



# Gender Equality: Perception of Medical Students of SMC, Vijayawada, A P, India

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## Introduction

*"We recognize that gender equality and women's empowerment are important for sustainable development and our common future. We reaffirm our commitments to ensure women's equal rights, access and opportunities for participation and leadership in the economy, society and political decision making.*

*We underscore that women have a vital role to play in achieving sustainable development. We recognize the leadership role of women, and we resolve to promote gender equality and women's empowerment and to ensure their full and effective participation in sustainable development policies, programmes and decision-making at all levels."*

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development: (General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex, paras. 31 and 45).<sup>1</sup> Sustainable development is economic, social and environmental development that ensures human well-being and dignity, ecological integrity, gender equality and social justice, now and in the future. Although, women constitute half the world population, they do not have an equal privilege to autonomy and opportunities. In the household, school, the workplace, and in politics, women continue to face violence, sexual abuse, exploitation and discrimination. Globalization and libertarian reforms have worsened injustices against women.<sup>2</sup>

Gender justice is crucial for poverty reduction and progress. It is a moral and ethical imperative. Efforts to achieve a just and sustainable future cannot ignore the rights, dignity and capabilities of half the world's population. Discrimination is ingrained in the perpetuating systems of patriarchy and negative social and cultural norms. The effects of unsustainable patterns of development intensify gender inequality because women and girls are often disproportionately affected by economic, social and environmental shocks and stresses.

Traditional patriarchal norms have relegated women to secondary status within the household and workplace. This drastically affects women's health, financial status, education, and political involvement. Women are commonly married young, quickly become mothers, and are then burdened by stringent domestic and financial responsibilities. They are frequently malnourished since women typically are the last members of a household to eat and the last to receive medical attention. Additionally, only 54% of Indian women are literate as compared to 76% of men. Women receive little schooling, and suffer from unfair and biased inheritance and divorce laws. These laws prevent women from accumulating substantial financial assets, making it difficult for women to establish their own security and autonomy.<sup>3</sup>

The vitality of gender equality, women's empowerment and the realization of women's rights in achieving sustainable development have been increasingly recognized in recent decades. This recognition is evident in a number of international norms and agreements, including the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development<sup>4</sup>, adopted in 1992 by the United Nations, in its statement regarding the full participation of women being essential to achieving sustainable development.

Increasingly, women's full participation is recognized as central to policymaking. However, while gender equality can have a catalytic effect on achieving economic, social and environmental sustainability, the reverse does not always hold true. Hence, a simple "win-win" relationship between gender equality and sustainability cannot be assumed. Indeed, some patterns of economic growth are premised on maintaining gender inequalities, such as through maintaining gender wage gaps and entrenching gender discriminatory norms, values and institutions.<sup>5,7</sup>

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With the changing global scenario, trying to accommodate the third gender in every sphere of life, providing them equal rights and privileges, destigmatizing this class of society is gaining importance at great speed. Giving equal opportunities to them cannot go on without understanding their needs and also to what extent the present societies are ready to involve them in the day to day functioning. After all, it is not possible to forget a sizeable chunk of the population when development is the agenda on all charts and incorporating every individual from every sphere is what collective development is all about!

Doctors are one of the highly educated and reputed communities, and are expected to be living examples for the society. This study is an attempt to understand how today's medical students view gender and gender equality, in a predominantly patriarchal society of Southern India.

### Objectives

1. To elicit the perception of gender equality among medical students.
2. To study the association of these perceptions with certain demographic and social variables.

### Material and Methods

A cross-sectional observational study was done on all the students pursuing MBBS (3<sup>rd</sup> year) at Siddhartha Medical College, from June to September 2015, in Vijayawada, using a self-administered, structured questionnaire adapted from International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES), 2011.<sup>8</sup> Students who

were not willing to participate, were excluded from the study. A written consent was taken, after explaining about the purpose of the study and assuring confidentiality, from every participant before administering the questionnaire. The data obtained was analyzed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS V.15.

### Observations and Conclusions

A total of 122 students (82 men and 40 women) consented to participate in the study. Various questions like education of their parents, who took care of them when they were young, who provides the major source of income, who makes decisions about education, expenditure on major and minor issues, views regarding who should be doing domestic chores, who should be taking care of children, witnessing violence at home, laws existing for violence, policies regarding quotas for women at various levels, views regarding prostitution, homosexuality and issues of homosexual individuals reflecting the environment they grew in, the general attitudes and influences, were asked along with their general demographic details.

