



GENDER DISCRIMINATION AND MODERN TRENDS IN FAMILY PLANNING IN PRESENT TIMES: PERSPECTIVES GAINED FROM A WORKING WOMEN'S SURVEY STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims at finding out the modern trends in family planning methods (Ved) used and views that the modern working woman (Hession) holds on gender discrimination (Bharadwaj) and her role in the present times. The present study aims at finding out the way the social structural and economic environment that still constrains woman's choices to some extent and whether the social structural factors are of declining importance now. The study is significant as it will give an overview of the present conditions of the married working women and their views with the changing times. The views would make us give documented evidence and analyse the present scenario.

KEY WORDS: *gender discrimination, married working women, family planning.*

INTRODUCTION

The present study proposes to carry out an in depth study in the Nagpur City. A earnest effort is to project a comprehensive picture of views of married working women in the present scenario and document the change in Family Planning decision-makers responsible for sexual and reproductive health methods (WHO), views on gender discrimination. India struggles with gender inequality (Mahrotra) issues beyond just equal economic growth and access to educational resource opportunities. Gender inequality exists in the form of socially constructed, predefined gender roles (Lindsey) firmly anchored in India's socio-cultural fabric that has deep cultural and historical roots (Batra).

SCOPE OF STUDY

The scope of the study is to cover all issues that are the root causes of Gender Discrimination.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To explore the respondent's family background and family profile.
- To find the role and responsibilities of women in a family.
- To know the views on family planning and practiced norms.
- To document the scenario of change that has occurred among the married working women with regards to gender discrimination.
- To check the level of job-satisfaction at the workplace.

- To judge the awards and rewards from the family members as per the pace of time.

HYPOTHESES

- Education has increased the gender awareness among working women.
- The present social structure and economic environment still constrains woman's choices to some extent.
- The secular social trends have reinforced patriarchal positions or gender discrimination.
- Modern working woman has formed new norms to be abreast with changing times with regard to family planning measures adopted.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study involved a descriptive and exploratory Survey methodology.

Research Design: A Survey research method will be used as a research design.

Area

Area chosen for study: The area chosen for the sample study was Nagpur. It is essential that selection within each stratum is random.

Sampling Technique.

Stratified sampling is used as only married working women's data is used here.

Sample size:

The Sample size was 60 respondents from varied professions. They were randomly given the questionnaire, irrespective of their ages. The married



working women were chosen as they would be mature, intelligent and world-wise to give their view and bias followed by them and those around them.

Sources of Data Collection: An anonymous, self-report questionnaire was administered to 60 respondents.

The Interview Schedule: Closed or forced choice schedule, a set of alternative responses was provided for every question and the respondent was required to select a response that best approximates her opinion or attitude. The responses could be dichotomous (yes/no, true/false) or may be from a set of responses. Some Open-ended schedules were also used by the interviewer and the questions by the interviewer to the respondents could be freely responded.

Pilot Study:

The interview schedule of the present study has been pre-tested and revised to make the questionnaire more comprehensive, easy and useful in eliciting the desired information.

ANALYSIS

After collection of the Data it will be processed, sorted out into different categories and a chart is made consisting of data in a code form. Data was converted into a table-form and analyzed.

Problems faced during Data Collection

It was found that some respondents were apprehensive to reveal certain sensitive data.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Firstly, the study was limited to the city of Nagpur. Secondly, the distribution of data was not equitable.

Results: The following are the results based on the extensive questionnaire survey amongst the married working women to know their views on gender discrimination:

1. It is clear that the majority of respondents opted for graduation and post- graduation, irrespective of the necessary and sufficient requirement raised from their workplaces.
2. Married Working women showed a preference towards the teaching profession and it may be deduced that it may be a profession where women feel most comfortable and safe.
3. The Statistical data reveals that a majority of the respondents fall into the age group of 35-45 yrs a pre-menopausal group, the next in the order were the age group of 25-35 yrs which is a high fertility period in a women's life. The post menopausal group the age 45 and above were also a important part of the study statistics.
4. Married women would constitute a major part of the study and it may be more acceptable study where majority of women

