

Social Problems as Perceived by Adults of Punjab: A Perceptive View of Gender

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ABSTRACT

The present study was aimed to reveal the difference in the perception of social problems of male and female educated adults of Punjab. It was assumed that no significant difference exists in the perception of social problems of male and female educated adults. The study reveals that there is no significant difference in the perceptions of social problems of educated male and female adults of Punjab. 23% of male and 23% of female educated adults have perceived less social problems. 25% of male and 27% of female adults have perceived more social problems. The results concluded that social problems relating to drugs and alcoholism, crime and criminals and health related problems are strongly perceived by educated male and female adults of Punjab.

Key Words: Social Problems, Male Educated Adults, Female Educated Adults, Drugs and Alcoholism, Crime and Criminals, Health related problems.

Introduction

Men and women are equally important for the development of society. The women play multidimensional role and the same makes it unique. However, careful analysis of Indian society indicates that the situation is not good for women. The gender ratio of male and female in the India population has been changing and becoming unfavorable towards women. The women are also subjected to discrimination in learning, dowry deaths and exploitations of various kinds which are very common. In fact the women are becoming targets of atrocities of many types. The same is manifested in discrimination against them from very early period. The incident of infanticide, early marriage, emphasis on domestic activities and lesser emphasis on education and career have made women's lives full of problems. They are discriminated against from early childhood. The Indian dependence on others (e.g. parents, husbands) becomes fate of the majority of the women folk. The pattern of discrimination against women varies across rural, urban and tribal areas. They are assigned diverse responsibilities and treated as relatively weaker and less competent. This image is still prevailing in various sections of the society. It is reflected in the discriminatory practices in the family such as distribution of work, food and social activities. The girl child is usually burdened with responsibilities that are beyond her capacity. Such exploitations function as obstacles in the process of development and growth of the girl child.

When a girl child matures and becomes an adult she is often found to be physically weak and mentally constrained. They are neither able to realize their potentials nor able to contribute to the mainstream of society. Their contributions are often limited to family and that too are ignored.

However, some Indian women have been able to overcome the barriers in their path and became successful in many walks of life. In this connection one can mention the names of Pandita Rama Bai, Sarojini Naidu and Indira Gandhi who emerged as leaders at national level. The provision for education, legal provisions about the age of marriage and reservation for women in various walks of life has contributed to change in their situation. Today the presence of women in various occupations and public offices is much more prominent than what it used to be during earlier periods. However, the Indian society has still to go a long way as far as gender equality is concerned.

Objective

To study the difference in the perception of social problems of male and female educated adults of Punjab.

Hypothesis

No significant difference exists in the perception of social problems of male and female educated adults.

Methodology

The study was conducted using descriptive method on 1201 educated male and female adults of Punjab belonging to rural and urban areas. The study was conducted on the educated adults of Majha, Malwa Doaba and Kandhi regions of Punjab. Graduate or above graduate individuals of 25 years of age or above were the respondents of the present study. To make the data representative to the different regions of Punjab, stratified random sampling technique was applied. The data were collected from each stratum on random basis. Social Problems Scale standardized by Bawa and Kumar (2011) was used to measure the social problems as perceived by educated adults of Punjab. Reliability of the scale was 0.68 determined through split half reliability technique. To test the significance of the variables under study, various statistical techniques i.e. Mean, SD, Q₁ and Q₃, Percentage and ANOVA were applied.

Results

The objective of the study was to know the gender difference in the perception of social problems of educated adults. The male and female educated adults of Punjab were compared on social problems scale. It was found that mean values of social problems score of the male and female were 340 and 339 respectively.

Level of Social Problems as Perceived by Educated Male and Female Adults of Punjab

The scores of social problem scale of the male and female respondents of educated adults of Punjab were calculated and grouped into three groups according to Q₁ and Q₃ values i.e. less perceived social problems group (LSP) those who scores less than 324, average perceived social problems group (ASP) having scores between 324-356 and more perceived social problems group (MSP) with scores higher than 356. The results have been presented in the table 1.

Table 1

Level of Social Problems as Perceived by Educated Male and Female Adults of Punjab

LEVEL	Male		Female	
	N	%	N	%
LSP	149	23	133	23
ASP	327	52	287	50
MSP	155	25	150	27

Mean= Male-340, Female-339

The results explored that 23% educated male adults of Punjab perceived less social problems, 52% respondents perceived average social problems, whereas 25% educated male adults of Punjab perceived more social problems. Again, 23% educated female adults of Punjab perceived less social problems, 50% respondents perceived average social problems, whereas 27% educated female adults of Punjab perceived more social problems.

