

CONSTRUCTION OF CHILDHOODs IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOL SPACES OF DELHI

ABSTRACT



This paper will focus on the construction of childhood in Government school spaces of Delhi. The primary socialization of the child begins within the family, where the child learns to interact and understands himself or herself as a girl or boy. At the age of four to five, children are formally admitted to school education where they broaden their horizons by interacting with teachers, peer groups, and other staff members. The child in school belonged to the different socio-economic background and hence every child is having different exposure and interpretation of their life. The

experience of childhood is not uniform for the child; it varies according to his or her caste, religion, region and gender etc. The main focus of this paper is on the construction of childhood among boys and girls as internalized in their behavior as boyhood and girlhood respectively. This paper aims to present the life situations and exposures of school going children in the age group of 10-14 years which leads to the construction of multiple childhoods. The emphasis is on the need to explain how school, through the formal and informal curriculum, creates the gendered childhood through which girls and boys internalize the differential behavior patterns and attitudes in their personalities as they conform to the masculine and feminine traits approved by society. This paper will unfold the issues and concerns around the gendered and multiple childhoods which need serious attention of various policymakers and stakeholders in order to make the childhood stage comfortable and uncover the full potential of the child to make him or her a productive member of the society and lead a successful life thereafter.

INTRODUCTION

Education imparts a significant meaning to an individual in the course of study. It is the aim of education, as an ideology and as practice, through educational processes, to fashion, constructs, and equips the human mind with reason to choose right and wrong. Such training

involves the teaching of skills and techniques to read, write numbers theories, all of which constitute 'knowledge' in one form or another that constitutes appropriate knowledge and how this knowledge is executed and communicated through the curriculum. The school is a significant physical and intellectual space within which knowledge is disseminated and received. The school, however, is not merely a building where information and technical skills are learned, some social skills inculcated, examinations conducted, and students assessed evaluated and eventually certified.

It is also that the moral and symbolic space where socialization takes place and identities constructed. The society constructs the identity differentiated by gender, caste, class, race, ethnicity among others where young minds followed the tried and tested path of learning, memorizing as well as challenging the given limits of knowledge and where cultures peer are formed and tend to shape everything that takes place in school. Peer cultures also define students' relationship with the world. The aspect of education that encompasses the socialization of the young into the accepted benchmark and values of society is referred to quite simply as education for socialization. The implications of this process are far-reaching and have consequences for the growth and development not only of individuals but also for society as a whole. School as the site of the construction of gendered identity as boys and girls where through engagement with formal and informal/hidden curricular processes, communications and day to day interactions creates gendered socialization among school students which they internalize as a necessary norm to be accepted to affirm as masculine and feminine traits in their behavior. The dominant idea of education, the processes in educational practices result in the constitution of the self. The study of education provides us with an understanding of the manifold processes at work within the space of the school, the peer group, and the community that is all tied up in the process of constructing the self. The school, therefore, is a center not only for a different kind of activity but also for space where different types of relations are created, established, maintained, questioned, or acclaimed. There is a first relationship to knowledge, to the written text to ideas and their limits to peers, teachers, and other school personnel and to the entire assemblage of activities events and emotions that constitute the daily life of the school (Thapan, 2005, p 3).

At the same time it is essential to identify that although the individual construction of self in relation to the social, this does not happen only as a random imposition or inculcations, it is always at the same time creation and engagement, albeit always informed by the limiting, constraining and restraining aspect of such an engagement. Schools as a space for the

evolution of power through the various nerve centers that constitute the school, whether these are spatial or intellectual, moral or material academic or social, personal or public. In this process, how does the human subject find space for articulation voice and resistance? Moreover, how indeed is this self-constructed in the school vis a vis the pedagogic encounter that remains essentially a political act charged with intent and meaning? There are undoubtedly demands of negotiations, challenge, and acceptance as well as ambiguities, conflicts, and tensions that reflect the multiplicity and complexity within which selves are constructed and reconstructed.

Thus in this sense, school fulfills the expectations in contemporary society as the primary function in the composite society schools- as formal institutions with planned curricula and professional teachers- exist to transmit and communicate our rich social heritage: its knowledge systems, beliefs practices, skills, and technologies. Schools enable the child to go beyond the particularistic values of family/kinship ties and adopt universalistic values without which a modern/ complex society cannot function. In other words, schools are necessary for bringing about social transformation. Schools work to fulfill the expectations of state-society by promoting uniformity and loyalty to the state. Schooling by certifying and choosing people for upcoming adult roles, justify their existence. (Pathak, 2002).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The understanding of self among school girls and boys the theoretical framework of C.H.Cooley's "Looking glass self" and G.H.Mead theory of self used. The theories of self explained that the child initially gives meaning to the understanding of self and later on, engage with the gender identity formation. The conceptual framework of self and identity in terms of gendered identity is studied from the different perspectives such as symbolic interaction, social constructionist, social learning, and gender schema theory perspectives emphasized in understanding the construction of gendered identities among the girls and boys.