59% of the students had either one or both parents who had completed tertiary education. Of them, 70.5% had a father who completed tertiary education while 47.5% had a mother with similar educational qualifications. Compared to the fathers, nearly 53% of the mothers had no educational degree or diploma, while 18% had not even completed high school (Table 1). 80% said that the main source of their family income was provided by their father, while 16.4% said that their mother was the main source of family income (Table 2).

**Table 1. Education Level of Parents**

Education level of parent	Mother (%)	Father (%)
No schooling	0 (0.0)	2 (1.6)
Primary school incomplete	8 (6.6)	4 (3.3)
Primary school complete (Standard 5)	8 (6.6)	0 (0.0)
High school incomplete	6 (4.9)	6 (4.9)
High school complete	12 (9.8)	6 (4.9)
Intermediate/ 10+2 incomplete	8 (6.6)	6 (4.9)
Intermediate/ 10+2 complete	22 (18.0)	8 (6.6)
Tertiary education incomplete	0 (0.0)	2 (1.6)
Tertiary education complete	58 (47.5)	86 (70.5)
Don't know	0 (0.0)	2 (1.6)
Total	122 (100)	122 (100)

When asked whether their parents treated each other with respect, during their growing up years, all the women students replied in agreement while 13% of the men varied their responses as their fathers treating

their mothers with respect sometimes and never and 9.7% of them revealed that their mothers treated their father with respect sometimes, hardly ever or never.

On inquiring if the man of the house (the father or male head of the household) had cooked food, cleaned the house, washed clothes, cleaned the toilet, or took care

of them or their siblings during their growing up years, less than 40% of them admitted to having seen their fathers do any of these activities frequently.

**Table 2.Provider of Main Source of Income**

Provider of main source of income	Frequency	Percent
Partner/ spouse	2	1.6
Mother	2	1.6
Father	98	80.3
Older relatives	2	1.6
Both mother and father	18	14.8
Total	122	100.0

**Table 3.Respect and Responsibilities among the Parents**

		Frequently (%)	Sometimes (%)	Hardly ever (%)	Never (%)	No answer (%)	Total	
My father or another man who lived with my mother treated her with respect.	Men	64 (52.5)	12 (9.8)	0 (0)	4 (3.2)	2 (1.6)	82	122
	Women	40 (32.7)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	40	
My mother treated my father or another man who lived with her with respect.	Men	66 (54.1)	6 (4.9)	2 (1.6)	4 (3.2)	4 (3.2)	82	122
	Women	40 (32.7)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	40	
While growing up, did you witness the man of the house-prepare food	Men	22 (18.03)	32 (26.2)	6 (4.9)	12 (9.83)	10 (8.2)	82	122
	Women	16 (13.1)	12 (9.8)	10 (8.2)	2 (1.6)	0 (0)	40	
While growing up, did you witness the man of the house-clean the house	Men	16 (13.1)	22 (18.03)	18 (14.6)	16 (13.1)	10 (8.2)	82	122
	Women	10 (8.2)	18 (14.6)	10 (8.2)	2 (1.6)	0 (0)	40	
While growing up, did you witness the man of the house-wash clothes	Men	14 (11.45)	14 (11.45)	10 (8.2)	32 (26.2)	12 (9.8)	82	122
	Women	8 (6.6)	10 (8.2)	8 (6.6)	14 (11.5)	0 (0)	40	
While growing up, did you witness the man of the house clean the bathroom/ toilet	Men	10 (8.2)	14 (11.5)	14 (11.5)	30 (24.6)	14 (11.5)	82	122
	Women	10 (8.2)	4 (3.28)	4 (3.28)	22 (18)	0 (0)	40	
While growing up, did you witness the man of the house take care of you or your siblings	Men	46 (37.7)	20 (16.4)	8 (6.6)	0 (0)	8 (6.6)	82	122
	Women	32 (26.2)	4 (3.28)	0 (0)	2 (1.6)	2 (11.5)	40	

On questioning if they had seen or heard their mother being physically beaten by their father during their growing years, 4.9% of the women students and 19.6%

of the men students admitted to having witnessed it sometimes to often.

