

Analyzing Trends for Girl Child Education Prospects in Urban Rajasthan

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Abstract- *This paper analyzes the trends in parental economical and psychological aspects visa-a-vis girl child education in urban Rajasthan. Study finds that the gender of parent is not a critical parameter for positive attitude towards girls' education and both mother and father are equally interested in the same. Parents from urban Rajasthan are found to be having positive attitude towards girl child's education and getting a job after completing her education, irrespective of the parent's education level, economic well-being or awareness about gender inequality issues prevalent in society.*

Keywords: Gender Inequality, Gender Sensitization, Education, Girl Child, Urban Rajasthan.

Introduction

Although, women are the active moderators of shaping the destiny of future generations, their status has been declining in societies since various eras (Jayapalan, 2001; Shinde, 2017). Men dominate women in almost every sphere of professional vocation. Despite being 50% of human population, 30% of the official labour force, while performing 60% of all working hours; women receive only 10% of the world income and own less than 1% of the world property (Bandura, 1986). Irrespective of the various rights given to women in constitution of India, and their political ascendancy, the status of women in India is not equivalent to their male counterparts at ground level (Parihar, 2011; Rao, 2008; <http://www.sify.com/news/50...>; <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women...>). In 2014, India ranked at 127 out of 152 countries in the UNDP's (United Nations Development Programme) gender inequality index, while in world economic forum's global gender gap index-2014 India was ranked at 114 in the list of 142 countries. In spite of various schemes and programs started by Indian government for the benefit and empowerment of women, there is no significant change in the condition of Indian women (<http://www.indiacelebrating.com>). There are many different traditional, spiritual or collective reasons for bias against women in Indian society:

1. Patriarchy system (<http://saarthakindia.org...>).
2. The supposed sanction from Religious and cultural beliefs of women's' lower status in domestic setups (<https://www.huffingtonpost...>).
3. Lack of opportunities, exposure, access, independence, inheritance, education among women due to gender discrimination (Agrawal and Agrawal, 2015).

4. Even inside a family, women may be given a smaller proportion of resources, thus living in relatively poverty in comparison to the male counterpart (Srivastava, 2016).
5. Gender Discrimination in jobs, as female participation in India's workforce waned to a low of 27% in 2014 from 35% in 1999, which is lower than the global average of about 50% and the East Asian average of around 63%. (<https://www.imf.org...>).
6. The societal hypothesis that women are housekeepers and should be limited to the four walls of the house is perceived normal (<http://www.womensweb.in.../>).
7. Most of the women are ignorant of their elementary privileges. (<http://www.dnaindia.com...>).
8. In 2010, all over India, about 96 Lakh boys and 74 Lakh girls appeared in class 10 boards 'exams, out of which about 78% girls and 73% boys pass the exam. The appearance ratio is about 44% girls and 56% Boys. This shows the blatant gender discrimination on part of parents. Figure 1 shows that the regions which score low on Literacy rate are more prone to gender discrimination and/or least safe for women (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women...>). Comparing the regions bounded by dark red lines in the two maps in figure 1 demonstrates correlation between low literacy level and less women safety in Indian context. Therefore, to uplift the overall status of women in India, major reforms must be implemented for elevating women education.