The symbolic interactionist emphasized that gender roles and traits are acquired in association with the biological sex as male and female. It categorizes the individual socially based on gendered behavior as masculine and feminine. Through interaction, engagement, and observed reality of gendered behavior in society, individuals internalize in their behavior masculine and feminine identity in due course of life. The acceptance of being a male or a female in society helps in the interpretation and understanding of gendered identities during

the whole of their lives. The understanding of gender identity is a result of human interaction focusing on the usage of language, the exchange of information, and the meaning-making of each act of life (Deegan, 1987).

Social Constructionist perspectives

Social constructionists emphasize that gendered differentiation of roles and responsibilities are created based on the societal distribution of work or labor by sex, which promotes the gender-segregated means of production and reproduction in society. The gendered division of work signifies the limited accessibility of society's resources and restrictions placed on ownership over women's own reproduction. In male-dominated societies, women's right to use and authority over resources is limited which leads to the different conceptualization of gender (Bahera, 2002).

Social Learning Theory

Learning theories by and large emphasize the process by which children gain knowledge of different types of behavior associated with sex role-related behaviors, which are defined in the society as the social construction of gender. Social learning theories are based on stimulus-response theory (Chafetz, 2006)

Children gain an understanding of their sex and learn to recognize the other individual's sex as the same or different in the same manner as they come to know about the existing social realities of their lives. However, social learning theorists accept that the significance of sex and gender in many socio-cultural contexts helps in creating an understanding of an individual's identity or role identification.

Individuals gain knowledge of oneself by engaging with others' behavior, following only those actions or conducts, which results in the desired behavior of the individual (Bandura).

In this context, children in a family through interaction with parents, siblings, and other family members learn sex-typed behavior because other people reinforce activities that conform to expectations of their sex group but do not reinforce those that do not conform. Differential reinforcement can account for gender-typed behavior (Fagot, 1985 and Huston, 1983). In this way, children make out in their family differential roles, and responsibilities are assigned to girls and boys. Studies of parents' behavior show that parents tend to reinforce some gender differences in toys children play with (Fagot and Hagon, 1985).

Gender Schema Theory

Gender Schema theorists emphasize the significance of social learning and cognitive developmental perspective. This perspective explained that the forming of children's conceptual categories takes place in society by following the sociocultural principles and processes. The belief was that gender schema influences in shaping the person's gender role identity development. Whereas the cognitive development theorist signifies the role of gender schema, they argue that these schemas are developed as a result rather than as a contributing factor of gender-associated classification of information. Sandra Bem emphasized that culture influences which schemas are necessary and claim that the individuals concentrate more and have more retention for information about important schemas. In a male-dominated culture, gender is a significant schema. Children trained following cultural specifications are most probably to follow and have more remembrance of information concerning gender related schema rather than knowledge of non –gender schema (Bahera, 2002). Bem asserts that an individual interprets the various meanings of gender schema created in a society based on the classification of information existing in the environment. There is a tendency to be strongly sex –type gender schema when the children find more gender related knowledge prevailing in his/her environment (Bem, 1993).

Objectives of the study

A study of the construction of childhoods in Government schools of Delhi

- How do students construct the meaning of self as girl and boy and roles associated in the everyday practices of school?
- How does the gendered differentiation within the classroom and outside the influence the construction of gendered childhoods?
- To explore the understanding of patriarchal ideologies among the school students, which shapes their boyhood and girlhood?

METHODOLOGY

The survey method was used to conduct this study. The study was descriptive cum analytical in nature. The interpretation of responses of students, teachers of Government school is predominantly qualitative in its approach as it is used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations. It provides insights into the problem or helps to develop

ideas. The sample was collected through observations and participation in the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) schools.

As a supervisor of B.EL.ED graduates during school experience programme observation of intern classroom teaching help to understand the school culture and power dynamics work in classroom teaching as a teacher is bearing the responsibility of transacting the formal curriculum. As actively participating in different school activities helps us to gauge the working culture of schools, issues associated with students and teachers.

