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Title: 'A Study of Elementary Schools of Delhi from a Gender Perspective'

Abstract

The current research based on the theoretical framework of multilayered sociological perspective of gender has unveiled in-depth information on the sixteen schools covered in the present research from the standpoint of the sociological critique. The wholistic analysis has unveiled the overall environment of the school including their nomenclature, leadership, physical facilities, co-curricular activities, initiatives for mainstreaming differently-able children, and; thrust areas for teacher's training from a gender perspective.

An analysis of the nomenclature of the sixteen schools revealed gendered distinctions in one fourth government schools that depicted gender bias in their nomenclature and their strength. The school leadership data in the present research shows women in leadership positions in ten schools out of sixteen while the remaining six schools had a male school Principal. A contrast was observed in the two categories of schools in terms of their human resources available for teaching and administration and; also in their overall male/female ratio. Another significant difference that emerged among government and private schools was a much higher percentage of male teachers teaching in government schools as compared to private schools where male teachers were hard to locate. It was also observed that in private schools, most of the male teachers were engaged in teaching either co-curricular subjects like art, music or sports or were teaching senior secondary classes in their schools. Analysis of co-curricular activities in the sixteen schools reveals wide differentiation in not only the number of such activities offered by the schools but also about their overall integration in the school curriculum. There was a compartmentalization of art education activities in accordance with sex based choices and

teacher's encouragements were apparent with the domination of girls in music and of boys in drawing in most government schools.

An analysis of gender differentiation in school practices and reflects several gender based distinctions being practiced in schools in overt and covert ways. A study of various classroom activities reflected that interactions within it seemed to be 'doing' gender among boys and girls in most government schools through sex based segregation in sitting arrangement, task allocation and in leadership, government schools seemed to be compartmentalizing boys and girls into two separate categories. Private schools on the other hand, in most cases were more open and adopted innovative methods in carrying out classroom activities.

Diverse viewpoints were reflected on analyzing the professional aspirations across school teachers and students. Professional aspirations of male and female students reflect three emerging trends. First, female teachers were more accepting and forthright as compared to male teachers about women being suitable for *unconventional* professions. Second, private school teachers were much more open minded with regards to acceptance for both boys and girls for most professions. Third and final, male teachers from private schools seem to be more free from the gender stereotypes as compared to their counterparts in the government schools with regards to professional aspirations for students. In contrast to teacher's opinions, children preferred a career in accordance with their interest and ambitions.

By and large both male and female teachers related *masculinity* with men, and; *shyness*, *compromise* and *nurture* with women. Progressive trends were observed among female teachers who considered both women and men as bold, confident and capable of generating income. Opinions of higher number of male teachers found to be in line with conventional norms with respect to personality traits for men and women.

To conclude, there is a need to strengthen gender perspective in overall education system. It has been realized that no one person or authority can bring about the change. There is a need for multi-sectoral and multi-pronged approach to make the school system gender sensitive. Multiple efforts have to be made to integrate gender within the overall school practices in order to promote equality between the two sexes.