



EDUCATING THE FEMALE CHILD AND ATTITUDE OF PARENTS TOWARDS IT OF ALIGARH CITY OF UTTAR PRADESH

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Abstract

Education is an essential requirement of every citizen. It is the key and critical input for sustainable socio-economic development. The unequal status of men and women in India has been a source of concern for educators, social activists, administrators and other members of the social spectrum. Several Commissions and Committees were set up from time to time to assess the progress of girls' education and promote their participation in education. But in spite of this realization and efforts, the education of girls is not given its due importance and priority. Therefore, education of girls has been on the National agenda since independence. Education of girls is increasingly being seen as a basic human right. From a human rights perspective, girls' education is seen as a priority, as girls still constitute almost two thirds of the children excluded from the basic education. In the present study, author has focussed on finding the attitude of parents towards female child's education. The data was collected from the four government primary schools of Aligarh district of Uttar Pradesh. A sample of 150 parents was selected. The investigator found that a highly favourable attitude is there among parents towards girls' education. The study further found that parents are willing to send their daughters to schools so as to enable them to get modern and quality education.

Key Words: *Girl child, Girl child education, Women empowerment, attitude scale.*

INTRODUCTION

Education for girls all over the world is undergoing transformation and transcendence. Ensuring quality for girls' education has become a vital issue in today's modern education. Since 1990, there has been a general acceptance of the critical importance of education to human development, and the key role played by girl's education within us.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, formulated in 1989, claimed the right to a quality education for all girls and boys. From a human rights perspective, girl's education must remain a priority as girls still constitute almost two thirds of the children excluded from basic education. Education for girls means that as women they will be able to exercise their rights to participate in political and economic decision-making in the community as well as in the house-hold. Over the past few decades, although progress has been made, but it is still the case that fewer girls than boys enrol in school and fewer girls than boys complete basic education.

Need for Female Education

A 2007 UNESCO-UNICEF report specified three rights-'The right of Access to education', 'The right of quality education', the right to respect within the learning environment'. But a majority of children especially girls are turned as child labourers or kept at home to do household chores or to look after their siblings when parents are away at work. In addition to this, insecure school environment and in adequate sanitation adversely affects girl's self-esteem, participation, and retention. Text books, curricular, and teacher attitude have sometimes enforced negative stereotypes and have kept girls from receiving the education they need and deserve. Girls are denied of their right to education, because parents believe that if girls are of the same educational status as men, they will not be getting married soon, and are a disgrace to the community. Girls are often the last enrolled and first to be withdrawn from schools if a family has to make a choice between sending a boy/girl to school. Girls' access to education may also be limited by other factors, for example safety of the journey to school or lack of water. Without access to quality education, girls drift in to the labour force at an early age well below the minimum age of employment. It is therefore vital to extend secondary education and skills training for girls and to ensure that children from poor and rural households can access to this provision.

A combination of poverty, disease and backward cultural practices continue to deny the girl child her right to education, despite of the best efforts of the Government and Civil societies who are at the helm of the affairs, making her realize her dreams. On August 4th, 2009, the Indian parliament passed a Bill which entitles, “Right of Children to free and Compulsory Education”. The Bill finally became an Act on 26th August, 2009. The Act specifies Free and Compulsory Education to children aged between 6 to 14 years. The Act also outlines the minimum norm in Government schools and prohibits physical punishment and mental harassment of all the children. In addition to this innumerable and unrecorded number of girl children are killed within hours of being born. Patriarchal norms, low status of women and preference for male children are the primary reasons that threaten survival of female children in India. The alarming fact is that female infanticide or foeticide has increased over, in the past few decades.

Another fact is absenteeism and drop out. The situation is worsened when the girl’s has to drop out without finishing her mathematics, reading/writing course. At school she has to be emotionally and psychologically be made comfortable. The functional education in the provision of such basic life skills facilities, home management/food and nutrition, internal decoration, crafts and hand work, washing and laundry, sewing, weaving and stitching of cloths, dying of clothes, book binding and perhaps music and dance would give more money to the girl child and that when this happens she would be more emotionally be more satisfied and fulfilled.

Significance of the Study

About 115 million children of primary school going age have been denied the right of getting free and compulsory education (Government of India, Annual report, 2009). The most urgent priority is to ensure access to, and improve the quality of, education for girls and to remove every obstacle that hampers their active participation. From Figure 1 shows the enrolment of girls in elementary education in the district of Uttar Pradesh, over the years 2002 to 2009.

Figure 1 Enrolment of Girls in Elementary Education (2002-03-2008-09)

Year	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Percentage of enrolment over total enrolment	50.12	50.16	50.17	50.01	50.06	50.00	49.74

Source: UGC Annual Report, Govt. of India, 2009

It can be seen from the data of figure 1, that the male-female ratio in the population of Aligarh district in the age group of school enrolment is evenly skewed and that almost the entire population of girls in the district who have attained the minimum age of attending school have admitted themselves to a school in the district.