Tools

The structured interview schedule for the teachers and students were used to gauges the understanding of gender identity among boys and girls, the perception of teachers towards boyhood and girlhood. The interview schedule was based on dimensions such as understanding of self as boy and girl. The awareness of societal expectations of masculine roles and responsibilities to be carried out by them in school and family. The differential treatment among girls and boys in school, classroom, peers, and family shapes boys' identity. The observation was used in the classroom to understand the classroom dynamics, peer interaction, and student-teacher relationship in the classroom.

Sample

The study was conducted in New Delhi Municipal Council schools (NDMC) Kidwai Nagar and Sarojini Nagar School, located in South Delhi. The sample consisted of one section of VII and VIII (11-14 Years) class students of Kidwai Nagar and Sarojini Nagar and 15 teachers of each school, including subject teachers, art, music, and physical education teacher.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY

1. The understanding of self among boy and girl students of NDMC schools located in Kidwai Nagar and Sarojni Nagar in Delhi

The boy and girl students were well aware of their gender identity as male and female societal expectations to confirm the gender roles and responsibilities in society. The boy students during the interaction shared that boys expected to be physically strong, tough, tall, loud voice, intelligent, independent, and dominating in nature.

The girl students described themselves as that they have to face criticism if they act like a boy, i.e., speak loudly, fight, and show aggression against the discomfort of any decisions

affecting their lives. The boy students in the age group of 10-14 years were well aware of the prevailing masculine traits in society and the pressure to conform to these roles. If the boy students were not able to confirm the masculine traits, then there exists a situation of gender strain. School plays a significant role in shaping the identities of students with the help of the formal and hidden curriculum. When the children in school interact with the different courses of study, which further shapes the identity of students as a period of girlhood and boyhood in which differential treatment in the school system leads to the gendered childhood.

2. The gendered differentiation within the classroom and outside classroom which influences the construction of gendered childhood in school.

Within Classroom

- **Seating arrangement**

Seating arrangement within the classroom was arranged in such a way girls and boys were not allowed to sit together. The boys were strictly told by the class teacher as well as physical education teachers who were involved in disciplining the students that boys will not sit with girls. If a boy commits some mistake or misbehaves in the classroom, then as punishment, he is made to sit beside a girl student.

During the observation, the NDMC school girls, as well as boys, resist sitting together, and if they are found sitting together in the class, boys were subject to harsh corporal punishment by the teacher and girls were advised not to repeat this action. As students were in the adolescent stage, one of the English teachers said that if we allow them to sit together, then there would be chances of them getting attracted to each other. According to her, adolescence is a very tender stage when they should concentrate on studies that are why they follow the segregated seating arrangement in the class.

In the context of seating arrangement in the classroom, girls shared that boys are violent by nature, always engage in fights, use abusive language stare and comment on the body; that is the reason most of the girls do not prefer to sit with boys. The girl students also shared that if the boy is good in studies, then they prefer to sit with boys in order to understand the concept and finish work; otherwise, girls do not show interest in sitting with boys. On the other hand, boys do not want to sit with girls because their peer group teases, and teachers think that they are in the relationship between girlfriend and boyfriend.

- **Distribution of duties and responsibilities among girl and boy students in the classroom.**

Class Monitor

For class management and conveying the information/messages to students, collecting the notebook in the classroom, and giving to teachers, the class monitor is selected in class. One boy and girl class monitor is selected in the class. The girl class monitor is used to deal with girl students only and vice versa. As gendered seating arrangement is followed in classes in the same manner to control the class same sex class monitor approach is followed wherein the boy monitor means dealing and interacting with boy students and vice versa.

The criteria for selection of class monitor discussed with the class teacher. The teacher said that the student's selection of class monitor is based on merit. However, over the years, the class indiscipline increased, and many times boys who are good in studies are not able to control the class. Many naughty students in the class do not listen to class monitor and creates noise, troubles the peer group, and disturbs the whole class.

If the boy class monitor complains to the teacher, then the naughty students tend to fight back and result in the fight even outside the school, so the criteria of selection of boy class monitor changed. At present, the boy students who are naughty in the class selected as boy class monitor. The naughty boy selected as a boy class monitor resulted in the decline of indiscipline as his peer group does not create the indiscipline. In the context of girls' class, monitor teachers do not have any problem as girl students follow the instructions of the girl monitor. The girls are passive and receptive by nature.

The teachers shared that they prefer the girl monitor should manage the girls only as boys do not listen to girls as well as the aggressive nature of boys many times results in the fight among the peer group. In order to protect the girls from involving in fighting, the school follows the policy for the same sex class monitor for class management.