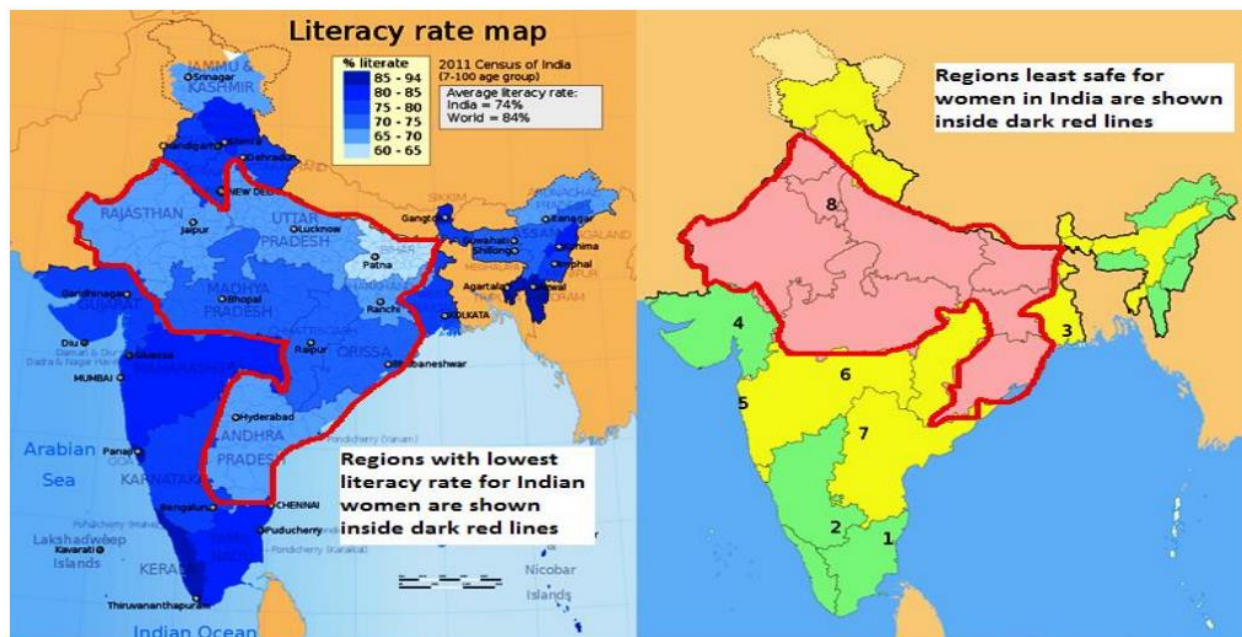


Figure 1: Comparing Regions with Low Literacy Rate and Lower on Women Safety.

Understanding the problem could be the first step towards taking the remedial measures, which could assist in better opportunities for female population in socio-economic domain of India. One of the solutions to improve the female situation in India would be to educate them and make them less dependent on their male counterparts. However, the average Indian male literacy rate is

82.14% and female literacy rate is only 65.46% according to Census 2011. The gap indicates a wide gender disparity in India, such that Indians do not give enough importance to the education of girls. Although the literacy rate in Rajasthan is seeing an upward trend and is 66.11 % as per 2011 population census (in comparison with 60.41% in 2001), there is still a wide gap between the male and female literacy rates; male literacy stands at 79.19 % (75.70% in 2001) while female literacy is only at 52.12 % (43.85% in 2001). (<https://www.census2011.co.in...>). Not only that Rajasthan average literacy rate is far below the national average of 74.04%, the state also has the highest difference in male female literacy in the country at 28%, where the national average is 16.7%. (<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/>). Incidentally, 75.13% of Rajasthan population is rural and 24.87% stays in urban areas. Expectedly, average literacy rate of rural population is 61.44%, whereas, 79.68% of urban Rajasthan is literate on average. While the male and female literacy rates in census 2011 for rural Rajasthan stands at 76.16% and 42.20% respectively, the urban Rajasthan fares quite well comparatively, with male and female literacy rates standing at 87.91% and 63.81% respectively.

What makes this significant difference in male and female literacy rates for urban and rural Rajasthan? Better logistics and infrastructures in urban Rajasthan would be a major factor with easy access to school and availability of transportation. However, it would be interesting to understand the psychology of urban parents and to see if it makes a significant difference towards a better male and female literacy trend in comparison with rural Rajasthan? Furthermore, it would also be remarkable if there is any significant difference in male and female parents thinking regarding the siblings' education, depending on their gender? This study attempts to understand the various lateral trends in urban parents thinking vis-à-vis girl child education. In addition, the study would show the relationship of various lateral trends with each other. The results could be significant such that it would give an insight into parents' psyche in urban Rajasthan and could provide solutions to achieve a higher average literacy rates in rural Rajasthan, while reducing the difference in male and female literacy rate.

Questionnaire and Data Collection

The study is based on primary data that is collected from respondents in urban area of Rajasthan, India. The respondents were randomly selected from low and middle income community (comprises mostly of housewives or maids and labours). The data was collected using survey questionnaires. The questionnaires were administered personally and the responses were taken at the house, office or shops of respondents, in the span of 1 week. The language of the survey was English, and it was converted in the local language Hindi by the interviewer while interviewing the respondents who had difficulty in understanding English. The questions were framed so that they are easy to comprehend and straight forward (given in Table 1). The motive of the questions asked is to assess the educational and economic background of a respondent and his/her views about girl child education, awareness about gender inequality, independence and job security of girl child and a daughter's place in society as compared to male child.

