

SEX DISCRIMINATION AMONG CHILDREN: A PERSPECTIVE FROM RURAL HARYANA, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Sex segregation in day to day life internalize gender role identity in children. They observe and imitate the same sex parents as spent more time with same sex members of society. The study was undertaken on 500 households to understand the sex segregation among rural children in different cultural zones of Haryana and it was found that children were not allowed to sit and spend more time with opposite sex children and other members of the society. Children were segregated on the basis of sex. As age of the children was increasing the sense of segregation was also increasing and socio-cultural values of the community dominated. There was significant association between cultural zone and physical space and time spend.

Keywords: Sex, Sex Segregation, Discrimination, Children, Rural, Cultural zone and Community

INTRODUCTION:

In traditional societies sex segregation in day to day life in the family and society has prevailed. Sex segregation was practiced in various way in society. Family activities and roles of men and women were segregated. Physical space of the house in general was also segregated. Most of the time was spend by a women in the company of other women and a men in the company of other men. This aspect of daily life internalize the concept of sex segregation among children.

The theory of social learning that learning of gender roles take place by observation than by limitation (Bandura, 1977). Parents play a crucial role in this process because of the amount of time they spend in close contact with children and because of the emotional

relationship children have with them. Parents reward their children for the behaviour they consider to be gender appropriate; children learn to anticipate what will produce approval and behave accordingly.

Sex segregation is also done so that children spend most of their time with same sex parents and other member and imitate them. Therefore the study was conducted to understand sex segregation among rural children of the sampled household in different cultural zones as anthropologist have demonstrated through their ethnographic findings that cultural factors are very crucial in influencing human behaviour. They found that human behaviour varies from one society to another to the extent that it is beyond the grasp of anyone who knows his own culture. Socialization is influenced to a considerable extent by the cultural characteristics of the family. The present study was an attempt to sex segregation among rural children in different cultural zones of Haryana.

METHODOLOGY:

From each cultural zone of Haryana one or more than one village representing the cultural zone the most were selected to have better representation of the area. These were Nimbi and Dulath (Ahirwal), Boh (Nardak), Kirani (Mewat), Siswal (Bagar) and Kilazafargarh (Khadar). In this way six villages were selected purposively for further investigation.

A sample of one hundred households having children of both the sexes were selected with simple random sampling procedure from each cultural zone. Mother of the child was the main respondent for gathering information. Data was collected personally on the pre-test respondent schedule chi-square test was applied to know the relationship between cultural zone and sex segregation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

Results with discussion of the present study have been presented under following sections. Sex segregation was assessed in three ways:-

1. Physical space of the house.
2. Permission to play or talk with opposite sex children
3. Time spend with opposite sex parents.

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segregated. Most of the time was spend by a women in the company of other women and by a man in the company of other men. This aspect of daily life internalize the concept of sex segregation among children. Therefore, an attempt was made to understand sex segregation.

1. Physical space of the house:-

It is a general practice in the rural areas that men sit gossip and work in the outer or front portion of the men sit gossip and work in the outer or front portion of the house commonly known as Bethak/Poli and women in the interior portion of the house. Women living in their own small world of their homes have a major problem for collective actions. Socialization practices too have such an impact on them that, they are constantly reminded that their families are their world and the basis of all their thoughts and actions. Nothing else should be even as important, let alone being moreimportant than their families. This makes women generally ignore the outside world to a great extent.

Table 1 revealed that 14.6 percent of the families' son had separate room facilities and that take place was generally made for the male members. Only in 1.4 percent of the families both the children, son and daughter were provided separate room facilities and even in these well to do educated families room for daughter was in the interior portion of the house adjoining women's rooms.

Table 1: Separate room facilities for children as per cultural zones.

Separate room for children	Cultural zones					Total (N=500)
	Ahirwal n ₁ =100	Nardak n ₂ =100	Mewat n ₃ =100	Bagar n ₄ =100	Khadar n ₅ =100	
Son	15	16	20	15	7	73(14.6)
Daughter	0	0	0	0	0	0(0.0)
Both	1	0	0	6	0	7(1.4)
None	84	84	80	79	93	420(84.0)

χ^2 : 20.5 d.f. =8* (significant at 0.05 level of probability)

Figures in parenthesis denote percentage.

Farther table revealed that overwhelming majority of the families (84%) separate room facility was not provided to the children and elder male children used the separate place specially made foe male member in the family. Daughter lived with other female members of the family.

