



People's Perception about Gender Equity at RHTC, Naila, Jaipur

Priyanka Bharti^{*}, Manoj Verma^{*}, Amita Kashyap^{**}, Monika Rathore^{**}

Introduction

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of women and men, as well as girls and boys (United Nations Women, 2012)¹. Women in India have suffered gender disparities since ages; although addressed at all fronts (social, political) for last few decades yet we can find scars here and there in the form of gender violence, honor-killing, rape, and social policing. Changes toward equitable gender roles and relations in the community as well as household are a prerequisite to gender equality¹. Promotion of gender equality and empowering of women is one of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDG) to which India is a signatory. Gender equality and women's empowerment are two sides of the same coin: progress toward gender equality requires women's empowerment and women's empowerment requires increases in gender equality² evident by pairing of them in MDG.

The health of women and their children in many societies is adversely affected by women's inferior social status within households. This is mainly because of the culturally and socially determined roles for women that pervade every aspect of their lives.³

The role of gender equality, when women and men have equal participation in decision-making and control of resources, and equal value and treatment, has been shown to influence a number of maternal and child health outcomes positively.⁴

Beijing Declaration, ICPD Cairo (1994)⁵ and Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the Millennium Development Goals, has focused on empowering women and removing barriers to their access to education, health, economic opportunities, and participation in social and political life. Clear advances have been made toward these goals, especially in education and increasing women's political representation (International Center for Research on

Women [ICRW] 2008). But progress in other areas like reducing violence against women, increasing women's income relative to men's, and reducing inequalities related to the care burden-has lagged in both developing and developed countries.⁶

Gender involves differences in power, which encompasses legal and informal rights, access to resources, and pursuit of knowledge and personal goals, and cuts across most domains of human functioning, including familial, cultural, and institutional domains, control over societal and household resources and decisions, cultural and religious ideology, and one's own and others' bodies. Importantly, men tend to have greater power than women, and, in some domains, even have power *over* women.

Gender-based inequalities translate into greater value being placed on the health and survival of males than of females.²

Gender discrimination often begins at a young age; gender gaps in education, early marriage, widow inheritance, and male dominance in a patriarchal society are main reasons for the persistence of gender inequality in the society. Hence the GOI has given more equity in form of reservation of seats in education, jobs and in politics.

There are limited data about the perception of people toward Gender equity and the effects of age, sex, and education on these attitudes. Understanding these attitudes and any differences among sex, age, and education help plan for more effective and targeted actions.

Objectives

1. To study the perception of rural people regarding Gender equity.
2. To assess any association of socio-demographic factors with the perception of Gender Equity.

^{*}Resident Doctor, Dept. of PSM, SMS Medical College, Jaipur.

^{**}Professor, Dept. of PSM, SMS Medical College, Jaipur.

Correspondence to: Dr Priyanka Bharti, Dept. of PSM, SMS Medical College, Jaipur.

E-mail Id: priyankabharti8638@gmail.com

Methods

- Study Design: Community based, cross sectional, Descriptive study
- Study Period: From April to August 2015
- Study Area: village Naila, District Jaipur.
- Study Universe: Patients attending OPD at Rural Health Training Centre, Naila and their accompanying attendants.

Sample Size: the minimum Sample size calculated was 96 subjects at 95% confidence limit and 10% absolute allowable error assuming that 40% of Indians have favorable attitude towards Gender equality (as per seed article) after adjusted it for three age and two sex groups. For study purpose 150 subjects were taken.

Inclusion Criteria

1. Patients or their attendants; between 18-45 years, attending OPD at RHTC Naila.
2. Those who were residents of Field practice area of RHTC, Naila.
3. Those who gave consent for study.

