification of Respondent. People tend to be more progressive in their thinking about Social equivalence of Son and Daughter as the education level grows. Out of 23 respondents having education below 10 <sup>th</sup> class, only 4 were open to asking financial help from daughters while out of 37 Postgraduates interviewed, 24 supported the idea of asking financial help from daughters.	

Variable 1	Variable 2
Gender	Awareness about the Gender Inequality Issues
<b>H03:</b> There is No difference in Awareness about gender inequality issues, vis-à-vis difference in respondent's gender.	
$X^2(df) = X^2(1) = .383, p = 0.536$ (More than 0.05), so our result is Statistically NOT Significant.	
There was Not sufficient evidence to Reject the null Hypothesis H03.	
<b>Inference:</b> Awareness about Gender Inequality issues is NOT dependent on Gender of Respondent. Out of 64 women, 32 seem to be aware of gender inequality while out of 52 males, 29 were found aware of the same. This is about 50% of the male and female respondents.	
Variable 1	Variable 2
Gender	Would you like your girl child to get a job after her studies
<b>H04:</b> There is No difference in person liking their daughters to get a job, vis-à-vis difference in respondent's gender.	
$X^2(df) = X^2(1) = 2.344, p = 0.126$ (More than 0.05), so our result is Statistically NOT Significant.	
There was Not sufficient evidence to Reject the null Hypothesis H04.	
<b>Inference:</b> A person's choice to like his/her daughter to get a job after her studies is NOT dependent on Gender of Respondent. Progressive Thinking about girl child's independence in terms of her taking a job is NOT gender Specific. Out of 64 women, 58 wanted their girl child to work after her studies. Out of 52 Males, 42 supported the idea of their daughters joining a job after their studies.	
Variable 1	Variable 2
Gender	Would you rather ask for financial help from your son or daughter
<b>H05:</b> There is No difference in Thinking about Societal position of son and daughter, vis-à-vis difference in respondent's gender.	
$X^2(df) = X^2(1) = 2.119, p = 0.145$ (More than 0.05), so our result is Statistically NOT Significant.	
There was Not sufficient evidence to Reject the null Hypothesis H05.	

Inference: Progressive Thinking of a person vis-à-vis the Social equivalence of their Son and Daughters is NOT dependent on Gender of Respondent. Nevertheless, Women are somewhat more likely to ask for financial help from their daughters. Out of 64 women, 37 opted for daughters, while out of 52 males, 23 opted for asking financial help from Daughters over their son.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusions

Following conclusions could be drawn from the chi-square analysis done in the present study:

- Awareness about Gender Inequality is positively associated with Educational Qualification of Respondent. More educated parents have more awareness about the gender inequality issues in Rajasthan.
- Progressive Thinking is positively associated with Educational Qualification of Respondent.
- Awareness about Gender Inequality issues is NOT associated with Gender of Respondent. The result is significant in the way that it contradicts perception that men are not aware about gender inequality [<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015...>].
- Further, only about 50% of the male and female respondents were found to be aware of gender discrimination issues against female in urban cities of Rajasthan, which is not very comforting.
- A person's choice to like his/her daughter to get a job after her studies is NOT associated with gender of respondent. This result again is contradictory to the stereotype prevalent in Indian society which assumes that Indian parents would not like their daughter to get a job after her studies. [<https://www.quora.com/Why...>].

Progressive Thinking of a person vis-à-vis the social equivalence of their son and daughters is NOT associated with Gender of Respondent. These results are very significant, as they are against the perceived stereotype that Indian parents hesitate in asking help from their daughter once she gets married (or even from unmarried daughter).

In conclusion, our study has shown that in urban Rajasthan, both male and female parents are equally aware about the gender issues. Further, there is no parental gender bias towards a better outlook for girl child as both parents feel equally open about their daughters' individual independence. The status of a son or daughter is also equal for mother and father in urban



constituencies of Rajasthan, which again is a very encouraging finding. Our study has also conclusively shown that education is the real criteria which positively associate with the awareness of parents about gender inequality. And finally, education is the positive factor when it comes to giving equal status to son and daughter. Therefore, increasing the education level of both male and female parents could be the key to gender sensitization in urban India.

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