

# A Comparative Study of Gender Socialization Practices

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**Abstract:** Gender socialization entails learning how to perform the behaviors that are consistent with one's gender. Gender socialization occurs not only through the acquisition of gender-appropriate behaviors, but also through observing adults in the household, who are role models to children. The study was conducted in Hisar city and two schools were randomly selected from the selected schools. Respondents of class-XI<sup>th</sup> and class-XII<sup>th</sup> were taken. A list of students was prepared from the respective class and from the list a sample of 30 adolescents each from class XI<sup>th</sup> and XII<sup>th</sup> were taken randomly thus making a total sample of 60 adolescents. The parents of these adolescents were also interviewed.

**Keywords:** Gender, socialization.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Gender socialization is the process of learning the social expectations and attitudes associated with one's sex. Sociologists explain through gender socialization why human males and females behave in different ways: they learn different social roles. For example, girls learn to do different household chores than boys; girls learn to bake and clean, and boys learn to mow lawns and take out garbage. Gender socialization occurs through such diverse means as parental attitudes, schools, how peers interact with each other and mass media. Some researchers believe that biological differences underlie some behavioral differences between males and females; others disagree. Sociologists and other social scientists generally attribute many of the behavioral differences between men and women to socialization. Socialization is the process of transferring norms, values, beliefs, and behaviors to future group members. In regards to gender socialization, the most common groups people join are the gender categories male and female. Even the categorical options of gender an individual may choose is socialized; social norms act against selecting a gender that is neither male or female. Thus, gender socialization is the process of educating and instructing potential men and women how to behave as members of that particular group.

Socialization is a rational process and its objective is to build gender identity (Crespi 2003). Gender socialization is a more focused form of socialization; it is how children of different sexes are socialised into their gender roles (Giddens 1993) and taught what it means to be male and female (Morris 1988). Though the Indian constitution grants equal rights to women and men, strong patriarchal traditions persist and manifest themselves in different ways. In most Indian families, a daughter is viewed as a liability, and she is conditioned to believe that she is inferior and subordinate to men. Sons are idolised and celebrated (Coonrod 1998). Children are always referred as "builders of the nation", but many children are deprived in various ways accessing various opportunities of life. So, the study was conducted with the objective- to study gender socialization practices across rural and urban area of Hisar.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

To study gender socialization practices one school from rural area and one school from urban area of Hisar city were randomly selected. From the selected schools a sample of adolescents in equal sex ratio was taken from class XI<sup>th</sup> and XII<sup>th</sup>. A list of students was prepared from the respective class and from the list a sample of 30 adolescents from class XI<sup>th</sup> and another 30 from class XII<sup>th</sup> were randomly taken and their parents were also interviewed. Thus total 60 respondents were covered under the study. The independent variables included personal variable viz. age, caste, type of family, size of family, education of parents, occupation of family, monthly income of family. A well structured schedule was developed for data collection. Data were collected with the help of pre-tested interview schedule. The inferences were drawn on the basis of frequency and percentage.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-personal profile of respondents is presented in Table 1. It was found that in rural area 93.3 per cent male respondent's parents age was above 40 years followed by 6.6 per cent upto 40 years whereas 66.6 per cent female respondent's parents age was above 40 years followed by upto 40 years (33.3%). In urban area 86.6 per cent male respondent's parents age was above 40 years followed by upto 40 years (13.3%) and in case of female it was above 40 years (80.0%) followed by upto 40 years (20.0%).

It was found that in rural area, 53.3 per cent male respondents belonged to medium caste followed by high (46.6%) in case of female 53.3 per cent belonged to medium caste followed by high (46.6%). In urban area, 86.6 per cent male respondents belonged to medium caste followed by high caste (13.3%) whereas in females 73.3 per cent respondents belonged to medium caste followed by high (26.6%). It is clearly highlighted from the table that in rural area 66.6 per cent of male respondents had nuclear family followed by joint (33.3%) whereas in females 53.3 per cent respondents had joint family followed by nuclear families (46.6%). In urban area, 86.6 per cent male respondents had nuclear family followed by joint (13.3%) whereas majority of females had nuclear families (86.6%) followed by joint families (13.3%).