Table-1 Questionnaire Construct

Respondent's Name
Respondent's Age
Residing in District
Respondent's Gender
Respondent's Education
Respondent's Occupation
Respondent's Spouse age
Respondent's Spouse Education
Respondent's Spouse Occupation
Do you have a daughter?
Are you aware of the educational gender inequality issues in Rajasthan?
Are you economically sound to furnish your child's education?
What according to you is the ideal level of qualification for a girl child?
Will you like your girl child to work as an employee after her studies?
At what level an educated girl do you think will live happily after marriage?
Would you ask for financial help from your son or daughter?

Analysis and Results

The descriptive analysis is shown in Table 2. Respondents are from the urban areas of Rajasthan, India with bulk of them from Ajmer district. We have chosen Rajasthan in our study as this state ranks at 24th place in sex ratio (out of 29 states and 7 union territories of India). Rajasthan's sex ratio of 928 females per 1000 male is worse than the Indian national average of 940 females per 1000 males (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_states...). Therefore, assessing the status and psychology of urban adult males and females towards their girl child education could even analyse the effect of government sensitization schemes and women empowerment schemes in comparatively backward state of Rajasthan (Medatwal, 2015). Total of 116 respondents with average age of 43.61 were interviewed, where minimum age was 23 and maximum age was 65 years. There were 64 women and 52 males in the respondents. Education level of respondents and their spouse were categorized in 4 types; "Below 10th", "10th -12th", "Graduate" and "Postgraduate". Occupation of respondent and their spouse was categorized into 5 categories; "Business", "Private Employee", "Government Employee", "Housewife" and "others". Ideal Education levels of girl child were categorized in 4 types; "Below 10th", "10th -12th", "Graduate" and "Postgraduate". Ideal Education levels of girl child to live happily after her marriage were categorized in 4 types; "Below 10th", "10th -12th", "Graduate" and "Postgraduate".

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics							
	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Age	116	42	23	65	43.61	8.103	65.666
Gender	116	1	0	1	.55	.499	.249
Educational Qualification:	116	3	1	4	2.75	1.110	1.233
Occupation	116	4	1	5	2.57	1.174	1.378
Husband/Wife's Age?	116	46	24	70	44.10	8.518	72.563
Husband/Wife's Educational Qualification?	116	3	1	4	2.54	1.153	1.329
Husband/Wife's occupation?	116	4	1	5	2.66	1.201	1.443
Do you have a daughter?	116	1	0	1	.92	.269	.072
Are you aware of the educational gender inequality ratio in Rajasthan?	116	1	0	1	.53	.501	.251
Are you economically sound to furnish your child's education?	116	1	0	1	.69	.465	.216
What according to you is the ideal level of qualification for a girl child?	116	3	1	4	3.53	.704	.495
Would you like your girl child to get a job after her studies?	116	1	0	1	.86	.346	.120
What level educated girl do you think will live happily after marriage?	116	3	1	4	3.36	.762	.581
Would you rather ask for financial help from your son or daughter?	116	1	0	1	.52	.502	.252
Valid N (listwise)	116						

The 4-D stacked plot in figure 2 shows that most of the parents who has education level below 10th, are not economically sound to support the education of their child and are also not aware of the educational gender inequality ratio. A larger number of women are in “education below 10th” category than males and they are also less aware of gender inequality issues. This evidently also shows the gender inequality in education persisting in urban Rajasthan. On the other hand, most of the graduate and post graduate parents were economically sound as well as more aware of the educational gender inequality in Rajasthan.

