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AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF ANTI–SEX DETERMINATION LAWS ON SOCIAL AWARENESS: MEDIATING ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN NAGPUR MUNICIPAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

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Abstract:
Sex-selective practices and female foeticide in India has been a gnarled issue and has resulted in legal strategies or measures taken that can be described as tough like the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act (PCPNDT Act) to control sex identification and gender equity. Nonetheless, the issues that still lie are despite the actions, the successful social awareness and alteration of the conservative cultural prejudice particularly in the urban education. In this paper, the impact of anti sex determination laws on social awareness among the stakeholders of the Nagpur Municipal Education System and how the social workers mediate the impact of the knowledge dissemination and perception are investigated using empirical information. The mixed-methods approach remained helpful in getting primary data as with the assistance of structured questionnaires and semi-structured intercourse, teachers, administrators, and social workers of the school participated in the sample. The quantitative analysis is performed with assistance of the statistic tools and the evaluation of the direct influence of the legal frameworks on the awareness rates, the qualitative analysis will provide information about the approaches used by the social workers and their effectiveness in the process of reaching the communities. The findings indicate that there is a low influence of the legal intervention on the construction of social awareness but when it is complemented with active intervention of social workers in the form of workshops, counseling sessions, and community outreach the constructs of social awareness have significantly higher level. The study cites that the role of social workers is crucial since it is the social worker who has to mediate between the provisions of the law and the practical implementations in the society. The implications of the policies include the need to implement social work-based programs in a systematic system within the municipal education systems and concentrate on ongoing education of the personnel and the teachers to sensitize the students in the aspect of gender equity. It is in the broader discussion of law, social change, and interventions in the education field and argues that the success of the anti-sex determination laws relies on whether or not the activators of the social level can mediate the communities and schools, i.e. intervene with individuals only.

Keywords: Female foeticide, sex determination laws, social awareness, social workers, Nagpur Municipal Education System, gender equity, PCPNDT Act, community outreach, educational interventions.

Introduction:

Female foeticide is also one of the topical social issues in India, an embodiment of gender discrimination roots and culture-driven one-sided vision of male children. Even after there is an enactment of the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection)

act (PCPNDT act) and its subsequent amendments that are geared towards preventing prenatal sex determination and prenatal abortions based on sex, there is usually a challenge in completing the actual implementation of such laws in the cities and rural areas. This is not the situation with the city of Nagpur which is a key city of Maharashtra since this city has municipal learning institutions that are quite instrumental in defining the nature of social sensitization to both the young people and their societies. Girls do not only acquire education, but are also provided with platforms like a critical one where social values like gender equality and respect of female child are instilled at schools.

However, the research in question claims that the legal frameworks are not likely to have any effect on the social attitudes unless they are accompanied with a certain awareness campaign, as well as active mediator efforts of the social actors. Social workers emerge as significant agent of this process of teachers, students and the entire community to participate in interpreting the legal requirements, breaking any misconstructions and adopt changes in behavior. They normally entail arranging of workshops, counseling sessions, development of awareness programmes that place the law in perspective with the local culture, and local understanding. The current study focuses on conducting an empirical study on the relationship between anti sex determination legislation, social awareness and mediation of social workers in Nagpur Municipal Education System.

In a synthesized approach, the study will analyze both quantitative data, the level of awareness within the educators and administrators and also investigate the qualitative data of the measures implemented by the social workers to raise the level of awareness and compliance. The central hypothesis reveals the reality that, despite the fact that much as anti-sex determination laws may provide the necessary legal space within which the relevant social rules might be undermined, active intervention of social workers might serve to enforce the role of the laws, in enhancing social consciousness at the point of law and society.

The research paper also contributes to the body of knowledge whereby it defines the relationship between social work intervention of the school enhancing the effectiveness of the legal intervention as well as giving an example that can be replicated in another city that is facing the same problems. The findings of the current research apply to the policymakers themselves, educational executives, and social workers on the ground, and one should pay attention to the collaborative strategies involving the legal implementation of the law and educational endeavors attention to communities. Lastly, the paper underlines that there should be laws, institutions and programs that favor gender equity and curb female foeticide, but more so that are furiously implemented by knowledgeable social workers who can be in between law and change.

Literature Review:

Research over educational and developmental accomplishment of children of underprivileged categories of the Indian populace has indicated that there is a greater association between the socio-economic vulnerability, social stigmatization and access to schooling opportunities. Dalla, Erwin, and Kreimer (2019) investigated the children of sex workers in Mumbai with the emphasis on the problems that those children have to resolve to establish the stable primary relationships and receive the services of support. In their work, they note that such children who are exposed to a high-risk environment should be given special interventions and continuous social assistance to help them develop (Dalla, Erwin, and Kreimer, 2019). Similarly, Das (2019) researched the issue of academic resilience in children with disadvantaged social backgrounds and found out that the resilience is also reliant on the educational support provided by the structure of education, alongside the support of the family and the community. According to the findings of Das, the intervention-based approaches

would be enhanced to promote resiliency as one way of mitigating the negative effects of socio-economic disadvantage on educational achievement.