**Table 4. Physical Violence in the Family**

		Never (%)	Sometimes (%)	Often (%)	Very often (%)	Total	
Before the age of 18 years, I saw or heard my mother being beaten by her husband or the man she lived with	Men	58 (47.5)	22 (18.03)	2 (1.6)	0 (0)	82	122
	Women	34 (27.9)	6 (4.9)	0 (0)	0 (0)	40	

When asked who had the final word in the house about decisions involving schooling, buying food and clothing and making larger investments, more than 50% said that both the parents had equal say in the said matters (Table 5). So a correlation was done to see if there was any relation between the education level of the mother and her say in these matters. A positive correlation ( $r=0.009$ ) was seen between education of the mother

and her role in decision making regarding larger investments, implying that the higher the education status of the mother, the greater was her role in decision making in grave decisions regarding the household (Table 6). No significant correlation was seen between mother's education and smaller decisions like food and clothing.

**Table 5. Final Word about Decisions in the House**

		Mother (%)	Father (%)	Both parents equally (%)	Others (%)	No answer (%)
Who has final word in your household about decisions involving you and your brothers and sisters (their schooling, their activities)?	Men	6 (4.9)	24 (19.7)	48 (39.3)	2 (1.6)	2 (1.6)
	Women	2 (1.6)	6 (4.9)	32 (26.2)	0 (0)	0 (0)

**Table 6. Role in Decision Making in Grave Decisions regarding the Household**

	Mother's education level	Final word about spending on large investments
Pearson correlation (r)	1	0.009
Sig. (2-tailed)		0.921

39% of the students agreed that when women work, they are depriving men of their job opportunities. About 28% of them opined that when women get rights, they are actually depriving men of their rights. 26% felt that by giving rights to women, men loose out. 28% of them agreed that when a woman is raped, she actually did something careless to put herself in that situation and about 25% of the men opined that in some rape cases the women actually wanted it to happen to them (Table 7).

On questioning about gender equality, 49% opined that gender equality has come far enough already, 59% said that gender equality has been achieved for the most part and 62% of them expressed the view that works to achieve gender equality today benefits mostly well-to-do people. 37% students think there is no need for a quota system guaranteeing fixed proportion of places in the government, 34% opined there should not be a fixed

quota for women in universities while 36% expressed disapproval for fixed quotas for women in executive positions. 11.5% of men were against laws that promote equal salaries for men and women in the same position (Table 8).

46% of the students said that a woman's most important role is to take care of her home and cook for the family, 39% think that changing diapers, giving kids a bath, and feeding the kids are the mother's responsibility and 18% expressed a view that there are times when a women deserves to be beaten. 16% feel that it is the woman's responsibility to avoid getting pregnant while 83.6% agreed that a couple should both collectively decide what method of contraception is to be practiced. 26% think that a man should have the final word about decisions in his home and around 23% feel that a woman should tolerate violence in order to keep her family together (Table 9).

**Table 7. Opinion of Students on Some Important Topics**

		Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	No answer (%)	Total	
When women work they are taking jobs away from men	Men	40 (32.8)	42 (34.4)	0 (0)	82	122
	Women	8 (6.6)	32 (26.23)	0 (0)	40	
When women get rights they are taking rights away from men	Men	26 (21.3)	56 (45.9)	0 (0)	82	122
	Women	8 (6.6)	32 (26.23)	0 (0)	40	
Rights for women mean that men lose out	Men	30 (24.59)	52 (42.6)	0 (0)	82	122
	Women	2 (1.6)	38 (31.1)	0 (0)	40	
When a woman is raped, she usually did something careless to put herself in that situation	Men	28 (22.9)	52 (42.6)	2 (1.6)	82	122
	Women	6 (4.9)	34 (27.8)	0 (0)	40	
In some rape cases women actually want it to happen	Men	30 (24.59)	52 (42.6)	0 (0)	82	122
	Women	0 (0)	38 (31.1)	2 (1.6)	40	
If a woman doesn't physically fight back, you can't really say it was rape	Men	32 (26.23)	50 (40.98)	0 (0)	82	122
	Women	4 (3.28)	36 (29.5)	0 (0)	40	
In any rape case one would have to question whether the victim is promiscuous or has a bad reputation	Men	34 (27.9)	48(39.3)	0 (0)	82	122
	Women	10 (8.19)	26 (21.3)	4 (3.28)	40	
Gender equality, meaning that men and women are equal, has come far enough already	Men	38 (31.1)	42 (34.43)	2 (1.6)	82	122
	Women	22 (18)	18 (14.8)	0 (0)	40	
Gender equality has already been achieved for the most part	Men	56 (45.9)	26 (21.3)	0 (0)	82	122
	Women	16 (13.1)	24 (19.7)	0 (0)	40	
Work to achieve gender equality today benefits mostly well-to-do people	Men	50 (40.98)	32 (26.23)	0 (0)	82	122
	Women	26 (21.3)	12 (9.8)	2 (1.6)	40	