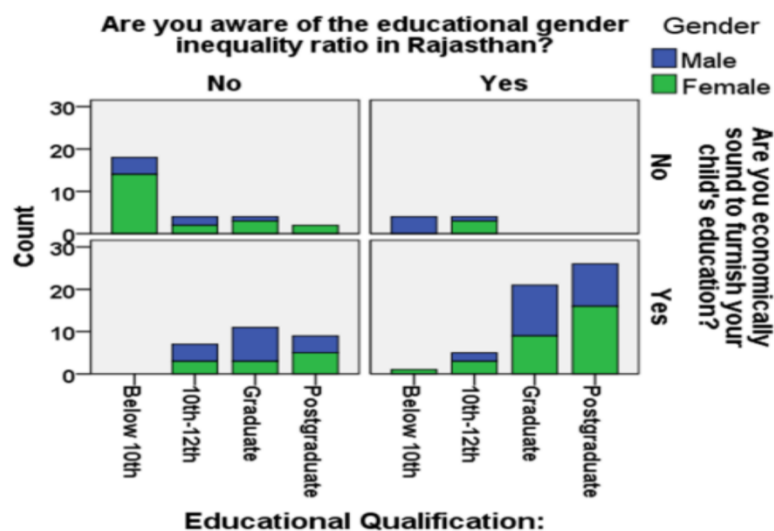


Figure-2.

Parent's educational qualification vis-à-vis awareness and economic wellness

The 4-D stacked plot in figure 3 shows that most of the parents (even with education level below 10th), would like their girl child to be graduate or post graduate, irrespective of their economic wellness. This trend is quite important to understand the impressive male and female literacy ratio in urban Rajasthan, in comparison with rural domain. In urban Rajasthan, irrespective of education level or economic condition, most of the parents are willing to support their girl child to get higher education.

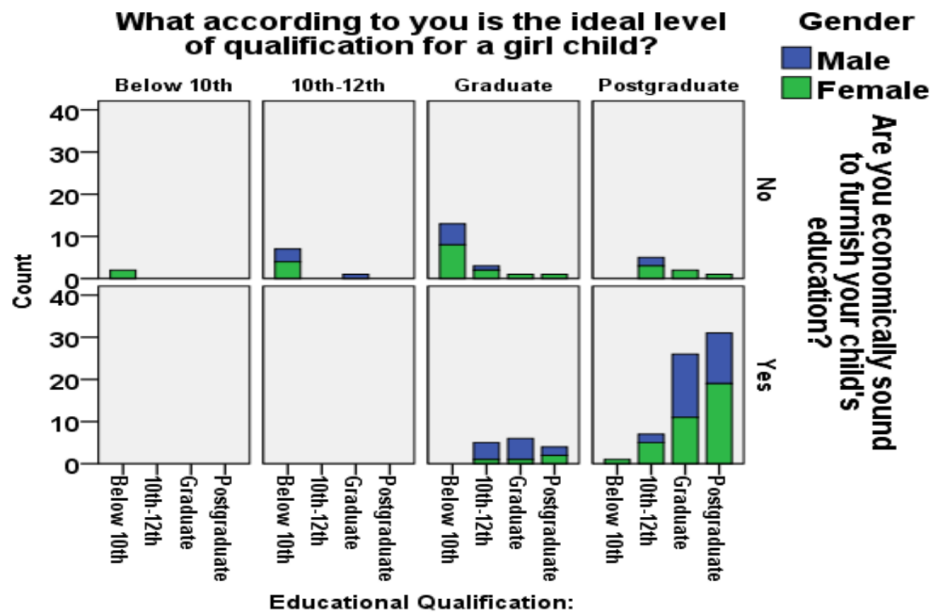


Figure 3.

Parent's educational qualification and economic wellness vis-à-vis attitude towards girl child's education.

The 4-D stacked plot in figure 4 shows that most of the parents (even with education level below 10th and not economically sound), would like their girl child to be get a job after her studies. This trend is again quite noteworthy, as in urban Rajasthan, irrespective of education level or economic condition; most of the parents are open and progressive towards their girl child's job prospects.

