

Gender Discrimination in Primary Education Sector: A Study on Slum Area in Rajshahi City Corporation

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Abstract

Although Bangladesh has brought many improvements in many sectors, including educational sectors, gender discrimination has existed in literacy in the last several decades. The study aims to analyse the present disparity between males and females in the primary education sector. In this regard, household and primary school questionnaire survey have been performed to collect the necessary data. Systematic random sampling has been used for survey design, and the sample size was fifty with a confidence level of 95%. The obtained data were analysed using SPSS and Microsoft Excel software. The study has found that the rate of school-going female children is less than that of male children, and the rate of dropout female children is more than that of male children. The reason behind this consequence is a financial problem and parents' incognisance. Despite many facilities in the primary education sector, female education is given less importance than male education. This study reveals the present condition of gender discrimination in the primary education sector. By taking some steps of Government and raising public awareness, gender discrimination in the primary education sector can be solved very soon.

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Introduction

Primary education is the first stage of formal education. Primary education provides students with a basic understanding of various subjects as well as their skills. Primary education is universally accepted as the foundation laying level of education in all nations of the world (Etor. et al., 2013). A pupil or student who completes a level of education such as primary education (from grade 1 to 5 in Bangladesh) is called a primary graduate. Primary education is compulsory for both male and female children.

Gender discrimination means a situation in which someone is treated less well because of their sex, usually when a girl is treated less well than a boy. Gender discrimination occurs when a person is treated unfavourably due to social behaviour such as the non-conformance of gender roles (which may be related to someone's sexual orientation). Half of the world's population consists of women, whose large portion is still discriminated against in different phases of life directly or indirectly. Gender discrimination in the world can be seen in different religions, countries and communities. For gender discrimination, women lag behind men in many activities such as educational activities, economic activities, decision-making processes, social and cultural activities.

Gender discrimination is much pronounced in the education sector. Equal primary education is the fundamental right of every citizen of the country. Inequality has appeared as a major barrier in achieving universally acknowledged primary education in Bangladesh. Though there are various efforts undertaken to achieve universal primary education, gender discrimination also exists in literacy. A large number of female children are deprived of primary education for discrimination. Gender discrimination prevails in the percentage of drop out male and female children. The disparity in primary education exists in division, locality, gender, sex and economic status in Bangladesh (Ferdaush, 2011).

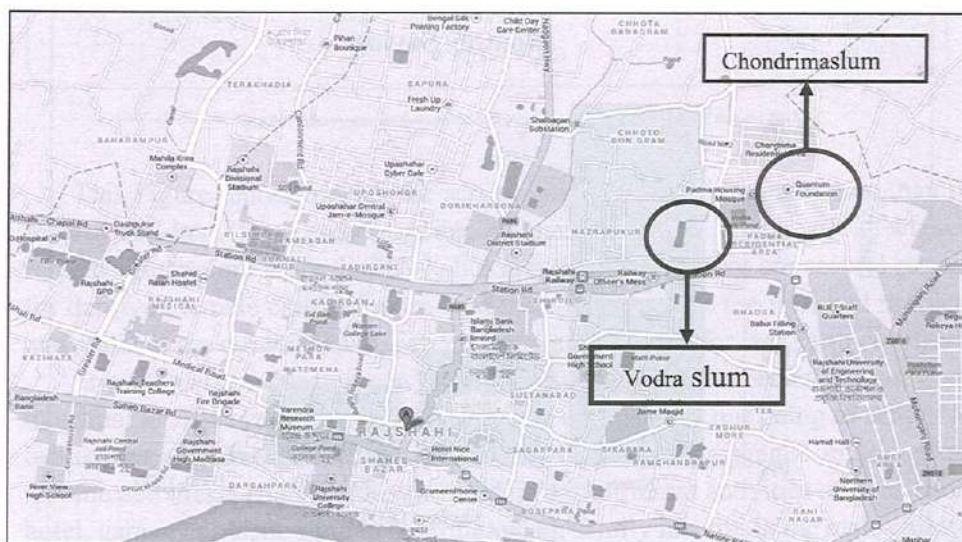
Gender discrimination highly predominates in lower classes and some middle classes. Usually lower classes people are illiterate and have no concern about the importance of their children's primary education. In Rajshahi city-corporation, there are some slum areas where many children live with the age of 6 to 10 years. However, most of the children are not going to primary school, and their parents are not also concerned about their children's primary education. The children are engaged in different low-income activities. As a result, the literacy rate of Rajshahi city-corporation is not increasing.