**Table 8. Opinion of Students on Some Laws and Quota System**

		For (%)	Against (%)	Don't know (%)	Total	
Quota system which guarantees a fixed proportion of places for women in government	Men	36 (29.5)	36 (29.5)	10 (8.2)	82	122
	Women	22 (18)	10 (8.2)	8 (6.6)	40	

When inquired about views regarding homosexuality, 49.2% of the students considered homosexuality as an unnatural and abnormal phenomenon, 58% asserted that they would never befriend a homosexual, 49.2% of them admitted to being uncomfortable around a homosexual person. 40% expressed a view that homosexual men should not be allowed to work with children, 19.7% were against the adoption of children by homosexual individuals. 54.1% opined that homosexual couples should be allowed to legally marry just like heterosexual couples (Table 9).

Regarding violence against women, when asked if there are any laws in our country to curb violence against women, 67.2% of students acknowledged the existence of such laws while 11.5% denied their existence and 21.3% admitted of no knowledge of any such laws. Of the 67.2%, 34.4% were men who expressed a view that

the laws against violence make it easy for a woman to bring a violence charge against a man and 18% of the women students supported the view. 55.7% of the students agreed that the laws are not harsh enough (Table 10).

59.1% of the students think that the existing laws do not provide enough protection to the victims of violence and 52.5% expressed their concern that the laws expose woman to even more stigmatization and pain.

When inquired about what the students would do in a hypothetical situation where they were the audience to a violent act against a woman, the act being committed by an acquaintance or a stranger, most of them said they would intervene to halt the act. Five% said they would report to the authorities in case of an acquaintance while 19% said they would report the act in case of a stranger.

**Table 9. Opinion of Students on Homosexuality, and role and position of women in a family**

Attitudes		Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Not answered (%)	Total	
A woman's most important role is to take care of her home and cook for her family	Men	48 (39.3)	34 (27.9)	0 (0)	82	122
	Women	18 (14.8)	22 (18)	0 (0)	40	
There are times when a woman deserves to be beaten	Men	62 (50.8)	20 (16.4)	0 (0)	82	122
	Women	36 (29.5)	2 (1.6)	2 (1.6)	40	
Changing diapers, giving kids a bath, and feeding the kids are the mother's responsibility	Men	46 (37.7)	36 (29.5)	0 (0)	82	122
	Women	26 (21.3)	12 (9.8)	2 (1.6)	40	
It is a woman's responsibility to avoid getting pregnant	Men	68 (55.7)	14 (11.5)	0 (0)	82	122
	Women	28 (23)	6 (4.9)	6 (4.9)	40	
A man should have the final word about decisions in his home	Men	56 (45.9)	26 (21.3)	0 (0)	82	122
	Women	32 (26.2)	6 (4.9)	2 (1.6)	40	
A woman should tolerate violence in order to keep her family together	Men	56 (45.9)	26 (21.3)	0 (0)	82	122
	Women	36 (29.5)	2 (1.6)	2 (1.6)	40	
A man and a woman should decide together what type of contraceptive to use	Men	18 (14.8)	64 (52.5)	0 (0)	82	122
	Women	0 (0)	38 (31.1)	2 (1.6)	40	
I would never have a gay friend	Men	30 (24.6)	52 (42.6)	0 (0)	82	122
	Women	22 (18)	10 (16.1)	8 (6.6)	40	
To be a man, you need to be tough	Men	36 (29.5)	46 (37.7)	0 (0)	82	122
	Women	34 (27.9)	4 (3.3)	2 (1.6)	40	
Being around homosexual men makes me uncomfortable	Men	34 (27.9)	48 (39.3)	0 (0)	82	122
	Women	26 (21.3)	10 (8.2)	4 (3.3)	40	
Homosexuality is natural and normal	Men	40 (32.8)	42 (34.4)	0 (0)	82	122
	Women	20 (16.4)	18 (14.8)	2 (1.6)	40	
Homosexual men should not be allowed to work with children	Men	52 (43.3)	30 (25)	0 (0)	82	122
	Women	18 (15)	18 (15)	2 (1.6)	40	
Homosexual men should not be allowed to adopt children	Men	66 (54.1)	16 (13.1)	0 (0)	82	122
	Women	30 (24.6)	8 (6.6)	2 (1.6)	40	
Homosexual couples should be allowed to legally marry just like heterosexual couples	Men	40 (32.8)	42 (34.4)	0 (0)	82	122
	Women	14 (11.5)	24 (19.7)	2 (1.6)	40	