With regard to size of family, it may be concluded that in rural area 60.0 per cent of male respondents had small size family followed by 26.6 per cent and 13.3 per cent having large and medium size family. Whereas in case of females 40.0 per cent respondents had small size families followed by 33.3 per cent and 26.6 per cent having large and medium size families. In urban area, 73.3 per cent of male respondents had small size of family followed by medium (26.6%) and in case of female 86.6 per cent had small size of family followed by medium (13.3%).

Regarding educational level results revealed that in rural area, majority of male parents (66.6%) were educated and above matric 33.3 per cent were educated upto matriculation whereas in female parents education was above matric (60.0%) followed by upto matric (33.3%), technical (6.6%). In urban area, majority of male parents (80.0%) were having technical education followed by above matric (13.3%) whereas in case of females parents 80.0 per cent were those who were having technical education followed by upto matric (13.3%). Results presented in table 1 highlighted that majority of the respondents (66.6%) main occupation was agriculture followed by service (26.6%), business (6.6%) whereas in case of females 66.6 per cent females parent's main occupation was agriculture followed by service (26.6%), business (6.6%). In urban area main occupation of parents was (73.3%) service followed by business (20.0%), agriculture (6.6%) whereas in case of females 80.0 per cent females family's main occupation was service followed by business (13.3%) and agriculture (6.6%).

**Table 1: Socio-personal profile of respondents (n=60)**

Sr. No.	Variables	Categories	Rural		Urban		Total (%) (n=60)
			Male (%) (n=15)	Female (%) (n=15)	Male (%) (n=15)	Female (%) (n=15)	
1.	Age of parent	Upto 40 years	1 (6.6)	5 (33.3)	2 (13.3)	3 (20.0)	11 (18.3)
		Above 40 years	14 (93.3)	10 (66.6)	13 (86.6)	12 (80.0)	49 (81.6)
2.	Caste	Middle	8 (53.3)	8 (53.3)	13 (86.6)	11 (73.3)	40 (66.6)
		High	7 (46.6)	7 (46.6)	2 (13.3)	4 (26.6)	20 (33.3)
3.	Family type	Nuclear	10 (66.6)	7 (46.6)	13 (86.6)	13 (86.6)	43 (71.6)
		Joint	5 (33.3)	8 (53.3)	2 (13.3)	2 (13.3)	17 (28.3)
4.	Family size	Upto 4 members	9 (60.0)	6 (40.0)	11 (73.3)	13 (86.6)	39 (65.0)
		5 to 6 members	2 (13.3)	4 (26.6)	4 (26.6)	2 (13.3)	12 (20.0)
		Above 6 members	4 (26.6)	5 (33.3)	-	-	9 (15.0)
5.	Education of parents	Upto matric	5 (33.3)	5 (33.3)	1 (6.6)	2 (13.3)	13 (21.6)
		Above matric	10 (66.6)	9 (60.0)	2 (13.3)	1 (6.6)	22 (36.6)
		Technical	-	1 (6.6)	12 (80.0)	12 (80.0)	25 (41.6)
6.	Occupation of family	Service	4 (26.6)	4 (26.6)	11 (73.3)	12 (80.0)	31 (51.6)
		Business	1 (6.6)	1 (6.6)	3 (20.0)	2 (13.3)	7 (11.6)
		Agriculture	10 (66.6)	10 (66.6)	1 (6.6)	1 (6.6)	22 (36.6)
7.	Family income	Upto Rs. 20,000	11 (73.3)	6 (40.0)	1 (6.6)	1 (6.6)	19 (31.6)
		Rs. 20,001-30,000	4 (26.6)	6 (40.0)	2 (13.3)	1 (6.6)	13 (21.6)
		Rs. 30,001 and above	-	3 (20.0)	12 (80.0)	13 (86.6)	28 (46.6)

**Figures in parentheses indicate percentage:**

The results given in the table indicate that in rural area 73.3 per cent of male respondent's family belonged the income category of upto Rs. 20,000 followed by Rs. 20,001 to 30,000 (26.6%) whereas female respondents were from families having income upto Rs. 20,000 and Rs. 20,001 to 30,000 (40.0% and 40.0%) followed by Rs. 30,001 and above (20.0%). Majority of male respondents from urban area were from families having income Rs. 30,001 and above (80.0%) followed by Rs. 20,001 to 30,000 (13.3%) and upto Rs. 20,000 (6.6%) whereas majority of female respondents belonged to families having income Rs. 30,001 and above followed by Rs. 20,001 to 30,000 and upto Rs. 20,000 (6.6% and 6.6%).