Exclusion Criteria

1. Those who were below 18 years or above 45 years of age
2. Patients who were too ill to respond or refused

Perception on Gender Equity (GE) was assessed by their views on 13 questions selected based on previous literature and plausibility. Views were sought regarding following statements:-

1. "Rights for women mean that men lose out their rights"
2. "When women work they are taking away jobs from men"
3. "When a woman is raped, it's usually because she did something careless to put herself in that situation"
4. "Woman's most important role is to take care of her home and cook for her family"
5. "Men need sex more than women do, hence wife should co-operate even if she is tired or doesn't want sex"
6. "It's usually a woman's responsibility to avoid getting pregnant"
7. "A man and a woman should decide together what type of contraceptive to use."
8. "There are times when a woman deserves to be beaten"

9. "A woman should tolerate violence in order to keep her family together"
10. "If women complain to police about violence at home she is not respecting family and has to suffer more"

Question 11-13: took stock of opinion regarding- quota system which ensures more equity for women in (1) Education, (2) Service and (3) politics.

Response to each question was given a score on a Likert Scale ranging from 1-3 or 1-5. Maximum total score was 42 and minimum was 11. Respondents were then classified into 3 categories based on their score namely- 'Totally in favor'-score >36, 'Partially in favor'-score 27-36 and 'Against GE'-score <26. Association of these perceptions was evaluated in relation to age, sex, education, occupation and mother's respect in the family.

Statistical Analysis

Qualitative data was expressed as percentage and quantitative data as mean and standard deviation. Chi-square test was used for analysis of qualitative data. Level of significance was taken at P value <0.05.

Results

Total 150 subjects (75 of each gender) were interviewed. Twenty percent respondents were illiterate and one-fourth were graduate and above (36% male, 13.4% female). Majority of the study population were Hindus (94.7%). Perception of gender Equity: only 4% (all male) study subjects were 'Totally in favor', 79% 'Partially in favor', and 17% were 'Against GE'.

Generally females were more sensitized (83% vs 74%) towards Gender Equity (P=0.015) but all who were totally in favor of Gender Equity were male (6/150).

Age had no significant association with perception of Gender Equity (P=0.122), still it is an important observation that younger people (<25 yrs) were more favorable to gender equity (86% vs 70%).

Education had significant positive impact as graduates were more in favor of GE than primary passed (8%vs1%). (P=0.030) Every third of less educated (<12th class) person was against GE. Significantly higher proportion of persons from families where women were not respected were against GE (36% vs 2%); (P=0.000). Families of working women had a positive opinion for equity for women then male dominated families. (P=0.02).

Sex	Against n (%)	Partially favor n (%)	Totally favor n (%)	p value
F (n=75)	13 (17.33)	62 (82.67)	0	P = 0.015
M (n=75)	19 (25.33)	50 (66.67)	6 (8)	
Age				
≤ 25 yrs (n=84)	12 (14.28)	69 (82.14)	3 (3.57)	P=0.122
26 -35 yrs (n= 41)	13 (31.71)	27 (65.85)	1 (2.44)	
36 -45 yrs (n= 25)	7 (28)	16 (64)	2 (8)	
Education				
≤8 th (n=77)	19 (24.67)	57 (74.03)	1 (1.30)	P=0.030
9 th -12 th (n= 36)	11 (30.56)	23 (63.89)	2 (5.55)	
≥graduate (n=37)	2 (5.40)	32 (86.49)	3 (8.11)	
Women's status in family				
Respected (n=42)	1 (2.38)	37 (88.10)	4 (9.52)	P=0.000
Partially respected (n=67)	15 (22.39)	50 (74.63)	2 (2.98)	
Not respected (n=45)	16 (35.56)	29 (64.44)	0	
Bread Provider				
Male (n=47)	16 (34.04)	30 (63.83)	1 (2.13)	P=0.020
Women also earn (n=54)	5 (9.26)	45 (83.33)	4 (7.41)	
Dependant (n=49)	9 (18.37)	39 (79.59)	1 (2.04)	
Decision maker				
Male only (n= 94)	19 (20.21)	73 (77.66)	2 (2.13)	P=0.303
Women has equal say (56)	7 (12.5)	46 (82.14)	3 (5.36)	