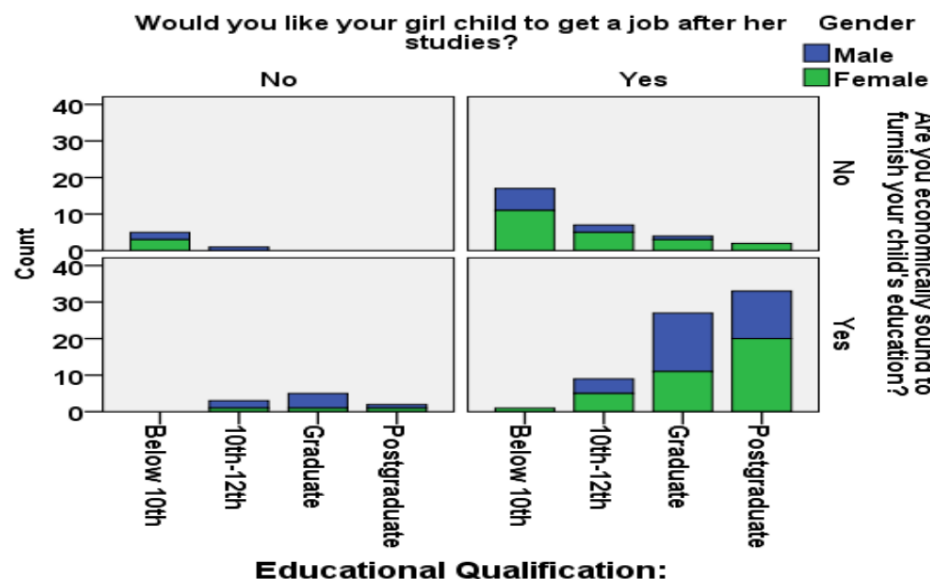


Figure-4.

Parent's educational qualification and economic wellness vis-à-vis attitude towards girl child's job prospects.

The 4-D stacked plot in figure 5 shows that most of the educated parents would like their girl child to be a graduate/post graduate to have a good married life. This trend is again quite remarkable, as in urban Rajasthan, irrespective of gender or economic condition; most of the parents understand that their daughters would live a happy married life only if she is highly educated.

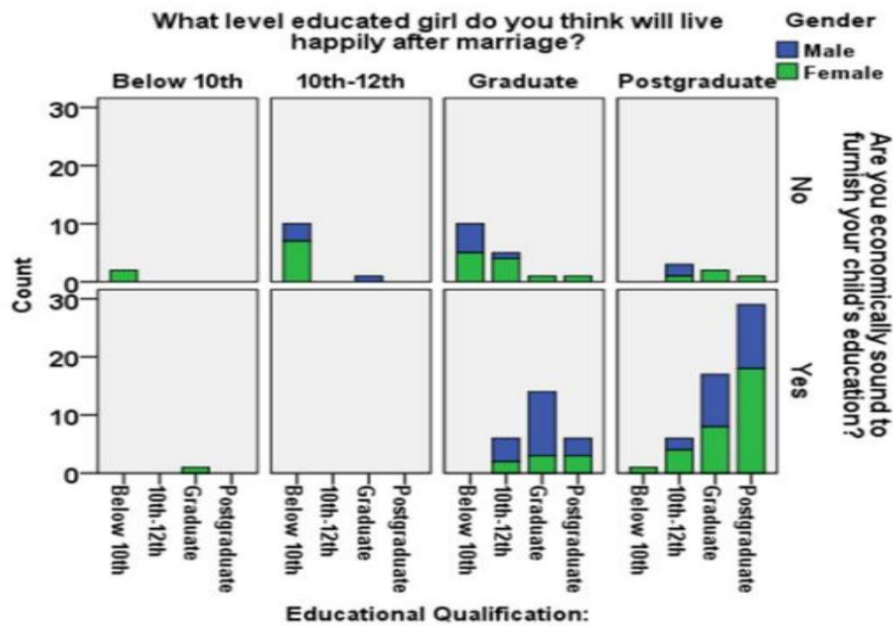


Figure 5. Parent's educational qualification and economic wellness vis-à-vis attitude towards daughter's education and married life.

The 4-D stacked plot in figure 6 shows that most of the parents would like their girl child to be a graduate/post graduate irrespective of parent's gender, education or awareness about the gender inequality in education. This is a welcome sign as irrespective of the various factors prevailing in urban Rajasthan, most of the parents understand and willing to invest in girl child's education.