This study will help to know the education status of parents and their economic condition, the rate of primary school-going children and reasons behind for not school going, the percentage of dropout students and reasons behind dropout, the existing condition of gender discrimination of primary school education and lastly thinking about the further study of the educational sector. There have been some problems with completing this study. There were tendencies of the respondents to conceal information. Again, some respondents did not want to talk.

Methods and Materials

Primary education is typically the first stage of formal education, coming after preschool and before secondary education. But still, a large portion of children are deprived of primary education for gender discrimination. The objectives of this study were to analyse the significant changes in gender discrimination of primary school education and the rate of female dropout students, and the public perception of it in Rajshahi City Corporation.

Generally, low-income people have a higher tendency to be deprived of primary education. For that, two slums were selected in Rajshahi City-corporation to collect data. These slums were Vodra slum and Chondrima slum in 19 No. ward. In this slum, most families are illiterate, and their monthly family income is meagre. Around 740 populations live in these slums, and there are about 200 children aged 6 to 10 years.



(Source: Google map, 2018)

Map: Location of Vodra slum and Chondrima slum in Rajshahi

Simple random sampling and systematic random sampling were followed for the study. A questionnaire was created to get the desired data on the different variables set to establish the achievement of the study's objectives. The population of this study was 740, and the sample size was 50 with a confidence level of 95%.

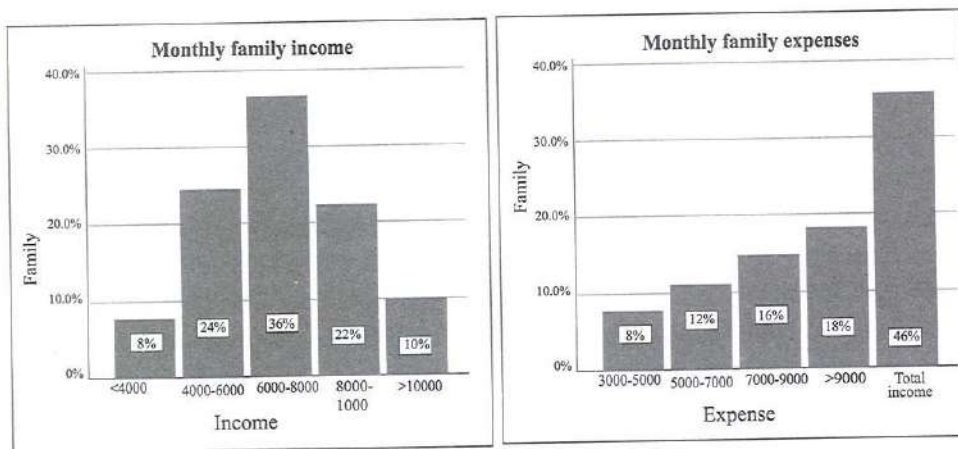


Figure-1: Monthly income and expenses of family (Source: Field Survey, 2018)

From this Figure, it can be observed that most households have monthly expenses equal to their monthly income. Generally, the slum area has many family members, but accordingly, the number of earning members is low. Some