Table 1. Over all Perception of gender equity/ equality as per socio-demographic characteristics of the study subjects

		Agree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Total	p value
Age group (years)	<=25	19 (22.62)	65 (77.38)	84	0.080
	25-35	9 (21.95)	32 (78.04)	41	
	>35	11 (44.00)	14 (56.00)	25	
Sex	male	17 (22.66)	58 (77.33)	75	0.045
	female	22 (29.33)	53 (70.67)	75	
Education Level	≤ secondary	29 (37.66)	48 (62.34)	77	0.050
	Sec. to Sr. Sec.	09 (25.00)	27 (75.00)	36	
	≥ Graduate	06 (16.22)	31 (83.78)	37	
Bread provider	Male only	19 (40.43)	28 (59.57)	47	0.024*
	Women also works	11 (20.37)	43 (79.63)	54	
	Dependant	09 (18.371)	40 (81.63)	49	
Decision maker in family	Either father or mother	30 (31.91)	64 (68.09)	94	0.051
	Both father and mother equally	09 (16.07)	47 (83.93)	56	
How father treats mother	Disrespect	07 (53.85)	06 (46.15)	13	0.000*
	Partial respect	13 (52.00)	12 (48.00)	25	
	Full respect	19 (16.96)	93 (83.04)	112	

Table 2. Opinion about "Right to women means men lose right" as per study variable

	Sex (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	p value
Women should tolerate a little violence for family peace	M, (n=75)	40 (53.33)	35 (46.67)	p=0.071
	F, (n=75)	28 (37.33)	47 (62.67)	
There are times when women deserves to be beaten	M, (n=75)	27 (36.0)	48 (64.0)	p=0.381
	F, n=(n=75)	21 (28.0)	54 (72.0)	

Table 3. Opinion on Gender violence against women

More Equity for	Sex (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	p value
Education	M, (n=75)	14 (18.67)	61 (81.33)	p=0.004
	F, (n=75)	31 (41.33)	44(58.67)	
Service	M, (n=75)	47 (62.67)	28(37.34)	p=0.018
	F, (n=75)	61 (81.34)	14 (18.67)	
Politics	M, (n=75)	64 (85.4)	11 (14.6)	p=0.894
	F, (n=75)	68 (90.7)	7 (9.3)	

Table 4.Opinion on raised equity by 'Quota System' for women

Women had equal say in only 37.33% (56/150) families, majority (83%, 47/56) of these women don't believe that 'rights for women means that men lose out their rights'. Same Perception prevailed significantly where mother was treated with respect ($p=0.000$), where women was working ($P = 0.024$), and where people were educated \geq Graduate ($P = 0.050$). Although age ($p=0.080$) and sex ($p=0.45$) had no significant association with the belief that "rights for women means that men lose out their right"

Almost 80% of the participant felt that it's not solely woman's duty to cook and care for family ($p=0.189$), and almost 50% of both sex agree that it's the duty of the woman to provide sex even if she doesn't want it herself ($p=0.744$). Although statistically not significant, it's an important observation that even today 37% women; may it be rural, think that for family's name and peace a women should tolerate violence ($p=0.071$) and deserve to be beaten at times (28%, $p=0.381$).

Female agree more on "reservation of female in Education and Service" ($P<0.05$), but not in politics ($P>0.05$). Present study found that 42.7% of male and 32% of female respondents had equal say of Women in the family. Relatively younger people (<35Yrs) believed that Family planning is responsibility of both the partners (50% vs 44%) but they were ready to tolerate a justifiable violence to keep harmony at home (21% vs 12%). Non-tolerance to violence against women was significantly associated with education, decision making power of women and respectful status of women. Significantly higher number of Older people (>35 yrs) agree that "when a women is raped it is usually her carelessness" ($P=0.048$). Most of the families (75%) where mother was equal decision maker disagree with this statement ($P=0.047$).