Separate room facility was provided only to son in twenty percent of the families in Mewat while in other zones it was less than twenty percent. But there was no such families in which separate room facility was provided only to daughter. In six percent of the families in Bagar and one percent in Ahirwal separate room facility was provided to children of both the sexes while there was no much family in other zone. Chi-square value shows significant relationship.

2. Permission to play/talk with opposite sex children:-

An attempt was also made to know whether the children are allowed by their mothers to play/talk with opposite sex children and responses are précised in table-2.

Table 2 indicated that nearly sixty percent (58.8%) of the mothers did not allow their children to play/talk with opposite sex children outside the family especially to grown up daughters. Some of them were also of the view that as their children well understand the norms of the society they themselves did not play/talk with opposite sex children outside the family thereby reflecting their socialization. Bhende (1994) examined in a study on adolescent girls and boys living in six slum settlements in a suburb of Bombay several restrictions on adolescent girls by their parents regarding choice of friends and outdoor activities. Social interaction with adolescent girls and boys was considered taboo in slum communities under study. Further revealed that 38 percent of the families both children were allowed to play/talk with opposite sex children.

Table 2: Mothers permissiveness to children to play/talk with children of opposite sex outside the family as per cultural zones.

Permission to children	Cultural zones					Total (N=500)
	Ahirwal n ₁ =100	Nardak n ₂ =100	Mewat n ₃ =100	Bagar n ₄ =100	Khadar n ₅ =100	
Son	1	2	3	4	2	12(2.4)
Daughter	1	1	0	0	2	4(0.8)
Both	35	32	45	30	38	190(38)
None	53	65	52	66	58	294(58.8)

χ^2 : 7.03 d.f. = 12* (Significant at 0.05 level of probability)

Figures in parenthesis denote percentage.

Results further depicted that significant relationship was reported between cultural zone and permission to children to play/talk with opposite sex children. In less than five percent of the

families in all the zones, only son was allowed. In Mewat permission was given in somewhat more number of families than other zones (45%), as there was close relationship between all the families in the zone especially among the Meos.

3. Time spend:-

Another aspect of sex segregation undertaken was amount of time spend by parents with their children. Data enclosed in table-3 indicated that mother spend more time with daughter while father spend more time with son.

Data regarding amount of time spend by mother with children shows that she spend more time with daughter in more than fifty percent of the families (56.4%) while in about one-third (29.4%) of the families, she spend equal time with both the children. Only in 14.2 percent of the families more spend more time with son. In Ahirwal mother spend more time with daughter (74%) in comparatively more number of families. More time was spend by mother with son in 24 percent of families in Nardak, while in other zones it was less than 17 percent.

Table 3: Time spend by parents with the children as per cultural zones.

Time spend by parents	Cultural zones					Total (N=500)
	Ahirwal n ₁ =100	Nardak n ₂ =100	Mewat n ₃ =100	Bagar n ₄ =100	Khadar n ₅ =100	
Mother: χ^2 : 30.84 d.f. = 8*						
More with son	9	24	16	14	8	71(14.2)
More with daughter	74	55	54	45	54	282(56.4)
Equal with both	17	21	30	41	38	147(29.4)
Father: χ^2 : 27.08 d.f. = 8*						
Father not alive	4	0	0	5	0	9(1.8)
More with son	51	53	60	49	51	264(52.8)
More with daughter	51	21	11	7	1	51(10.2)
Equal with both	34	26	29	39	48	176(35.2)

(Significant at 0.05 level of probability)

Figures in parenthesis denote percentage.

From critical perusal of data it can be inferred that father was involved in socializing son and mother was more for daughter. Kotelchuk (2007) reported that in inferred that father was involved in socializing son and mother was more for daughter. Father gave more attention to

the sons than daughter. Younies and Smollar (1985) reported that daughters were more distant from fathers than were sons. Even in American families.

Table further revealed that mother spend more time with daughter while father with the son (52.8%) equal time was spend by father with both the children 35.2 percent of the families and in only 10.2 percent more with daughter. Father was not alive in 1.8 percent of the families. In half or more than half of the families in all the zones. Father spend more time with son. Statistically significant differences was observed between the variables under references.

The gender differences were reported as children spend more time with the same sex parents. They observed imitated, observational and internalized the behaviour of same sex parents and as a result differently socialized.

CONCLUSIONS:

It is concluded that legislation which provide share to widows in landed property has increased their status in society. They have control on that land and if they want can take their share. The children especially the sons respect more when they have share in landed property. The results of this study shows that they were not taking a separate share but they had given that share to their sons either living with the respondents or alone.

SUGGESTIONS:

It is suggested that there is need to change age-old practice of not giving separate share to widows in landed property. Widows should also be hold enough to demand their share.

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