Thimir Shukla (2008)¹⁰ has done a study of attitude towards women education in the two villages of Uttar Pradesh. Singh, V (1988) investigated the extent and causes of dropout among girls in rural schools of Chandigarh. The study revealed that the dropout rate of rural girls was higher at Class I in primary stage compared to other classes; with this rate going down in the higher grades, the girls were weak in English and Mathematics. Parents were unwilling to send their daughters because of domestic reasons. Nayer, U (1991) found that the provision of schooling/educational facilities for girls is low and its utilization is till lower on account of school, economic and attitudinal barriers and sheer physical distance. Poverty and hunger were listed as the chief causes of non-enrolment of girls. Normen, J.M.D (1992) has studied the reasons for the failure of girls than boys. The study found that the girls give much attention to the household duties which became the reason for their failure. Vasumathi; M (1992)¹¹ has done a study on the role, attitude and expectation of women, and found that both men and women have the same attitude towards women's role, attitude and expectations. Duggal, J (1992) undertook a micro-study of access of scheduled castes girls to elementary education in rural Haryana and found that physical facilities in sample school were inadequate and utilization was low. Fatima, N.J (1989)⁸ in her study revealed that the women who have higher education have positive attitude towards girl's education. Chan, K (1989) in her study concluded that the higher education is available only for the upper caste women only, and the reason for non enrolment of lower caste women to higher education is their poverty and early marriage. Aghentha (1989)¹ has revealed in his study that difficulty in

the science subjects is the main reason for the girls going away from the technological field and the attitude of girls towards maths and science subjects also influences their achievement. Phema, Sherman and Osibod (1989)⁹ have found in their study that the occupations are selected on the basis of gender. Many studies have been conducted to know the attitude of public and other towards girl's education, but there is less number of studies done to know the attitude of parents towards girl's education in Uttar Pradesh. So the present study is significant as it throws some light on the attitude of parents towards girl's education.

Objectives of the Study

The author has undertaken following objectives for the present research study:

1. To know the attitude of the parents towards girl's education.
2. To know difference between male and female parents in the attitude towards girl's education.

Hypothesis of the Study

The investigator framed the following hypothesis for the present study undertaken:

1. There is no significant difference between male and female parents in the attitude towards girls' education.

Methodology and Design of the Study

The present study is descriptive in nature and normative survey method is used to collect the required data. An attitude scale towards girls' education was prepared and is used to collect the data from the parents of Government primary school students of Aligarh district of Uttar Pradesh. A total of four (04) Government primary schools were taken for this present study.

Sample of the Study

A sample of 150 parents was selected for the present study using Random Sampling Technique. Out of the total sample of 150 parents, 70 were male parents and 80 female parents were selected for the present study.

Tool and Technique Used

Data was collected through a Likert type 05 (five) point attitude scale which was prepared by the investigator, so as to know the attitude of parents of primary students towards girls' education. In order to frame the items for attitude scale, books, journals and various websites related to girls' education were visited and referred. Some previous attitude scales were also examined, and with the help of some experts in the field of education, the content and the items were standardised and written. A total of 72 items of the attitude scale were written. It was ensured thoroughly, that all the items of the attitude scale chosen were based on facts and are directly related to the subject of the study.

Try out of the Attitude Scale

The attitude scale initially was tried out on a small sample of 15 parents. Then the responses of the parents were evaluated and the unnecessary, ambiguous and unanswered items were deleted from the list of final items selected. Finally, a total of 30 items were selected, which consisted of 17 positive and 13 negative items and a time of 30 minute were fixed to answer these thirty items of the attitude scale. The classification of the attitude level of the parents is given below:

1. Mean +1 = Positive Attitude
2. Mean -1 to mean +1 = Neutral Attitude
3. Mean -1 = Negative Attitude

Analysis of the Data

The analysis of the data was done. The marks scored by the parents on the given attitude scale were classified into three categories as Positive (mean+1), Negative (mean-1) and Neutral (mean-1 to mean +10. The details of the analysis of the data are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Details of the Attitude of Parents towards Girl's Education

S NO.	Attitude	No. of Parents	Percentage
1.	Positive	20	15.38

2.	Neutral	87	67.92
3.	Negative	23	16.69

As it is shown in Figure 2 that, as high as 67.92 percent of parents have neutral aptitude towards girls’ education and 16.69 percent have negative altitude and as low as 15.38 percent of parrots have positive attitude towards, girls education.

Findings and Testing of the Hypothesis of the Study

The author employed statistical technique of ‘t’ test to test the Hypothesis of the study. The results of the data interpretation can be noticed from the figure 3 and figure 4.

Figure 3 Attitude of Parents towards Girls’ Education on Total Sample

Sample Size	Mean	Standard Deviation
150	206.642	19.025

From the above figure 3, it can be seen that a highly favourable attitude is there among parents towards girls’ education, which shows that they realize the importance of girls’ education. Though in Government primary schools there are sometimes very less facilities for imparting of primary education and also there in no motivation among the parents to send their daughters to schools, but still the analysis of the data has revealed that parents are willing to send their daughters to schools so as to enable them to get good and modern education. Hence it is the responsibility of the Government to take necessary initiatives and provide all the facilities and incentives, so as to promote and provide girls’ education in the desired direction.