Discussion

Only 4% of respondents were "Totally in favor' (all were male) while 17% were 'Against' and 79% were 'partially in favor' Gender Equity. Anurag Mishra et al⁴ (2014) in Uttar Pradesh found 'higher (34.7%), 'Moderate (58.7%) and low (6.6%) gender' equal attitude in their study. The

difference in finding may be due to inclusion of only rural population in the present study.

Sex

In our study, female were more in favor of gender equity. Jennifer Scott¹¹ in a study in Sudan found that men (37%) were more likely than women (27%) to respond that women should have the 'same' power within the community compared to what they currently have ($p = 0.008$). Geeta Nanda et al⁷ in a study in Tanzania found that more males (16.5) than females (5.5%) had High equity attitude. The difference may be due to different in social and cultural values in different countries.

Role of Female

Twenty one percent of men and 12% of female believe that women are meant for domestic duties only. Jennifer Scott¹ also observed that bathing and feeding of children are women's duty ($p = 0.03$).

Decision Making

There was no difference in opinion about gender equity among male and female of those 37% families where woman had equal say, Sunita Kishor et al² (2009) also reported that, although a majority of men say that husbands and wives should make Decisions jointly, yet a significant proportion feels that husbands should have the major say in most decisions.

Similarly Binyam Bogale⁸ et al in Ethiopia observed that urban male agree that wife should also be part in decision making but rural male do not think so Geeta nanda et al⁷ found that only 5% of female agreed that women should have equal say in all major decisions. This difference may be due to difference in education level and cultural values. Dev A Acharya⁹ revealed that decision making power of women and subsequent gender equity depends on age, employment and number of living children of women. Tim Dyson observed that female social status is the single most important factor influencing decision power of female in family¹⁰.

Education

Present study found positive association of education and opinion towards GE. Sunita Kishor et al² (NFHS-3) reported that 95-97% of men with little or no education, and 99% of men with 12 or more years of education agree that a wife should have an equal or greater say in one or more decisions asked about.

Wife Beating

In present study 64.0% of males and 72.0% of females disagree that 'at times women deserves to be beaten'. Geeta nanda et al⁷ found that 5.5% of wives and 30.5% of husbands believe that none of the reasons for wife beating is justifiable. Just Sunita Kishor et al² (NFHS-3) found that overall, 54% of women and 51% of men aged 15-49 agree with one or more reasons for wife beating. Almost two-thirds of both women and men with no education agree with wife beating, compared with about one-third of women and men with 12 or more years of education. Women aged 30-49 were in favor of beating but as age increases, more men opposes that. Women and men with education of more than 5 years are not in favor of beating. Urban residence, education, and high socioeconomic class are significantly associated with lower odds of agreeing with wife beating for both women and men² similarly Sayada Kanwal aslam¹¹ et al also observed that women whom mothers experienced domestic violence have more chances of wife beating.

Sex Provider

It was observed that almost half of male & females were in the opinion that "female has to provide sex whenever husband wants irrespective of given situation" as observed by Ravi K Verma in Mumbai¹² Geeta Nanda et al⁷ found that 74.5% of wives and 72.5% of husband agreed that a woman has the right to refuse sex for all reasons. Sunita Kishor et al² (NFHS-3) found that the likelihood of agreement that a woman has the right to refuse sex; increases with age till the age-group 30-39. For men, the higher the level of education, the higher the odds of agreeing, compared with men who have no education. For women, however, the odds of agreement increase with education only if women have completed at least five years of education.²

Conclusion

Majority of the people were in favor of Gender Equity but to a limited extend. Overall women were respected in only 28% of families, 21% of families showed no respect while 51.3% showed only partial respect.

Education was significantly associated with GE while age not. 68% of the people (more female than male) did not believe in physical violence against women. Significantly higher number of female was in favor of quota for women in Education and services.

Conflict of Interest: None

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