

Gender Discrimination in Child Rearing Practices Adopted By Chhattisgarh Farm-Women

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Abstract

The authors intended to study gender discrimination in child rearing practices adopted by Chhattisgarh farm-women. Impact of habitat (tribal and non-tribal) in this regard was also observed. It was hypothesized that there would be genuine gender discrimination in rearing practices.

150 tribal and 150 non-tribal farm-women were inquired about their child rearing practices with the help of Child Rearing Practice Questionnaire (CRPQ) (Verma et al., 2012).

It was observed that considerably higher number of farm women were low in gender discrimination as regards to their child rearing practices. It was also observed that considerably higher number of non-tribal farm-women practiced lower gender discrimination than tribal farm women who favoured male child more.

KEYWORDS- Gender Discrimination, Child Rearing Practices, Chhattisgarh Farm Women.

INTRODUCTION

“Gender differences in cognitive, social, and personal characteristics have been investigated since the early 1900s. Research has identified differences in several specific cognitive skills as well as in a range of social and personal characteristics. Some differences are apparent from infancy; others do not emerge until late childhood or adolescence. Interestingly in several skills the differences between boys and girls have shrunk over the past two decades. This indicates that socialization and differential experiences play roles in gender difference (Cook, 2009).”

“Cultural norms and social beliefs also contribute to discrimination by restricting people's access to education. In most societies, women rather than men expected to take time off work to look after children or other family members. There is also the persistent belief that women have less need to earn income than men. This may lead parents, especially in situations of scarce resources, to invest more in education for boys than girls. This subsequently affects the quality and type of job women may be offered (ILO report, 2015).”

Mamonah & Anwaar (2013) found the “gender biased parental attitudes towards education in Dasua, Faisalabad, Pakistan. Generally in Pakistan parents preferred their sons over their daughters because they were supposed to be helping hand for the parents. Parents tended to think that whatever they spent on sons was an investment whereas spending over daughters was a waste, because they are considered as liabilities. “Purdah” (naqab covering the body and face) was observed by girls, and they did not come in front of stranger men and boys; they did not interact with them, did not go out alone. The girl child became the victim of discrimination and differential treatment right from the time of birth. The birth of a male child was welcomed with a happy heart whereas that of girl was met with depression, especially if she was born after two or three sisters. She was considered as a weakness for the family, and economic burden. Girls were given dowry and it was assumed that it was equivalent to the share in land. The preference was given to the males in the sphere of health. The girls were treated locally whereas the boys might be taken to the doctor, especially in the low-income families in which more than two daughters were present, the boy’s life was more important as compared to the girls. They concluded that in the family, parents differentiated among their children. Mother played the major role in this differentiation. When a woman was expecting she said that a son should born. If a son was born, she thought of herself as a great woman who had given birth to a man. This man would continue the lineage to his father. The literacy level of the population showed that women were the one who were less educated.”

Sekher & Hatti (2005) stated that “in India, the underlying working of female discrimination was undoubtedly highly complex. However, a number of factors had been identified which together created a situation where sons were preferred and daughters suffered discrimination and neglect. The patterns of inheritance were typically patrilineal in India with property passing from father to son. Upon marriage the bride left her natal home to with the family of her husband. In this exogamous lineage system women were left out. They became dispensable essentially because they were counted for very little as individuals. There was a double loss of a daughter leaving the family together with the fact the benefits from investments made in daughter’s upbringing would accrue to the new family. While valuing adult women’s contributions to the household, the system generated strong disincentives to raising daughters. A common explanation for existence of son preference and daughter discrimination was that sons could provide old age support. Another factor leading to strong disincentives and discrimination against daughters was the existence of dowry system, which together with marriage costs a major drain of household resources. Since there was a great ritual importance in having a daughter to give away in marriage (Kanyadan), a first daughter was accepted positively but with an anticipation of burden of future marriage costs. The discrimination against girl children is thus, not general but selective. It had also become more costly to raise children as education became more important. This might also acted as disincentive against raising daughter. The researcher carried out intensive field work in two villages of Karnataka State. In one village, the increasing dowry was cited as a major

factor, and in another village, the joint family structure resulting in low bargaining power for women was responsible for decline child sex-ratio.”

“In India, the child sex-ratio in the age group of children 0-6 years has declined from 927 girls per thousand boys in 2001 to 914 girls per thousand boys in 2011. The decline is especially disturbing as it is occurring in spite of a strong legal and policy framework and various government initiatives including cash transfers and incentive schemes, various media and messaging efforts. If it is not reversed, it will alter demography; erode gender justice, social cohesion and human development.”

Khandaker & Rahman (2013) “studied gender discrimination in healthcare spending in the household and women’s access to resources in Bangladesh. The study revealed that health care spending for female was significantly lower than that of male children. It was found that socio-cultural norms, religious beliefs, patriarchal family setting and dominance of male counterparts of women contributed to the regular forms of discrimination against women. The study highlighted some basic causes of gender disparity against women included patriarchal family setting, ignorance of female children at birth, lack of opportunities for education, poverty among women, less investment for women’s health care in the household and so forth.”

Balbuzanov (2009) found that “boy-girl discrimination on the basis of household expenditure in Gansu Province, China. The results did not present strong evidence for differential treatment of boys and girls in terms of household resource allocation. Examining several adult goods, spending on culture and education, children’s allowance, children’s clothing, as well as seven categories of foods both purchased and grown, the study discovered that male children were not preferred in terms of household spending on these goods. In fact, girls were favoured within several age categories.”