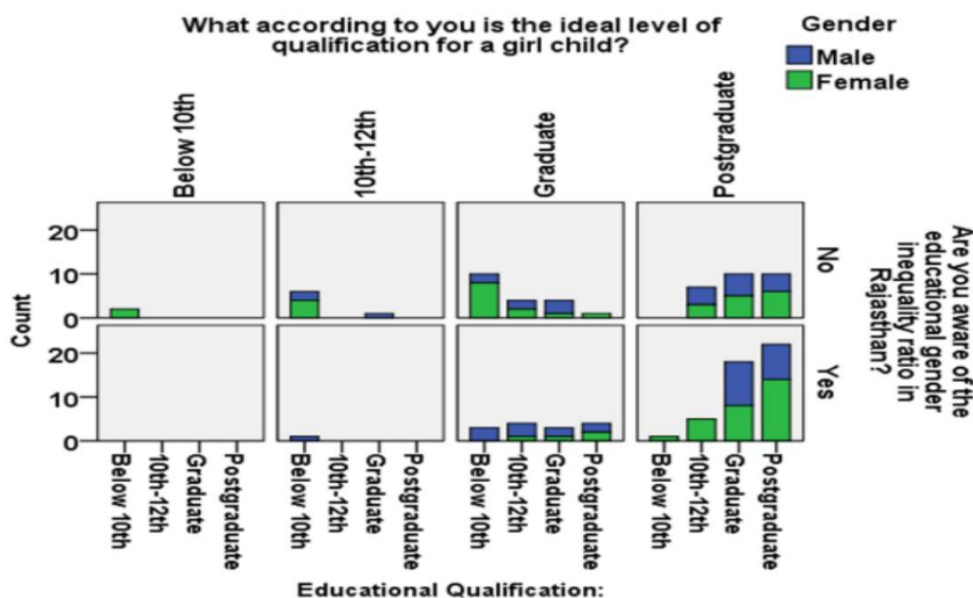


Figure 6. Parent's educational qualification and awareness vis-à-vis attitude towards daughter's education

The 4-D stacked plot in figure 7 shows that most of the parents would like their girl child to get a job after her studies, irrespective of parent's gender, education or awareness about the gender inequality in education. This willingness to allow the girl child getting a job after her studies and become an independent individual (or maybe help her parents financially) could be the big motivation for urban parents to invest in their female ward's education.

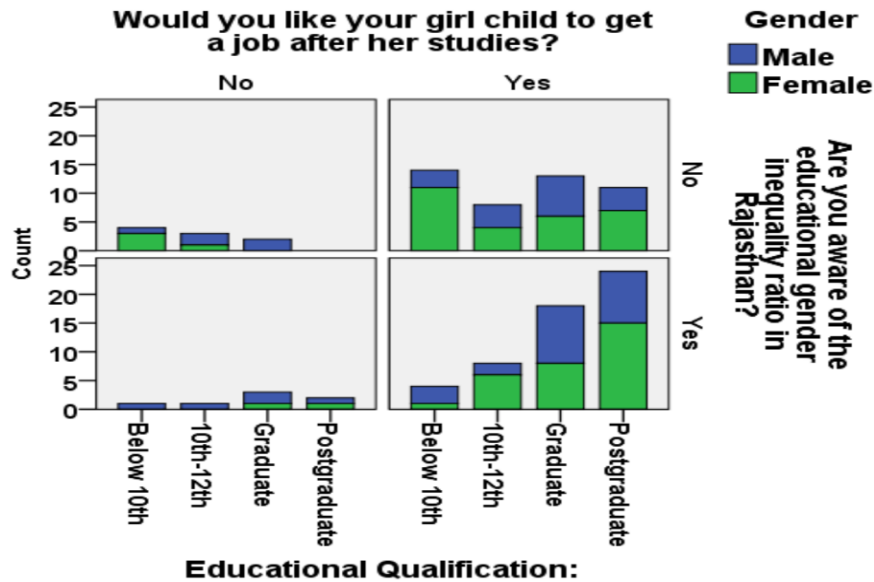


Figure 7.

Parent's educational qualification and awareness vis-à-vis attitude towards girl child's job

The 4-D stacked plot in figure 8 shows that most of the parents would like their girl child to be a graduate/post graduate to have a good married life, irrespective of parent's gender, education or awareness about the gender inequality in education. This again could be a big motivation for Indian urban parents to invest in their girl child's education, as her prospective spouse in urban setup is more likely to come from an educated background.