Social Problems as Perceived by Educated Male and Female Adults of Punjab

The percentage scores of the social problems scale of the educated male and female adults of Punjab were calculated with respect to the different components of social problems i.e. socio-economic, child abuse & child labour, socio-political, educational problems, crimes and criminals, drugs and alcoholism, health related problems, family problems, adulteration and violence against women. The results have been presented in table 2

Table 2

Social Problems as Perceived by Educated Male and Female Adults of Punjab

S. No.	Components of the Social Problems Scale	Perception Scores (%)	
		Male	Female
1	Socio-economic	79.40	79.31
2	Child abuse & child labour	76.42	75.64
3	Socio-political	77.62	76.85
4	Educational problems	76.30	75.65
5	Crimes and criminals	81.29	82.17
6	Drugs and alcoholism	81.72	81.79
7	Health related problems	80.18	80.86
8	Family problems	74.84	75.67
9	Adulteration	78.12	78.89
10	Violence against women	63.53	63.21

The results indicated that 81.72% male educated adults of Punjab have perceived use of alcohol and drugs as social problems and 81.29% perceived that crimes and criminals were rising alarmingly. Similarly, 80.18% male educated adults of Punjab perceived health related problems, while 79.40% advocates socio-economic problems as social problems. Again, 78.12% male educated adults of Punjab perceived adulteration as social problems and 77.62% perceived that socio-political problems were on edge. Further, 76.42% male educated adults of Punjab perceived child abuse & child labour related problems as social problems and 76.30% perceived that educational problems as social problems. While, 74.84% male educated adults of Punjab perceived family problems as social problems and 63.53% perceived that violence against women were on rise.

The results indicated that 82.17% female educated adults of Punjab perceived crimes and criminals as social problems and 81.79% perceived that use of alcohol and drugs were rising alarmingly. Similarly, 80.86% female educated adults of Punjab perceived health related problems, while 79.31% advocates socio-economic problems as social problems. Again, 78.89% female educated adults of Punjab perceived adulteration as social problems and 76.85% perceived that socio-political problems were on edge. Further, 75.67% female educated adults of Punjab perceived family problems as social problems and 75.65% perceived educational problems as social problems. However, 75.64% female educated adults of Punjab perceived child abuse & child labour related problems as social problems and 63.21% perceived that violence against women has been on rise.

Variance in Social Problems as Perceived by Educated Male and Female Adults of Punjab

Male and female educated adults of Punjab were compared on social problems scale, ANOVA was applied and the results have been presented in the table 3.

Table 3

Summary of ANOVA of Social Problems as Perceived by Educated Male and Female Adults of Punjab

Groups	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F-Value
Between Groups	46.145	1	46.15	0.07
Within Groups	713743.39	1199	595.28	P> .05
Total	713789.54	1200		

The results showed that values of sum of squares and mean squares between groups have been found to be 46.145 and 46.15 respectively and the values of sum of squares and mean squares within groups have been found to be 713743.39 and 595.28 respectively. The F-value being 0.07, has been found

to be insignificant at 0.05 level of significance. It reveals that there is no significant difference in the perceptions of social problems of educated male and female adults of Punjab.

The hypothesis of the study states that no significant difference exists in the perceptions of social problems of male and female educated adults. The findings of the study were in accordance with this hypothesis as no significant difference has been found in the perceptions of social problems of educated male and female adults of Punjab. Hence hypothesis has been accepted. The studies conducted by Pandey (1987), Natalino (1979), Bergen (1995), Merton (1995), Noon (1996), Robinson (1996), Kiangi (1996), Makofane (1999), Flores (2001), Gupta et.al. (2003), Bansal et.al. (2005) explored problems faced by women and crime against women. However, studies conducted by Griffin (1976), Luna (1996) explored and discriminate problems faced by males and females. Griffin (1976) in the study of drinking behaviour and attitude among adolescents explored that more males than females drink alcohol frequently and in greater amount. Luna (1996) through a study perceived problems of Muslim college students in United States has also explored social, religious, financial, academic and linguistic adjustment problems in higher education. The investigator revealed that men perceived more social problems than women. The results of above studies do agree with the results of present study which revealed that there has been no significant difference in the perceptions of social problems among educated male and female adults of Punjab. It has been observed that due to modernization, the difference in awareness among gender has been reduced considerably and this has resulted in a drastic change in their perceptions. This can be a strong reason for not finding the gender difference in perceiving social problems prevailing in Punjab.

Conclusions

1. There is no significant difference in the perceptions of social problems of educated male and female adults of Punjab.
2. 23% of male and 23% of female educated adults have perceived less social problems.
3. 25% of male and 27% of female adults have perceived more social problems.
4. The results concluded that social problems relating to drugs and alcoholism, crime and criminals and health related problems are strongly perceived problems by educated male and female adults of Punjab.

Suggestions

1. Our curriculum should be so equipped that young generation can be sensitized on various gender issues.
2. Government and other agencies responsible for maintaining law and order should ensure safety of women and do needful to curb graph of crime.
3. Women should be made aware about their rights and imparting strategies to escape themselves from being victimized.
4. People should be made aware about their responsibilities toward their family so that congenial environment within family should be created.
5. Strict action should be taken against those responsible for crime against women.

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