**Table 10. Awareness of laws about violence against women among students**

		Yes (%)	No (%)	Don't know (%)	Total (%)	
Are there any laws in your country about violence against women?	Men	48 (39.3)	10 (8.2)	24 (19.7)	82 (67.2)	122 (100)
	Women	34 (27.9)	4 (3.3)	2 (1.6)	40 (32.8)	

A meagre 16.4% of the men and 13.1% of the women students, i.e., a total of 29.5% admitted to having ever discussed about violence against women with their male relatives or friends in or outside their homes.

About prostitution and trafficking, when the students were asked about what they thought regarding adult and under-age female and male sex workers, the following were their views (Table 14).



**Table 11. Opinion of Students on Laws regarding Violence against Women**

About the laws for violence against Women, do you think?		Agree (%)	Partly agree (%)	Disagree (%)	NA (%)	Did not answer (%)	Total (%)	
		Men	30 (24.6)	12 (9.8)	6 (7.3)	34 (27.9)	0 (0)	82 (67.2)
They make it too easy for a woman to bring a violence charge against a man	Women	14 (11.5)	8 (6.6)	12 (9.8)	6 (4.9)	0 (0)	40 (32.8)	
	Men	6 (4.9)	18 (14.8)	24 (19.7)	34 (27.9)	0 (0)	82 (67.2)	122 (100)
They are too harsh	Women	2 (1.6)	4 (3.3)	28 (23)	6 (4.9)	0 (0)	40 (32.8)	
	Men	12 (9.8)	30 (24.6)	6 (4.9)	34 (27.9)	0 (0)	82 (67.2)	122 (100)
They are not harsh enough	Women	22 (18)	4 (3.3)	8 (6.6)	6 (4.9)	0 (0)	40 (32.8)	
	Men	24 (19.7)	18 (14.8)	6 (4.9)	34 (27.9)	0 (0)	82 (67.2)	122 (100)
They do not provide enough protection for the victim of violence	Women	20 (16.4)	10 (8.2)	4 (3.3)	6 (4.9)	0 (0)	40 (32.8)	
	Men	30 (24.6)	10 (8.2)	8 (6.6)	34 (27.9)	0 (0)	82 (67.2)	122 (100)
They expose the woman to even more stigmatization and pain	Women	18 (14.8)	6 (4.9)	8 (6.6)	6 (4.9)	2 (1.6)	40 (32.8)	

**Table 12. Reaction of Students to a Hypothetical Situation of a Violent Act against a Woman**

	What would you do if you saw a male friend use violence against a woman?		What would you do if you saw a stranger use violence against a woman?	
	Male (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
Intervene during the episode	38 (31.1)	20 (16.4)	34 (27.9)	8 (6.6)
Speak to him after the episode	16 (13.1)	10 (8.2)	2 (1.6)	0 (0)
Avoid/ shun the guy	4 (3.3)	2 (1.6)	4 (3.3)	4 (3.3)
Call the police.	2 (1.6)	4 (3.3)	10 (8.2)	14 (11.5)
Do nothing, it is their problem.	4 (3.3)	0 (0)	14 (11.5)	0 (0)
Mobilize the neighbors	2 (1.6)	0 (0)	4 (3.3)	4 (3.3)
Speak to the woman and advise her to take legal action against your friend	14 (11.5)	4 (3.3)	12 (9.8)	10 (8.2)
Speak to the woman and counsel her not to anger him and to adjust herself to the situation	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Did not answer	2 (1.6)	0 (0)	2 (1.6)	0 (0)
Total	82 (67.2)	40 (32.8)	82 (67.2)	40 (32.8)
	122 (100)		122 (100)	