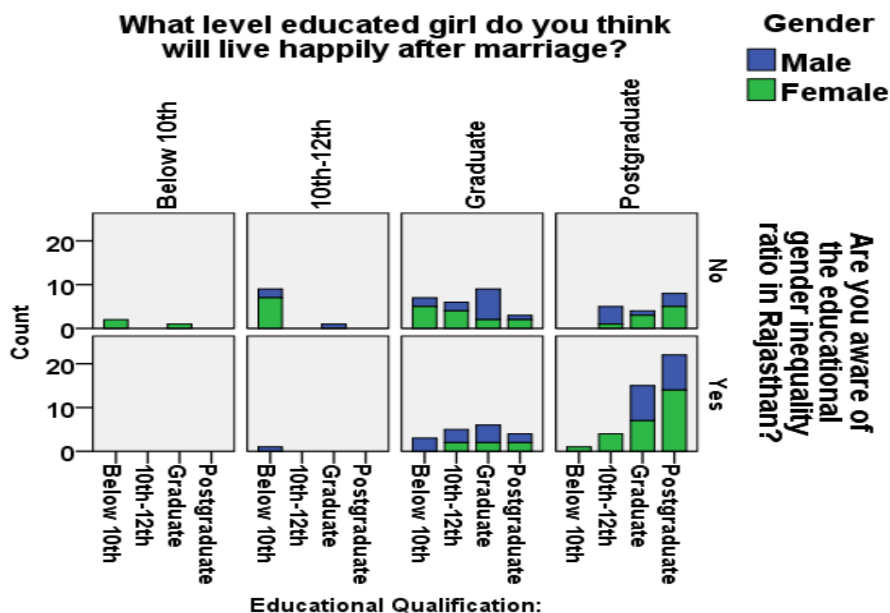


Figure 8.

Parent's educational qualification and awareness vis-à-vis attitude towards daughter's education and married life.

Discussion and Conclusions

The present study examined various aspects of psychological and economic outlook of male and female parents towards their girl child in urban Rajasthan. Following conclusions could be drawn from the trends analysis done in the present study:

1. Education brings more awareness about the gender inequality issues and positively related to economic wellness in urban Rajasthan, irrespective of gender. Therefore, every child should be attending schools (<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com...>). Further, schools must teach about gender sensitization as a compulsory course, to instill the required values in a young age among all the students (Barodia, 2015).
2. Awareness about Gender Inequality issues is NOT dependent on Gender of Respondent. The result is significant in the way that it contradicts perception that men are not aware about gender inequality (<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015...>). Different circumstances and different settings may require an altogether new and rigorous analysis of gender sensitization of male and female population. (<https://www.in.gov/...>).
3. A father or mother is equally likely to allow his/her daughter to get a job after her studies and become an independent individual, in urban Rajasthan. This result again is contradictory to the stereotype prevalent in Indian society which assumes that Indian parents would not like their daughter to get a job after her studies. (<https://www.quora.com/Why...>). A large majority of parents, (100 out of 116 in our sample) were open to allow their daughters to go out and get job even when there are so many negative news about female exploitation in our society (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/metoo>). This shows the resolve of urban Indian parents to be ready to take the issue of gender discrimination head-on, which indeed is a rich indication vis-à-vis gender sensitization of Indian society.
4. Irrespective of their awareness about gender inequality issues, their education or economic conditions, people in urban Rajasthan are ready to support their daughters getting higher education as well as getting a job after their studies and become independent. This is a very welcome signal as parents know the importance of their girl child becoming an independent individual.
5. However, this also brings out an uncomfortable truth about the prospects for girl child's education in rural Rajasthan. Considering that most of the poor and uneducated people in urban Rajasthan are first or second generation rural migrant, and they are quite open towards girl's education and her job prospects. So, effectively, if we try to reason out the factor which holds back the girl's progress and education in rural Rajasthan, patriarchy and mental backwardness of rural parents is not seems to be the real culprit. Rather, the lack of educational infrastructure, lack of logistics and security, and lack of motivation for girl child's education in rural Rajasthan seems to be the real issue. Educational infrastructure is still not adequate in rural Rajasthan to outreach the girl students. Moreover, lack of security, transportations, tuitions, poverty and many other drawbacks of rural society becomes a hindrance for girl child's reach to education. Finally, there is

hardly any motivation for educating rural girls, as there are no job prospects for them in the vicinity of their homes and the prospects of a single girl from rural background coming to urban Rajasthan for job is comparatively far less. How the various researchers, Indian government and education authorities assess this issue and promptly deal with it would be crucial for every girl from rural India which is holding back about 35% of total Indian population from reaching its Real potential.

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