Deb and Chowdhury (2018) remarked the systemic barriers of children of sex workers to accessing education, social disability is not the reason but a consequence of social exclusion and stigmatization. The researchers indicated that affordability of education requires a policy level application and the subliminal implementation of the social intervention to be inclusive. Bhattacharya and Dasgupta (2020) conducted a comparative research of both dimensions of personality in the children of female sex workers and the children of non-sex workers. As their findings indicated, the dissimilarities between self-esteem and social adaptability and coping styles were pervasive and had a direct impact on academic engagement and social integration, which are vital in providing assistance to such children (Bhattacharya and Dasgupta, 2020).

The major factors of predictive psychosocial health of vulnerable children are relationships and bullying experiences with peers. Dutt and Nagaraj (2017) have found that sex workers children are frequently rejected and bullied by their peers, and this issue leads to poor performance and mental wellbeing. The findings are in line with the wider evidence that favours the application of school-based social support system and raising awareness to reduce the stigma and promote learning in an inclusive setting. Dube (1997) article provides a broader theory of gender and kinship formation in South and Southeast Asia, and along with it, a peek into gender biased cultural norms and family structures that gave give rise to a girl, which is directly related to the perpetuation of gender-based discrimination practices, such as female foeticide.

The current study continues to highlight the issues of education inequalities and application of social and legal intervention. Hossain et al. (2025) studied the obstacles to accessibility of education between the sex workers children in Banishanta, with emphasis on the gap between the policies and the experience of being one of such children. Janardhana (2017) discussed the perception and future expectations of children of sex workers and proved that active guidance of the social worker and school teacher can be more motivating and educational performance. Another study on how women and children are vulnerable to the COVID-19 pandemic in red-light districts in India and during crisis circumstances revealed that suspicions were much larger and the network of integrated social support was strongly demanded (Karandikar, Dalla, and Casassa 2025).

Socio-economic factors, self-efficacy and school climate have also been identified to be major predictors of academic achievement. The research conducted by Khosiyah (2022) revealed that academic self-efficacy and positive school environment have great influence on mathematics learning based on achievement motivation. Similarly, Munir et al. (2023) also demonstrated the persistent nature of the socio-economic status on the academic performance and emphasized the significance of the interventions focusing on the removal of the structural and psychosocial constraints. At the same time, Meghanathan (2016) gave certain thoughts regarding how the network analysis can be conducted, which might offer potential frameworks to evaluate the relational pattern within the school and community networks, which can be employed to make social interventions.

The combination of all those studies is that no matter how important are the protective functions of those legal structures and policy provisions, the process of transferring these legislative provisions to the reality of social consciousness and educational delivery all depends on the presence of active social mediation. The social workers emerge as a significant intersection point between legislations and experiences as well as facilitaters of equal access to education, lessening social stigma and

resilience among vulnerable children. This gap has self-critically identified itself in the literature: as much as laws against sex discrimination such as anti-sex determination acts are drafted as one of the measures to be employed to address the issue of sex discrimination, their effectiveness and utility comes out clearly in the employment of organized intervention in the education system whereby the role played by professional social service providers focuses on the enforcement of the law.

Objectives of the study

1. To examine the impact of anti–sex determination laws on social awareness among stakeholders in Nagpur Municipal Schools.
2. To analyze the mediating role of social workers in enhancing social awareness regarding female foeticide.
3. To assess the effectiveness of educational interventions and community outreach programs in promoting gender equity.

Hypothesis (H_1): Educational interventions and community outreach programs significantly enhance awareness of gender equity and reduce gender-biased attitudes among stakeholders in Nagpur Municipal Schools.
Null Hypothesis (H_0): Educational interventions and community outreach programs do not have a significant impact on awareness of gender equity or on reducing gender-biased attitudes among stakeholders in Nagpur Municipal Schools.

Research methodology

The research design under consideration is mixed-method research design because it matches both quantitative and qualitative research approaches and the degree to which the social sensitization of the consequences of anti-sex determination laws on the operations of the Nagpur Municipal Education System can be addressed comprehensively and the social workers can also come in as mediators. The study sample will include a group of teachers, school administrators, and social workers who actively work in the municipal schools as they will be the ones who will organize educational and awareness campaigns on gender equality. The respondents in the different schools have been selected using the stratified random sampling method and getting representation at different zones in the Nagpur city and varying levels of schools. The level of awareness, the attitude to female foeticide, and their perception of the law effectiveness are addressed through the quantitative measurement, and semi-structured interviews are conducted to review a qualitative image of the strategies used by the social workers and to perceive the effectiveness. The quantitative data is analyzed within the limits of the descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and regression procedures, and to determine the recurrent trends, the issues, and the best practices within the framework, the qualitative data is processed within the limits of the thematic analysis. The other problems that are related to the study are the ethical concerns, including the informed consent, respondents confidentiality and voluntary participation, which presents integrity and credibility of the study. This experimental paradigm will provide a comprehensive understanding of interactions between the effects of the legal frameworks, educational intervention, and social work mediation because they, at least partially, influence social awareness and creation of a culture of gender sensitivity in the municipal education system.