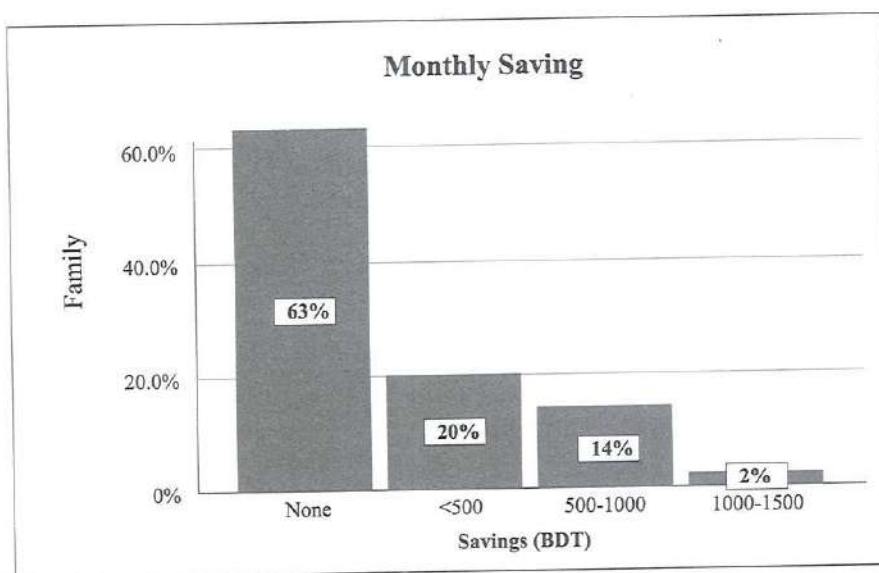


Figure-2: Monthly savings of family (Source: Field Survey, 2018)

male members work in hotels, plastic shops or welding shops, and some are rickshaw pullers and beggars. As well as some female members are engaged in different activities such as household works or begging. Most households have an average monthly income of 6000-8000 BDT, and their monthly expenses are total income. Very few families have more than two earning members and an average monthly income of more than 10000 BDT. There are also some families with a monthly income of less than 6000 BDT. There are few households whose monthly expenses are less than the monthly income.

This Figure represents that most of the families have no savings. Since their monthly expenses are equal to their monthly income, they cannot save any money in a month or a year. There are few families whose earning members are more than two and save 1000 BDT or less monthly. They save their money in different NGOs.

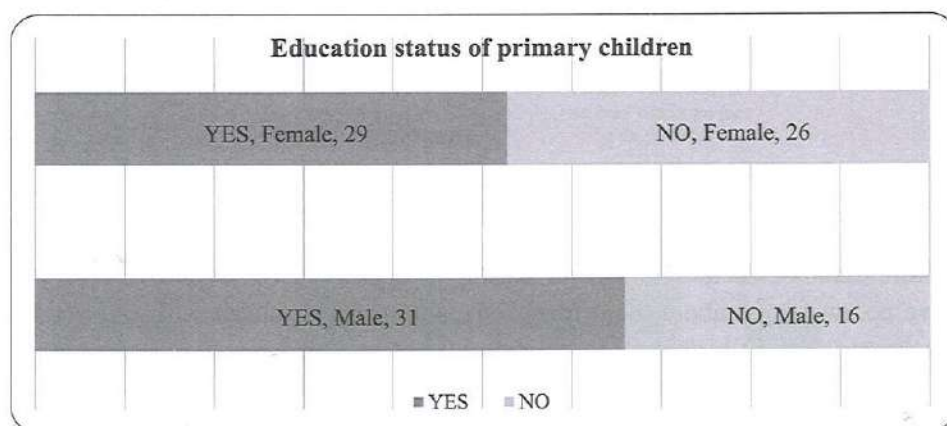


Figure-3: Primary education status of 6 to 10 years children (Source: Field Survey, 2018)

This Figure represents that the school going male children are more than the female children. Here, school-going male children are almost 65%, whereas female children are more than 50% but less than 55%. There are several reasons for deprived female children more than male children like the financial problem, and children are not interested, parents are not interested, for lack birth certificate.

From the above chart, it can be evaluated that the main reason for not going to school is a financial problem. Most of the children are not going to school for lack of money. The parents are not educated. They are engaged in some low-income activities. Their children are engaged in different activities such as tokay, hotel, garage or plastic shop to contribute their family income. Some male children are continuing their primary education along with the work, but the female

