

ATROCITIES FACED BY ADOLESCENT GIRLS OF HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KERALA

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted with the objective of exploring the phenomenon of atrocities faced by the adolescent girls of higher secondary schools in Kerala. The investigator used qualitative method for the study. The data regarding the phenomenon was collected by using a questionnaire and an interview schedule constructed by the investigators. The study was conducted on a representative sample of 330 adolescent girls from higher secondary schools of Kozhikode district. The sample was selected by giving due representation to government, aided, urban and rural school students. The analysis of the study revealed that most of the adolescent girls faced severe physical, mental and sexual harassment from home, school and the society.

Significance of the study

Children in India face basic rights violations in various forms. This starts from conception in the mother's womb till they complete their childhood. This is common across male and female child, while the girl child has specific areas of their rights being violated, given the cultural, social and religious value systems.

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Centuries have come and gone, but the plight of girls is not likely to change. Time has helplessly watched girl's sufferings in the form of discrimination, oppression, exploitation, degradation, aggression and humiliations. Violence against girls both inside and outside of their home has been a crucial issue in the contemporary Indian Society. Adolescent girls in India constitute near about half of its population and most of them are grinding under the socio-cultural and religious structure.

Adolescent girls are at a particular disadvantage since they are systematically denied of the advantages of autonomy, mobility, and economic opportunity that adolescent boys enjoy. This brings out the realities and challenges what adolescent girl's faces in their attempts to lead healthy, fulfilling lives and suggest how the right investment in empowering them could have the highest impact.

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act(POCSO) came into force on November, 14th, 2012. Even though these types of acts exist in our society, atrocities against adolescent girls are increasing day by day. Nobody is taking initiative to make use of these types of acts to control the atrocities against girls.

Kerala has witnessed on increase in crimes against children in the first seven months of 2013. A total of 1,336 crimes, including 427 rapes, against children had been reported in the state up to July this year. According to state crime Records Bureau (SCRB), thirteen cases were for offences under prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 69 kidnapping and 23 murders, it was stated. Total crimes against children in 2013 were 1877, which included 637 rapes.

The above data provides an authentic statistic about the atrocities against children. There has been an alarming increase in the instances of child abuse getting reported across India recently.

There is a large child population in India and a large percentage of this population is vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, and negligence. There is also adequate information about the extent of girl child abuse in the country. Barring a few sporadic studies, with limited scope, the attempt to understand the different forms and magnitude of child abuse across the country has been inadequate.

In addition to the available official data stated above, recent newspaper headlines too bring out the assumption that the girls of the higher secondary section face and experience lots of problems from classmates, school authorities, their own houses, the relatives, and the society in large. These facts are not revealed before the society. We will have to assume that it happens on account of their apprehension for social status, fear for further consequences to face in future and technical problems which stand in the way of legal justice. The literature review



done by the investigator makes it clear that no further researches have been made in this field except for a few. It is in this circumstances, the investigator has decided to conduct a research on atrocities faced by adolescent girls of higher secondary schools in Kerala. Thus, in such a social atmosphere in which cruelty against children is so conspicuous, a study among the children in the district becomes important. The dearth of such a study related to the problems faced by adolescent girls, becomes more relevant.

OBJECTIVES

To find out whether the adolescent girl students face any sexual harassment from the home, school and society for the total sample.

To find out whether the adolescent girl students face any physical or mental harassment from the home, school and society for the total sample.

To find out whether the adolescent girl students face any gender discrimination from the home, school and society for the total sample

METHODOLOGY

The study attempted to explore the atrocities faced by adolescent girls of higher secondary schools in Kerala. The investigator adopted qualitative method for conducting the study.

SAMPLE

The study was conducted on a representative sample of 330 adolescent girls from higher secondary schools of Kozhikode district. The sample was selected giving due representation to government, aided, urban and rural school students.

TOOL

The tool used for the present study was a questionnaire and an interview schedule constructed by the investigator with the help of supervising teacher.