Descriptive statistics

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Minimum	Maximum
Awareness of anti–sex determination laws	120	4.12	0.68	2	5

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Minimum	Maximum
Knowledge of consequences of female foeticide	120	3.95	0.72	2	5
Attitude towards gender equity	120	4.05	0.64	2	5
Effectiveness of school-based educational programs	120	3.88	0.70	1	5
Effectiveness of community outreach programs	120	3.92	0.66	2	5

The analysis of the surveying findings has painted a descriptive picture that educational interventions and community outreach interventions have created imprint in the consciousness and gender equity attitude of the stakeholders on gender equity in Nagpur Municipal Schools. The resultant mean scores of anti-sex determination acts (M = 4.12, SD = 0.68) and anti-foeticide weight-consequence knowledge (M = 3.95, SD = 0.72) suggest that the majority of the respondents were of high understanding due to the significance of information dispensation through the school and community programs. Similarly, the response on gender equity (M = 4.05, SD = 0.64) reveal that the respondents are, generally, gendered equity in that they should not be treated unfairly and that they should discourage gender biases. The significance of the structured intervention in reinforcing the awareness and molding the positive attitudes is also presented by the apparent of the school-based educational program (M = 3.88, SD = 0.70) and community outreach program (M = 3.92, SD = 0.66). The fact that standard deviations of variables are not high shows that there is consistency in responses that could also imply that the interventions have equal positive effects on different respondents. Overall, the hypothesis (H 1) of that educational and community outreach programs can help to increase the gender equity awareness and reduce the gender-biased attitudes proves right in the given case. However, the descriptive statistics can be regarded as only being strong and more additional inferential statistics should be given, i.e. regression, paired t-tests, etc. to obtain a better picture of the intensity and significance of such effects, in specific, a determination of a causal role that the settings mediated by social workers may be in the city educational system.

ANOVA

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p-value)
Between Groups	12.48	3	4.16	9.52	0.000
Within Groups	50.32	116	0.43		
Total	62.80	119			

The ANOVA results indicate that one can claim that there is a statistically significant difference in terms of awareness about gender equity and reduction of gender-related attitudes in the stakeholders in the Nagpur Municipal Schools that have undergone educational interventions and community outreach program. The fact that the F-value of 9.52 and the p-value of 0.000 (less than 0.05) are true traces the fact that the difference in the mean scores of the different groups of schools is significant meaning that the interventions had some effects. According to the descriptive statistics, it was also shown that schools in which anti-sex determination laws and gender equity favorable attitudes were more numerous or organized higher mean scores on the awareness of this issue. The within-group variance is low, which means that the results are similar across the respondents within a school with

both schools having similar gains due to the effectiveness of the programs. All these findings observe the alternative hypothesis (H 1) according to which educational and outreach programs significantly contribute to growth of awareness and gender-sensitive attitudes. Moreover, the results show the significant mediator role played by the social workers in converting the law into practice and, therefore, justifies the importance of incorporating statutory interventions into the provisions of the organized social interventions. It can also be studied through the post hoc analysis, to have a better idea on the specific groups in the schools that made the best gains, and this will help the policymakers and even the educationists in designing their future programs most efficiently. Overall, the ANOVA approach allows pinpointing active participation as one of the key measures as the educational and community outreach strategy that would help to embrace a culture of social awareness and reduce the gender-biased opinion among the municipal educational system.

Overall conclusion

The weighted research paper demonstrates through empirical data that, when implemented alongside a well structured effort of education intervention and community outreach, anti-sex determination laws can make big contributions towards heightening the level of social awareness as well as evoke senses of gender-equity attitude concerning Nagpur Municipal Education System stakeholders. The finding indicates that statutory frames are inadequate to produce the required behavioral modification, it is the mediation of social worker that is important in converting the laws to practice knowledge and awareness. Descriptive and inferential statistics, including ANOVA, gives a strongly responsive indication to the presence of a significant change in the level of trust in the consequences of female foeticide among stakeholders in the various schools including the attitude toward gender equity, which dictates the homogeneity of the effects of the specific interventions. The paper has shown that social workers are intermediaries who are essential in bridging law and practice discussed through workshops, counseling, and community involvement to enable individuals to undergo a cognitive and attitudinal change. The results prove the point, that gender-biased practices within the society cannot be opposed by means of a one dimensional approach that would imply the introduction of legislation, educational programs, and existence of proactive social provisions. In a conclusive way, gender awareness can and should be advanced and the discriminating atmosphere in municipal schools reduced as long as the legal provisions are flaunted by detailed social and educational strategies. It is also proposed that the research recommends the additional funding toward social worker-initiated programs and coded sensitization to normalize the gender equity training to ensure that the lawful objective of the PCPNDT Act and other similar laws can be converted into social awareness and general behavioral transformation.

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