- are in a relationship and may be experiencing gender discrimination in some form and divorcees could also voice their views and render the study all pervading.
5. Post graduates and graduates constitute a major portion of the data that is analyzed, the research contains valid reason to be considered as view forming as the recording of data contains views of married working women whose partners are educated.
6. It is deduced that husbands are in varied professions and they are also the bread winners of the family and could therefore have a better understanding about the working women and be in a supporting role as he too understands the working environment and stress thereof.
7. Almost 50% Married working women are smart enough to drive four wheelers and two wheelers safely and smartly in the cities which constitute 10% and 35% respondents respectively. In cities, there is a scarcity for parking areas too and two wheelers are economical, affordable and a safe alternative for the working women but alarmingly an equal proportion of women still are dependent on others for their movement.
8. The present trends from the data analysis suggest that modern society reiterates the sanction of family in matters of marriage. The choice opted by many (58%) is a testimony to the fact that even if the couple decide to marry it is only after the consensus of the parents and society that ultimately sanctions the relation. The parents and society sanctioning and bringing about an alliance stands a close second with 25%.
9. The tendency of the nuclear families is almost more than 50% as compared to the joint families. The reasons for this could be employment; families are migrating from their native places, the limited resources and income of the earning members and the separatist tendencies that are nurtured in the present times
10. It is deduced that most of the couples were successful in single and two child norms by practicing Family Planning methods. Two children norm is also a preferred choice as there is sharing and mutual support of the siblings and it is an economically affordable equation also.
11. Though we can see the empowerment and awareness among working married women, still there is a poor percentage of 21.67% of women who did not continue their further education after marriage. There is an urgent need to develop motivation and sensitization among these target groups.



12. The results indicate that even in this 21st Century the husbands encouraging the women for job are only 36% which indicates that a majority of husbands discourage their spouse from earning and progressing as it may possess a threat to them. Interestingly a good 43% of women work on their own motivation and self-awareness.
13. Maximum numbers of working women were part of both the options. The gap between the children shows a high incidence of the married women having both, a son and a daughter and a fair gap between issues is a testimony to the fact that Family Planning norms were practiced and followed.
14. The cause of concern is 46% reporting of abortions, they reflect the improper care and nutritional intake of the gestational stage of married women. Some sort of negligence is there, either in form of personal or medical healthcare facilities amongst the working women.
15. Majority of working women preferred to focus on proper care and healthy development of first child. An optimum gap between the two helps her in protecting the childhood of first one.
16. Maximum families prefer to opt for temporary and less-reliable option for the sake of family planning as against the permanent and more reliable methods.
17. The interesting fact is that the family-planning methods initiators are males in this study but the users are females. This shows that there is a sense of sincerity and consistency regarding welfare of the family exhibited by men but religiously practiced by women.
18. The permanent method of Tubectomy is done in 70% of the cases which is an indicator that married working women responsibly take to the permanent method as they are aware, conscious and enduring. Also, women possess the capacity of decision making in these sensitive matters.
19. From the above analysis and contrast figures, it can be assumed that in this world of equality among men and women, 75% educated married couple hardly bothered about the gender of their coming child. But there are 25% of those who prefers their child to be male which is a sad state. The 25% could also be an ice-berg tip where others may have not been able to clearly voice their biased concerns.
20. The study has an interesting outcome that there is 43% curiosity about the unborn offspring amongst the family members and 56.67 % did not sport any curiosity as to respond positively. The present data reveals a preponderance of male child as the first born. The Indian society has pro-patriarchal mind set which could thus influence the thinking of society at large.
21. The married working women yearns for a girl child as she understands that they can find their reflection in them and the similar sex may have a sensitivity index or EQ that they can relate to. Awareness among people has greatly increased regarding various schemes and awards for the girl-parents by the Governments.
22. The Indian society is a Patriarchal Society, the present study deduces that irrespective of the educational status the yearning of a male child is an indicator of that deep rooted grasp of androcentrism There is a greater satisfaction when a girl was born which was recorded by 31% but 41% being neutral tells on the subdued reactions and alarming are the 20% that need to be addressed. The sense of equality and equal opportunity among the genders has to be inculcated in the rest of the group.
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24. The neutral reaction holders are the highest in this group which could be an indication of suppressed responses. About 20% only accepted the second girl child as a gift of God or Providence. But the disappointed 33.33% shows that these require addressing the gender issue seriously.
25. The majority of the couples were happy to have a male child as this could owe to the Indian society which is a Patriarchal Society, the present study deduces that irrespective of the educational status the yearning of a male child is an indicator of that deep rooted grasp of androcentrism
26. It is obvious that majority of the respondents were happy to have either of the two genders of children
27. A sense of belongingness and readiness to accept the challenges are prominently seen as the working hours are more than five hours in majority of cases.
28. 63.33 % of the husbands who spends more than five hours for their professional duties and maximum time spent by both the wife and husband are more or less equal.
29. The married working women shows self reliance as she needs no help in her daily