**Table 2: Frequency distribution of gender socialization practices adopted by parents of rural and urban adolescents (n=60)**

Sr. No.	Statements (For parents)		Rural (n=30)		Urban (n=30)	
			Frequency	%age	Frequency	%age
1.	You give more freedom to sons than daughters.	A	29	96.6	3	10.0
		UD	1	3.3	1	3.3
		D	-	-	26	86.6
2.	You tease your daughter if dressed provocatively than boys.	A	-	-	-	-
		UD	4	13.3	-	-
		D	26	86.6	30	100.0
3.	You expected less domestic work from your son as compared to your daughter.	A	30	100.0	1	3.3
		UD	-	-	1	3.3
		D	-	-	28	93.3
4.	Girls should be more polite as compared to boys.	A	29	96.6	19	63.3
		UD	1	3.3	-	-
		D	-	-	11	36.6
5.	You prefer to provide higher educational opportunity to boys than girls.	A	24	80.0	-	-
		UD	5	16.6	1	3.3
		D	1	3.3	29	96.6
6.	You provide healthy nutritional diet to son than daughters.	A	28	93.3	-	-
		UD	2	6.6	-	-
		D	-	-	30	100.0
7.	You are more friendly with son than daughter.	A	13	43.3	2	6.6
		UD	17	56.6	7	23.3
		D	-	-	21	70.0
8.	Do you punish girls more for their misbehavior than boys.	A	25	83.3	1	3.3
		UD	5	16.6	1	3.3
		D	-	-	28	93.3
9.	Are you strict with daughter than son.	A	14	46.6	1	3.3
		UD	16	53.3	3	10.0
		D	-	-	26	86.6
10.	You tolerate more violence behavior at part of your son than daughter.	A	-	-	-	-
		UD	6	20.0	1	3.3
		D	24	80.0	29	96.6

Note: A → Agree

UD → Undecided

D → Disagree

The data shown in table 2 is about gender socialization practices adopted by parents of rural and urban adolescents. It is clear from the table that 96.6 per cent rural parents agreed on the statement that son should be given more freedom than girls. Khan & Prasad (2007) reveals the importance of age-old tradition with regard to son preference, which is common in Indian society whereas 86.6 per cent urban parents disagreed with statement. In second statement, 86.6 per cent rural parents were disagreed as compared 100.0 per cent urban parents. Further 100.0 per cent rural parents expected less domestic work from sons as compared to daughters whereas 93.3 per cent urban parents disagreed with this. In fourth statement, 96.6 per cent parents agree with the statement in rural area as compared to 63.3 per cent urban parents. In fifth statement, 80.0 per cent parents agree with the statement in rural area whereas in urban area 96.6 per cent parents disagree with the statement. In sixth statement, 93.3 per cent parents agree with the statement in rural area whereas in urban area

100.0 per cent parents were disagree. In seventh statement, 56.6 per cent parents were undecided about the statement in rural area whereas in urban area 70.0 per cent parents were disagree with the statement. In eighth statement, 83.3 per cent parents agree with the statement in rural area whereas in urban area 93.3 per cent parents disagree with the statement. In ninth statement, 53.3 per cent parents were undecided in rural area whereas in urban area 86.6 per cent parents were disagree with the statement. In the last statement, 80.0 per cent parents in rural area and 96.6 per cent parents in urban area were disagree with the statement. Ramana and Rao (2007) stated that parents feel that they are imparting training to their daughters to be effective homemakers and it is considered that the normally accepted gender stereotype for a girl is to take upon domestic responsibilities. Parthasarthy's (2009) study of parental expectations of children's work revealed deep rooted gender biases in division of work. A large percentage of the parents expected all types of domestic work to be performed by girls while boys are expected to do more of outside work and masculine tasks like changing scooter tyre etc.