Statistical Technique used for Analysis

Being a qualitative study, the collected data were consolidated and analysed by using statistical procedure like percentage. Verbal interpretation was also used for the analysis.



ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Sexual harassment faced by adolescent girl students for the total sample.

The data regarding sexual harassment in the home environment revealed that 4.84% of the adolescent girls had faced wrongly intended behaviors from their male relatives and 2.12% had had misbehavior from guests and family friends. More over in schools 1.21% of the girl students are misbehaved by their male teachers through touch or by means of inappropriate language and of which 5.15% have even crept in to the secrecies or personal matters. Obviously 3.03% of the girl students have tough time by the way the boys approach them with a wrong kind of intention. Considering the society 16.16% girls had faced bitter experience from their elders and 20.16% faced bitter experiences from fellow passengers during travel. Obviously 2.12% girls are subjected to sexual assaults.

From the above data, it can be concluded that our adolescent girls are not safe in our home, school and the society because they are exposed to bitter experiences from home, friends and from the society in large to which they belong to. The number may be still higher because girls naturally fear to disclose such incidents.

Physical and Mental harassment faced by adolescent girl students for the total sample

The data revealed that 10.9% of the girls have no freedom to express their dislikes at home. They do not have full freedom in their home. Some of the girls disclosed that they were not safe in their home. In schools, girls are restricted in mingling with boys. 24.24% girls revealed that teachers rebuked when they are mingling with boys and talk to them. 21.21% of the adolescent girls got punishment from their teachers for the low score or poor performance in the examination. 4.55% of the adolescent girls discouraged by anyone from taking part in arts and sports activities as they are girls. 3.64% revealed that social or personal problems affect their learning process.

The collected data shows that 3.94% of the adolescent girls are given neither proper parental care nor love. 5.45% of the parents are not fulfilling the needs of their girl child in accordance with their financial status. 6.36% of the girls felt that their parents have no interest in attending their personal problems and settle them. It is also found that 3.64% of the girl students are not getting sufficient care and support from their parents in their personal difficulties. 22.12% of the adolescent girls feel that they are being isolated in their home. 20.30% do not get opportunities in schools to share their mental and emotional problems with their teachers. Teachers even seem to insult 12.42% of the adolescent girls before others including their colleagues and other students. Teachers talk or deal hurt 5.76%



girl's emotions and 5.45% of them even misinterpreted or blamed despite the healthy relations with the male teachers. A few girls faced so many restrictions at their home and school as they are born as girls. Some teachers humiliate girl students before the public. They also faced mental torture while travelling and public conveyance.

From the above data, it can be inferred that some of the adolescent girl's experiences sex discriminations at home and schools. They are getting neither proper care nor love from parents and teachers comparing to boys. They felt insecurity even at home. They are suffering severe restrictions even to express their emotions at home and schools.

Gender discrimination faced by adolescent girl students for the total sample

The revealed data shows that 14.85% of adolescent girls felt that brothers have better consideration at home than that of girls. 11.21% of the adolescent girls opined that their parents ignore their girl children's suggestions and interventions while making important decisions on familial affairs. 19.69% of the girls shouldered with the entire household chore at home being a girl child. 21.82% of the adolescent girls feel that they are always rebuked compared to their brothers at home. 16.36% girls are restricted by parents from mingling with boyfriends of their age. 18.18% girls feel that boys are given better consideration in the classroom process. 4.85% girls faced negligence or discrimination in a mixed group for they were a girl child and 8.18% says that they are not proud of being a girl child.

From the above discussion, it is found that some of the adolescent girls suffer severe ignorance and discrimination at home and schools as they are being girls. They felt that boys are getting better considerations at home as well as at schools.

CONCLUSION

The collected data enabled the investigators to pick out the adolescent girls who faced problems including physical, sexual, and mental harassment and gender discriminations. even though very few of them appear to have disclosed chances for real atrocities, lion share of the children have fallen a prey to that is matter of truth. It further calls for nurturing girls of this kind through supportive activities contributing to lead them on helping to keep themselves going enhancing self-confidence. This needs micro level analysis to accomplish and get at the derived goal.



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