**Table 13. Discussion by Students about Violence against Women**

Have you ever talked to your male relatives or a boy you care for in the home or outside the home about violence against women?	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Answer (%)	Total (%)	
Male	20 (16.4)	34 (27.9)	28 (23)	82 (67.2)	122
Female	16 (13.1)	22 (18)	2 (1.6)	40 (32.8)	(100)

Table 14. Opinion of Students about Adult and Under-age Female and Male Sex Workers

In ref to		Adult female sex worker or prostitute		Under 18 years female sex worker or prostitute		Adult male sex worker or prostitute		Under 18 years male sex worker or prostitute	
		Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Morally wrong	Yes	46 (37.7)	28 (23)	50 (41)	34 (27.9)	52 (42.6)	30 (24.6)	50 (41)	34 (27.9)
	No	14 (11.5)	4 (3.3)	14 (11.5)	2 (1.6)	8 (6.6)	2 (1.6)	6 (4.9)	2 (1.6)
	No Answer	22 (18)	8 (6.6)	18 (14.8)	4 (3.3)	22 (18)	8 (6.6)	26 (21.3)	4 (3.3)
	Total	82	40	82	40	82	40	82	40
Violates his/her rights	Yes	30 (24.6)	22 (18)	44 (36.1)	32 (26.2)	28 (23)	18 (14.8)	36 (29.5)	32 (26.2)
	No	22 (18)	8 (6.6)	18 (14.8)	4 (3.3)	34 (27.9)	14 (11.5)	26 (21.3)	4 (3.3)
	No Answer	30 (24.6)	10 (8.2)	20 (16.4)	4 (3.3)	20 (16.4)	8 (6.6)	20 (16.4)	4 (3.3)
	Total	82	40	82	40	82	40	82	40
His/her own choice	Yes	42 (34.4)	16 (13.1)	22 (18)	4 (3.3)	46 (37.7)	16 (13.1)	30 (24.6)	6 (4.9)
	No	18 (14.8)	12 (9.83)	42 (34.4)	26 (21.3)	14 (11.5)	16 (13.1)	26 (21.3)	24 (19.7)
	No Answer	22 (18)	12 (9.83)	18 (14.8)	10 (8.2)	22 (18)	8 (6.6)	26 (21.3)	10 (8.2)
	Total	82	40	82	40	82	40	82	40
Wrong but there is nothing that can be done about it	Yes	36 (29.5)	12 (9.83)	32 (26.2)	10 (8.2)	32 (26.2)	12 (9.8)	28 (23)	8 (6.6)
	No	22 (18)	16 (13.1)	30 (24.6)	22 (18)	20 (16.4)	20 (16.4)	26 (21.3)	22 (18)
	No answer	24 (19.7)	12 (9.83)	20 (16.4)	8 (6.6)	30 (24.6)	8 (6.6)	28 (23)	10 (8.2)
	Total	82	40	82	40	82	40	82	40
I see nothing wrong with it	Yes	20 (16.4)	4 (3.3)	16 (13.1)	2 (1.6)	20 (16.4)	4 (3.3)	14 (11.5)	0 (0)
	No	30 (24.6)	22 (18)	44 (36.1)	32 (26.2)	28 (23)	26 (21.3)	36 (29.5)	32 (26.2)
	No Answer	32 (26.2)	14 (11.5)	22 (18)	6 (4.9)	34 (27.9)	10 (8.2)	32 (26.2)	8 (6.6)
	Total	82	40	82	40	82	40	82	40
It is a job like any other	Yes	24 (19.7)	6 (4.9)	16 (13.1)	2 (1.6)	24 (19.7)	6 (4.9)	14 (11.5)	0 (0)
	No	30 (24.6)	26 (21.3)	44 (36.1)	32 (26.2)	30 (24.6)	28 (23)	38 (31.1)	34 (27.9)
	No Answer	28 (23)	8 (6.6)	22 (18)	6 (4.9)	28 (23)	6 (4.9)	30 (24.6)	6 (4.9)
Total		82	40	82	40	82	40	82	40
		122		122		122		122	

Majority of the students regarded both purchasing and selling sex as morally wrong. About 26% opined that

men purchase sex as a service at least once in their lifetime.