Figure 4 Details of the ‘t’ test for the Hypothesis

Gender	N	Mean	S.D	df	t-value	Result
Male	70	203.2581	19.021	149	1.90	Not*

Female	80	210.046	19.029	149	1.90	Significant*
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*Significant at 0.05 level.

It can be seen from the figure 4, that the obtained 't' value 1.90 is not significant at 0.05 level, hence it is concluded that there is no significant difference between male and female parents in the attitude towards girls education.

Educational Implications of the Study

It is revealed from the study undertaken that majority of the parents have neutral attitude towards girls' education, and very less number of parents have positive attitude towards girls' education. There is no significant difference between male and female parents in their attitude towards girls' education.

The present study found that there are number of logistic constraints, which restricts girls from attending schools, especially after they have crossed the primary stage. These include distance from school and lack of girl friendly facilities in school buildings. Therefore efforts should be made to enrol and retain girls in school by reducing distance of school from home as far as possible. Also, if there are no elementary schools or secondary schools in the vicinity, Department of Education may take undertake alternative schooling system, like National Programme for Education of Girls for Elementary Education (NPEGEL), which can take care of their schooling needs till such time an elementary school is made available. The NPEGEL scheme is being implemented in 300 educationally backward blocks in 21 states where the female literacy rate is less than the National average and the gender gap is above the national average. Under this scheme it is proposed to develop a model; upper primary girls child friendly school in each cluster in all the educationally backward blocks. Efforts through Department of Education should be made to increase the number of female teachers at all levels so as to encourage girl child to continue their schools in safe and secure environment. High priority should be accorded to providing separate girls' toilet with proper water and sanitation facilities.

As girl children are pressed into home based duties especially sibling care, the number of ICDS (Integrated Child Development Scheme) and Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) in remote areas should be increased to relieve young girls children of their sibling care duties and that would also help in reducing drop out rates.

A nation cannot achieve success unless education is accorded to all its citizens. Therefore, it is the duty of parents to educate their girl child. Mothers are the first educators of the children, who establish virtues in the child's inner nature. They should encourage their girls child to acquire perfection and good manners, warn them against unbecoming qualities and encourage them to show resolve, firmness and endurance even during hardship and advance on the road of progress. Due regard for education of girls is therefore necessary. The parents should consider that the education of the girl child is of utmost importance.

Education for girls means that when they grow up they will be able to exercise their rights to participate in political and economic decision making in the community as well as in the household, as well as participate in developmental efforts and in the household and in the community. Moreover, educated females reduce the infant mortality rate through better child care. Several decades of research have demonstrated that educated girls become more effective mothers who have higher survival rates among their children because they have better nutrition and health practices. Educated women are more likely to enter the formal labour market, earn higher wages and thus-contribute more directly to a nation's economic productivity. There is also an intergenerational impact in that the daughters and sons of the educated women are more likely to be educated and thus carry the benefits into succeeding generations. Gender sensitization and gender awareness prograames should be organized and conducted for teachers, Panchyati Raj Institutions (PRIs), especially in rural areas on the rights of the girl child, social problems faced by them and to provide counselling or help if required.

Conclusion

Education improves girl's own lives now and in future. Education not only provides better employment, it also improved their living conditions and life situation. It also enabled girls and women to improve their standing in relationships, allowed them to better defend themselves and to take care of themselves and their children. Research has shown that educating girls offers a multitude of benefits for girls themselves, their current and future families, and their societies. Education also improves their overall economic condition and leads to greater care of the environment and indirectly it helps them to adapt to the demands of globalization and to shape it. Educating girls, educates nations. An educated woman has

the skills, information, and self-confidence which she needs to be a parent, worker and citizen.

Highest quality of school education should be imparted and prioritized for girls. Therefore, prioritizing quality in primary education for girls is not only a step towards education for quality alone, but also a vibrant endeavour in fulfilling the promises and aspirations of the new millennium. Educating the girl child also decreases social burdens on governments, increases family incomes, produces a larger and better-prepared workforce. It raises living standards and gross national products. At the same time broadened educational opportunity for all is perhaps the most effective means to reduce the misunderstandings, intolerance, and lack of respect that are the core of most disputes between communities, groups, and countries. NGOs and government organizations should do their best to educate and take out programmes for facilitating girl child education. Many activities can be planned for empowerment of girl students under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) with the help of NGOs or different groups from the community since the major objectives of SSA is to bridge all gender and social category gaps at elementary education level by 2010. SSA has played a significant role in augmenting the spread of elementary education among the girl child. An intensification of the campaign for the education of girl child coupled with flexibility in approach and pragmatism can go long way in ensuring universalization of elementary education (UEE), especially for the girl child. Thus, to conclude it can be said that, the need of the hour is to improve the girl child educational status by changing the attitude of the community so that a girl child's priority in her school age is not doing household and domestic chores or marrying at an early age, but to provide compulsory and healthy education.

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