Kang & Jaswal (2011) “studied the gender bias in parenting patterns used by Punjabi parents on their children. Significant gender differences were found in parenting patterns. Mothers were found to be more loving, encouraging, accepting and progressing towards sons as compared to daughters. They were using all negative dimensions of parenting with more intensity on daughters as compared to sons. They were more hating, rejecting, authoritarian, discouraging, and conservative towards their daughters. They also encouraged submissiveness and dependency in daughters as compared to sons. Fathers were using the similar positive dimensions on both sons and daughters. They were more conservative towards their daughters as compared to sons.”

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The problem of the present research aimed at studying gender discrimination in child rearing practices adopted by tribal and non-tribal farm-women in Chhattisgarh.

It was hypothesized that there would be genuine gender discrimination in rearing practices adopted by tribal and non-tribal farm-women in Chhattisgarh for two gender groups of children.

METHODOLOGY

Sample- The final sample was comprised of incidentally selected 150 tribal and 150 non-tribal farm women having child up to age of 9 years.

Tools- The Child Rearing Practice Questionnaire (CRPQ) developed and standardized by Verma et al. (2012) was used for the purpose.

Procedure- Initially two districts i.e., Bastar (Tribal) and Raipur (Non-tribal) were selected randomly from Chhattisgarh state. Secondly, two blocks i.e., Bastanar and Bakawand from tribal area and two blocks i. e., Arang and Dharsiwa from non-tribal were selected on random basis. Thirdly, 5 villages were selected randomly from each block from which total 15 women per village were selected incidentally. In this way 150 tribal and 150 non-tribal women were selected and administered CRPQ.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The only problem of present research was in regard to gender discrimination in child rearing practices. In CRPQ total 13 items were specified for getting information in regard to gender discrimination. On the basis of scores obtained on these items median was computed separately for three age-groups i. e., 0-3, 4-6, and 7-9 years, and then considering habitat (tribal and non-tribal).

It is clear from Table 1 that 168 (56 %) farm-women adopted low gender discrimination practices for children aging 0-3 years while 132 (44 %) farm-women adopted high gender discrimination practices. The obtained X^2 ($X^2= 4.32$) was significant at.05 level of significance.

Similarly, a perusal of Table 2 clarifies that 186 (62 %) farm-women adopted low gender discrimination practices for children 4-6 years while 114 (38 %) farm-women adopted high gender discrimination practices. The obtained X^2 for this difference ($X^2=17.28$) was significant at.01 level of significance.

Lastly, it is clear from Table 3 that 181 (60.33) % farm-women adopted low gender discrimination practices for children aging 7-9 years while 119 (39.66) % farm-women adopted high gender discrimination practice. The obtained X^2 for this difference ($X^2=12.81$) was significant at.01 level of significance.

Table # 1: Number of Farm-Women Classified into Low and High Gender Discrimination

Groups for Children 0-3 years (Median=6)

Group	Farm-women		Obtained X^2	Level of Significance*
	No.	Percent		

Low Gender Discrimination	168	56 %	4.32	P<.05
High Gender Discrimination	132	44%		
Total	300	100%		

*Table value of X^2 for 1 df - α .05= 3.841, α .01= 6.635

Table # 2: Number of Tribal and Non-Tribal Farm-women Classified as Low and High Gender Discrimination for Children 4-6 years (Median=3)

Groups	Farm-women		Obtained X^2	Level of Significance*
	No.	Percent		
Low Gender Discrimination	186	62%	17.28	P<.01
High Gender Discrimination	114	38%		
Total	300	100%		

*Table value of X^2 for 1 df - α .05= 3.841, α .01= 6.635

Table # 3: Number of Tribal and Non-Tribal Farm-Women Classified as Low and High Gender Discrimination for Children 7-9 years (Median=22)

Groups	Farm-women		Obtained X^2	Level of Significance*
	No.	Percent		
Low Gender Discrimination	181	60.33 %	12.81	P<.01
High Gender Discrimination	119	39.66%		
Total	300	100%		

*Table value of X^2 for 1 df - α .05= 3.841, α .01= 6.635

These obtained significant statistics provided sound statistical ground to believe that considerably higher number of farm-women in Chhattisgarh were non-discriminative in regard to their child rearing practices. More awareness due to education, media, NGOs and

Government agencies may be attributed for this favorable state in respect of child rearing practices.

This is a good sign in modern egalitarian society which emphasizes equal opportunities for self-development to both gender groups right from early age.

It is also pertinent to observe differences between tribal and non-tribal farm-women in regard to gender discrimination in child rearing practices. It is clear Table 4 that larger percentages (62%) of non-tribal farm-women were categorized into low gender discrimination group in comparison to tribal farm-women (38%). Furthermore, it is also clear that lesser percentage (38%) of non-tribal farm-women were categorized into high gender discrimination group than tribal farm-women (62%). The obtained X^2 for these differences ($X^2=17.28$, Table 4) was significant at .01 level of significance for 1 df which provided sound statistical ground to believe that non-tribal farm-women were truly low discriminative in child rearing practices in comparison to tribal farm-women.

Table # 4: Number of Tribal and Non-Tribal Farm-Women Classified as Low and High Gender Discrimination on Groups (Median=30.50)

	Tribal (N=150)		Non-Tribal (N=150)		Total	Obtained X^2	Level of Significance*
	No.	%	No.	%			
Low Gender Discrimination	57	38%	93	62%	150	17.28	P<.01
High Gender Discrimination	93	62%	57	38%	150		
Total	150	100%	150	100%	300		

*Table value of X^2 for 1 df - α .05= 3.841, α .01= 6.635

It seems that tribal farm-women maintained higher gender discrimination in child rearing practices due to their gender biased attitude prevalent in tribal society while a truly larger number of non-tribal farm-women were able to minimize their gender biased attitude in child rearing practices due to their frequent exposures to mass media, education and more specifically due to changing scenario of traditional patterns of behavior due to all these important factors.

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