**Table 15. Opinion of Students about Purchase and Sale of Sex**

What do you think about men who purchase sex?		Yes	No	No answer	Total
I think it is a natural thing for men to do.	Men	16 (13.1)	44 (36.1)	22 (18)	82 (67.2)
	Women	4 (3.3)	30 (24.6)	6 (4.9)	40 (32.8)
I think it is morally wrong.	Men	40 (32.8)	20 (16.4)	22 (18)	82 (67.2)
	Women	32 (26.2)	8 (6.6)	0 (0)	40 (32.8)
I think it is ok as long as he is not married or in a relationship with someone.	Men	24 (19.7)	34 (27.9)	24 (19.7)	82 (67.2)
	Women	2 (1.6)	32 (26.2)	6 (4.9)	40 (32.8)
I think it is something that most men do at least once in their lifetime.	Men	26 (21.3)	32 (26.2)	24 (19.7)	82 (67.2)
	Women	6 (4.9)	20 (16.4)	14 (11.5)	40 (32.8)
I think it is something that only sick men do.	Men	20 (16.4)	32 (26.2)	30 (24.6)	82 (67.2)
	Women	6 (4.9)	22 (18)	12 (9.8)	40 (32.8)
I think that sex is a service that can be bought like any other service.	Men	16 (13.1)	38 (31.1)	28 (23)	82 (67.2)
	Women	6 (4.9)	28 (23)	6 (4.9)	40 (32.8)

When asked about laws against prostitution, 49% regarded that laws should be against purchasing sex as against 42% who regarded the laws should be against the ones offering these services.

**Table 16. Opinion of Students about Laws against Prostitution**

		Yes	No	No, unless the girl or woman is under 18 years of age	No answer	Total
Do you think it should be against the law to purchase sex from a sex worker or prostitute?	Men	38 (31.1)	12 (9.8)	12 (9.8)	20 (16.4)	82 (67.2)
	Women	22 (18)	2 (1.6)	6 (4.9)	10 (8.2)	40 (32.8)
Do you think it should be against the law to work as a sex worker or prostitute?	Men	30 (24.6)	14 (11.5)	16 (13.1)	22 (18)	82 (67.2)
	Women	22 (18)	4 (3.3)	8 (6.6)	6 (4.9)	40 (32.8)

When asked what they would do if they encountered an individual forced into prostitution, 17% chose not to answer the question while 2 of the students admitted that they would avoid the individual. 39% said they would inform the authorities, while 40% of them said they would escort her to the authorities themselves.

**Table 17. Reaction of Students to a Hypothetical Situation of encountering an Individual forced into Prostitution**

If you knew that a prostitute or sex worker was forced or sold into prostitution, what would you do?	Call police	Escort her to police	Avoid her	No answer	Total
Men	26 (21.3)	34 (27.9)	2 (1.6)	20 (16.4)	82 (67.2)
Women	22 (18)	14 (11.5)	0 (0)	4 (3.3)	40 (32.8)

**Limitations**

The study was done only on students pursuing 3<sup>rd</sup> MBBS due to time constraints.

**Recommendations**

A detailed study of undergraduate medical students of first to final years would provide a better insight into the actual perspective of medical students about gender equality and identify where, when and what interventions are needed.

The study can be extended to students from various fields to understand the factors hindering or furthering the concept of gender equality in further details and also to compare the views expressed between the students of different fields.

Practical exposure to various works going on to empower women and the third gender need to be made known to the students to encourage the sense and importance of gender equality in the form of minor project works and workshops.

Zero tolerance to depiction of gender based violence in all forms of media, the spread of awareness regarding the various laws for protection of victims and, where and whom to approach in the midst of a crisis should be given priority by establishment of support groups involving peers, faculty and if possible establishing groups that include resource persons from various departments of relevance.

**Conflict of Interest:** None

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