- chores which constitute a 33% but a married working women needs assistance from others to fulfill her daily chores as she too is performing at the work front and the family front. The help women can get can be from maid-servants and other family members.
30. Maximum working women are satisfied with their role as a mother though a few percent of women express dissatisfaction about their roles as mothers.
 31. Maximum number of married working women opined that women were quite comfortable in their modern roles. 25% felt that women should come out of the day to day drudgery and go back to their traditional roles of being a house-wife.
 32. Maximum respondents are capable to cater to the needs and priorities of the family. A few 13% are incapable to cope with the demands of the workplaces and home.
 33. It can be interpreted from the above analysis that parents who groom and shape women leave a lasting influence on her and they motivate and influence her immensely, the husband is also seen to be support and influence her as well as in-laws of the working women are supportive to their daughter-in-law.
 34. The analysis has an outcome where a mother is the best role model for a women and a sister too influences in most cases .The other women also are looked upon as role models in some of the cases.
 35. The analysis of the responses suggests that the modern couples are self made and thus may prefer to live in their pre-owned residences and an almost equal number of the present response is an indicator that both the son and daughter are confided in by their parents. The couples preferred to stay with either of their children irrespective of their gender in their old age.
 36. It is clear from the above analysis that maximum respondents treat their children equally.
 37. According to the present analysis between the couple in the family, the wives are found to be more emotionally stronger and balanced with a higher emotional quotient.
 38. Working women are reluctant to accept that it is a man's world as women are also the main contributors of the society.
 39. From the above table and analysis, it is clear that, today's Working women is aware of her needs and finds the time and resource for pursuing her hobbies .The modern women knows how to switch roles and time to suit her personal aims and goals and they act accordingly, but there are some working

- women who rarely find any leisure time for their hobbies.
40. Some women do not feel that a male child is essential part of a family.
 41. Many Working women sported feminist views while expressing their views on gender discrimination.
 42. Most women do not feel that they are of an equal status with men.
 43. Working women have reported to have a work stress at place of work owing to their gender.
 44. Most Working Women feel a positive self confidence, reassurance and satisfaction about their present job conditions.
 45. The modern working woman wants a supportive family and healthy children as part of her Ideal Family.

CONCLUSION

1. Gender issues in the present times suggest that all social interactions and the institutions in which the interactions occur are gendered in some manner.
2. Gender Awareness has modified existing sociological theory and led to innovative research strategies and opened up new topics for sociological enquiry.
3. Gender roles are the expected attitudes and behaviors a society associates with each sex.
4. Specialization of household tasks by gender in contemporary families is more dysfunctional than functional. Society allows a degree of flexibility in acting out roles, but in times of rapid social change acceptable role limits are in a state of flux, producing uncertainty about what appropriate role behavior should be.
5. People may experience anomie (normlessness) because traditional norms have changed but new ones have yet to be developed.

Despite the positive developments for women in India, increased visibility in the public sphere, presence of women as the professionals and lower fertility rates--gender discrimination not only persists but also has seen little decline.

Over the past century there has been much to rejoice about the positive development of women in India: increased visibility of women in the public sphere, closing of gender gaps in primary and secondary school enrolment, the presence of women in the labor force across international borders, and lower fertility rates. In addition, women's organizations have been able to raise issues such as sexual and reproductive health and rights, violence against women, and inequality of power in gender relations, and make these the pivotal issues of debate in national and global arenas.



Yet these achievements have not eliminated, nor decreased, gender discrimination or patriarchy. Rather, in some cases, secular trends have reinforced patriarchal positions.

Science is a strange paradox, on one hand it has opened vistas of celestial blessing, by bestowing humankind with the latest technologies to combat infertility and on the other, degraded man to a brute level, demonizing him by giving him immense power to eradicate and end what we call "life in the making". History bears testimony to the fact that the treatment of women in India has been a contentious issue. While on the one hand, women are supposed to be anointed on the highest pedestal of Divinity, the ground reality is a dismal one, with the female of the species being disempowered. In instances of sectarian or communal strife or in anti-state movements, the experiences of women are hauntingly similar, durable and dismaying in their repetitiveness. Honor, victory, triumph, revenge are played out on their bodies. Men face violence and humiliation at the hands of the enemy to emerge as heroes and martyrs. Women face violence and humiliation at the hands of the enemy, and then as objects of shame, outcasts within their homes and communities. This difference in treatment is embedded in the patriarchal ideology of family, community and state. It obviously concluded that "the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields" (Resolution adopted by the General Assembly). The above suggestions will improve Gender Parity because greater the difference between girls and boys, the lower is the gender parity value. Gender parity is a useful tool for assessing gender inequality in specific areas, in setting goals, and in assessing change and progress under specific indicators of gender equality (Manlosa). The present twofold effort by the state, first to curb the illegal practice of sex-selective abortions through strict implementation of the law, and secondly to create awareness and empowerment of women through higher investments in public spending, particularly for the girl child, India will emerge as a connoisseur for positive change.

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