**Table 3: Frequency distribution perceived by children with regard to parental expectations (n=60)**

Sr. No.	Statements (For children)		Rural (n=30)		Urban (n=30)	
			Frequency	%age	Frequency	%age
1.	Your parents expect from you to do work around the house (making the bed, doing dishes or cleaning the house).	A	15	50.0	12	40.0
		UD	-	-	7	23.3
		D	15	50.0	11	36.6
2.	Your parents ask you for help.	A	25	83.3	25	83.3
		UD	3	10.0	4	13.3
		D	2	6.6	1	3.3
3.	Your parents have shown interest in the things you like to do.	A	18	60.0	28	93.3
		UD	6	20.0	2	6.6
		D	6	20.0	-	-
4.	Your parents have been proud of the things you have done.	A	18	60.0	30	100.0
		UD	9	30.0	-	-
		D	3	10.0	-	-
5.	Your parents have been sensitive to what you think and feel.	A	14	46.6	25	83.3
		UD	9	30.0	5	16.6
		D	7	23.3	-	-
6.	Your parents spend time with you during interaction activities like shopping.	A	23	76.6	22	73.3
		UD	6	20.0	7	23.3
		D	1	3.3	1	3.3
7.	Your parents give you privileges such as visiting a friend's house.	A	27	90.0	20	66.6
		UD	-	-	6	20.0
		D	3	10.0	4	13.3
8.	Your parents gives you privileges such as going to parties etc.	A	15	50.0	14	46.6
		UD	-	-	10	33.3
		D	15	50.0	6	20.0
9.	Your parents give you privileges such as staying up in friend's home.	A	14	46.6	8	26.6
		UD	-	-	9	30.0
		D	16	53.3	13	43.3
10.	Your parents punish you for your misbehaviour.	A	28	93.3	15	50.0
		UD	2	6.6	10	33.3
		D	-	-	5	16.6
11.	Your parents has been strict with you.	A	17	56.6	5	16.6
		UD	12	40.0	12	40.0
		D	1	3.3	13	43.3

**Note:** A → Agree  
 UD → Undecided  
 D → Disagree

The data shown in table 3 is about frequency distribution perceived by children with regard to parental expectations in rural and urban area. Results revealed that 50.0 per cent rural and 40.0 per cent urban adolescents stated that their parents expect from them to do work around the house. Majority of the rural and urban respondents (83.3%) agreed that their parents demand help from them. In third statement, 60.0 per cent rural and 93.3 per cent urban adolescents were agreed with the statement. In fourth statement, 60.0 per cent rural and 100.0 per cent urban adolescents were agreed with the

statement. In fifth statement, 46.6 per cent rural adolescents and 83.3 per cent urban adolescents were agree with the statement. In sixth statement, 76.6 per cent rural adolescents and 73.3 per cent urban adolescents were agree with statement. In seventh statement, 90.0 per cent rural adolescents and 66.6 per cent urban adolescents were agree with the statement. In eighth statement, 50.0 per cent rural adolescents and 46.6 per cent urban adolescents were agree with the statement. In ninth statement, 53.3 per cent rural children and 43.3 per cent urban children were disagree with the statement. In tenth statement, 93.3 per cent rural adolescents agree and 33.3 per cent urban adolescents were undecided about the statement. In eleventh statement, 56.6 per cent rural children agree with the statement whereas 43.3 per cent urban children disagree with the statement.

**Table 4: Frequency distribution of gender socialization practices in rural area**

Category		Parents		Children	
		Frequency	%age	Frequency	%age
Below adequate	12- 16	27	90.0	-	-
Adequate	17 – 21	3	10.0	2	6.6
Above adequate	22 – 28	-	-	28	93.3

Data presented in table 4 showed frequency distribution of gender socialization practices in rural area. It is clear from the table that 90.0 per cent parents fall in below adequate category followed by 10.0 per cent in adequate. In case of children, 93.3 per cent children fall in the category of above adequate category followed by 6.6 per cent in adequate.

**Table 5: Frequency distribution of gender socialization practices in urban area**

Category		Parents		Children	
		Frequency	%age	Frequency	%age
Below adequate	22- 24	3	10.0	2	6.6
Adequate	25 – 27	10	33.3	17	56.6
Above adequate	28 – 30	17	56.6	11	36.6

The data shown in table 5 is about frequency distribution of gender socialization practices in urban area. It is clear from the table that 56.6 per cent parents fall in above adequate followed by 33.3 per cent in adequate and 10.0 per cent in below adequate. In case of children 56.6 per cent in adequate category followed by 36.6 per cent in above adequate and 6.6 per cent in below adequate.

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