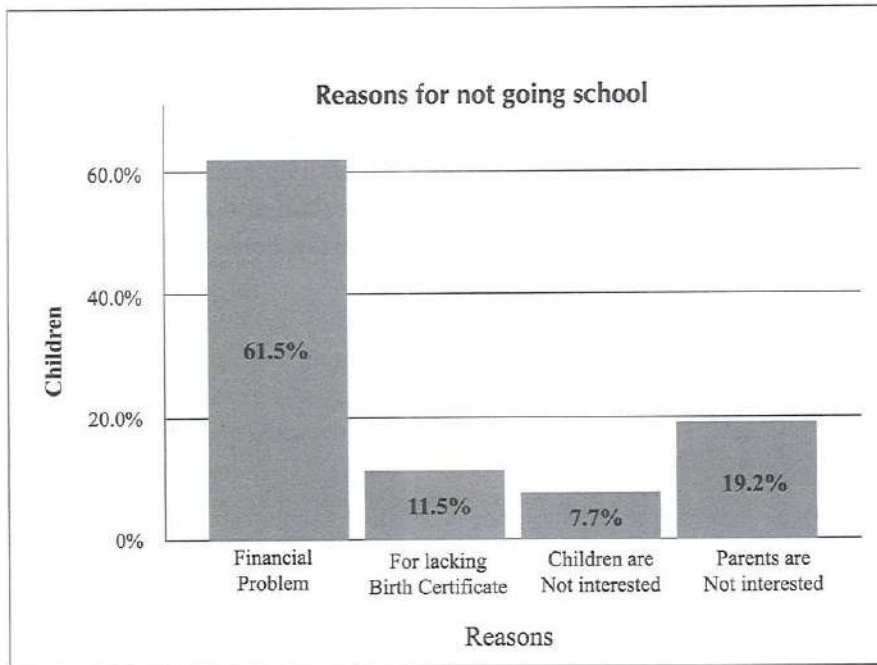


Figure4: Reasons for not going to school (Source: Field Survey, 2018)

children cannot do it. The second reason is parents' incognisance. The parents have no awareness about the primary education of their children. The other two reasons are lack of birth certificate, and children are not interested. Some parents

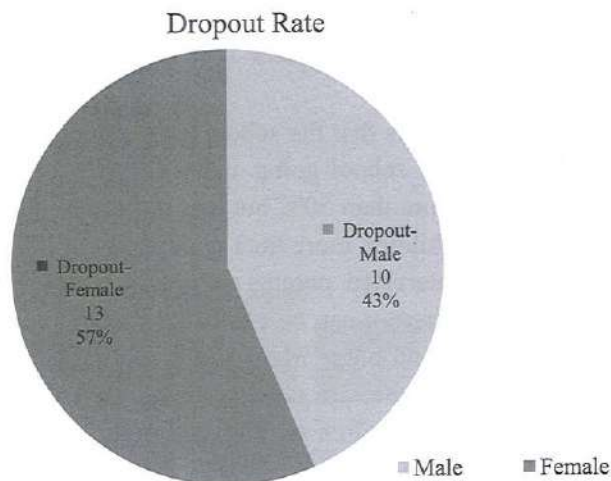


Figure-5: Dropout rate (Source: Field Survey, 2018)

are not conscious about preparing the birth certificate of their children. That is why the school administration could not admit them.

The Figure shows that the children, both male and female, do not complete their primary education. Here, the rate of female dropout children is more than the male dropout children.

Because male children can do many works in taking primary education, female children cannot do it. Again, when female children grow up, then their parents think about their marriage. As a result, female children are fall behind in education than male children.

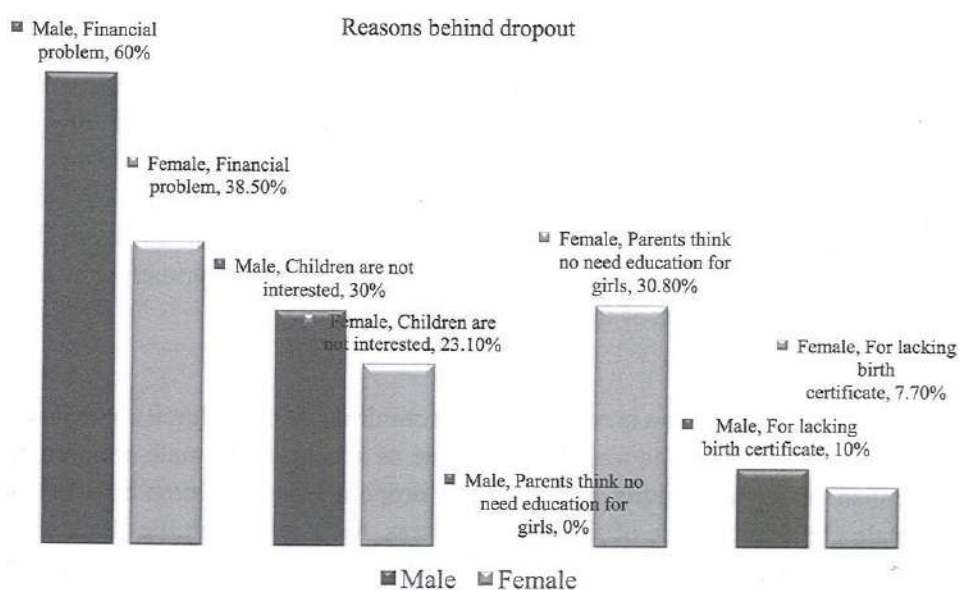


Figure-6: Reasons behind dropout (Source: Field Survey, 2018)

The chart represents that the main reason behind the dropout of both male and female children is a financial problem. Most of the children are given up primary education for lack of money. Their family income is meagre, and their parents cannot afford to study for their children. That is why the children are stopped attending school and engaged in various low-income activities. Several children are given up their education for lack of their interest. Some children are given up for lack of birth certificates. Besides these reasons, there is another reason which stopped female children from attending school. That is, parents think a girl's education is not necessary. They do not have any concern about female education. Because most of the parents are illiterate. So, when their female children grow up, then they think about their marriage.

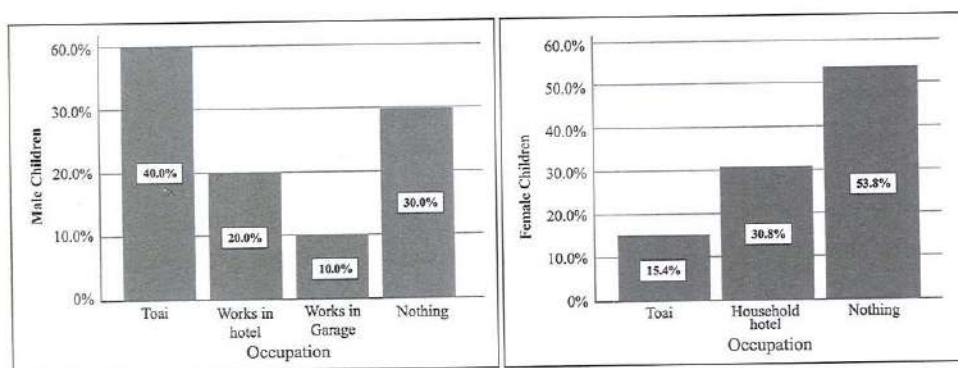


Figure-7: Occupation of the children (Source: Field Survey, 2018)

This Figure represented that; the children are engaged in different types of low-income activities to contribute to their family income. Most of the male children are tokay, and female children are not engaged in any activities. Some male children are works in a hotel, garage and female children work in the house. The male children earn an average of 1000-3000 BDT per month, and female children average 500-2000 BDT per month. Some male children are continuing their primary education with this income, but most of the female children cannot do it.

Discussion

Though primary education is compulsory for children, many children are deprived of primary education. It is found that the rate of school-going male children are more than the female children and the rate of dropout female children is more than the male children because of financial problems. Most of the families live below the poverty level, and the parents cannot afford to study their children. That is why the male children are doing many works to contribute to their family income. Most of the male children left their studies for income. Some children continue their primary education along with work. However, most of the female children cannot do it. As a result, the rate of school-going male children are more than the female children, and the rate of dropout male children are lower than the female children. Other reasons are lacking birth certificates, children are not interested, and parents are not interested. Most of the parents are illiterate. So, they have no concern about the primary education of their children. They have no awareness of the importance of female education. Still, the parents are thinking about the marriage of their female children. It is a matter of sorrow that gender discrimination still exists in our country at the primary education level. In order to build an educated society, this gender discrimination at the primary education level must be overcome.

Conclusion

Education is one of the basic needs of a human being. Primary education is compulsory for both male and female children. However, many children are deprived of primary education for many reasons. Still, there are exists gender discrimination, and for that, female children are deprived of primary education.

This study had the aim to analyse the gender discrimination in primary school education and dropout rate in Rajshahi city-corporation. The rate of primary school-going female children are less than the male children, and the rate of dropout female children are more than the male children. The main reason behind this not going to school and dropout from primary education is a financial problem. However, it is also seen that several female children are dropout for lack of parent awareness. Their parents are not interested in the primary education of their female children. So still, there are exists gender discrimination in primary school education. Gender discrimination is a social crisis. It has a destructive impact on the overall socio-economic sector. So, it needed to be solved very soon.

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