- **Distribution of duties among the boy and girl students in the class**

During the teaching learning process and assigning the roles and responsibilities, both boys and girls were equally assigned the duties and responsibilities. For the preparation of charts, decoration of classrooms, drawing painting, and arts, both boys and girls equally participated. It is a laypersons understanding that girls are good at drawing and painting and encouraged to participate in these activities. However, in Sarojini Nagar and Kidwai Nagar schools, boys

were equally good in drawing, painting, and art and have shown interest enthusiastically participate in the activities. It was observed that teachers preferred that it would always be good for boys to do the task related to shifting the furniture from class to other, nail on the wall to hang material or charts during the Diwali decoration of classroom or display of charts or any other reading material. As boys are rough and tough, they can run and hop easily in comparison to girls. It is important to note that teachers prefer that outside the classroom work like buying an article from outside the school shop group of boys were preferred.

The school teachers shared that for the duties of outside school, the boys are chosen to do the task. Sending the girl outside is not as safe as boys are not sexually harassed.

The protection of the sexuality of female students is more in comparison to boy students. The teachers said that boys generally sent to buy items to the nearby shops but accompanied by the school guards still teachers do not feel comfortable to send girls with school guards. Teachers have this understanding that only girls are vulnerable in relation to sexual harassment. Boys are safe in relation to sexual harassment.

Peer Interaction

The peer group interaction is gendered as girl students preferred to interact with girls only. During the observation, it was observed that the girls were not keen to interact with the boys. They remained happy in their own girls' group. The girls and boys used to share the classwork, curricular task, but the informal talks, games, and activities were very limited.

On the other hand, boys have shown interest in interacting with girls but boys prefer to play within their own boy's group. In the classroom, there was a lack of regular dialogue among girls and boys. The girls and boys are part of the same classroom but living their lives apart from each other.

The boys shared that he feels comfortable while interacting with boys only. The boy's point of discussion is different from that of girls; that is why boys do not want to interact with girls. The boys are different from girls, and their interests and choices are also different.

The boy students shared that he prefers to interact with the boy students only. The boy students share and discuss the classroom work and task with the girls but prefer to interact with boys only informally. The girls have a more complaining nature whenever there is a fight among girls and boy students; girls tend to complain about the incident to teachers

against the boys, which results in punishment by the teacher. On the other hand, boys generally do not complain to the teacher.

The girl students shared that they do not want to interact with boys' students as they use abusive language and pass comments on girls. Boys are aggressive by nature and trouble the girls. Boys always play games that involve jumping, running, and hitting each other. She feels that it is not safe to play with boys as there are more chances of being hurt.

During the observation, it was seen that the interaction with the boys and girls students is minimal. The girls prefer to interact with boy students who are good at studies; rather than the boy students who create indiscipline, naughty and troublesome. The students told that the class teacher prefers that girls should talk and play among the group of girl students only; that is the main reason that girls prefer to interact with girls only and vice versa.

The majority of girl students shared that boys are also not interested in interacting with girls as well as engaging in play and games. The reason for less interaction with the boys is that if the boys and girls interact with each other informally, talk, and play during the lunch break or school time, the other class students and teacher thinks that the students are in the relationship of girlfriend and boyfriend. The fear of getting the punishment boys resist interacting with girls. In school, many times, class students complained to the class teacher about the informal interaction and engagement of girl and boy students the boys used to get punishment and suggestion not to make girlfriends and concentrate on studies.

Thus the point of view of boys and girls students about the peer group interaction is that the students prefer to interact with same sex but few students would like to interact with the opposite sex, but due to the fear of teaching the students do not feel comfortable to interact.

OUTSIDE CLASSROOM

School Assembly

In school, assembly activities were organized in a gendered way where all dancing and singing of prayers are done by girls, whereas drum beating, maintaining discipline, boys do the lineup of classes. However, during the observation of school assembly in Kidwai Nagar, girls and boys were used to standing in one line according to height, whereas, in Sarojini Nagar School, different lines for girls and boys were made. Few male students in class VIII were derided for being shorter in height in comparison to girls by their peer group. "Kya yaar

ladkiyaan Bhi tujh se lambi hai.kab tak sab se agaye line mey khada hota rahega.” This instance indicates that male students have to confirm the societal expectation as physically strong, tall, and powerful in comparison to girls.

Playground and Physical Education

In the playground, the games and activities were segregated based on gender. There was strong resistance from boys not to play with girls as they are considered weak and not capable of keeping up with boys. Girls should play with girls only. If by chance, girls got hurt while playing, then they start crying, and boys do not cry as well as run faster.

Boys had this understanding that boys are strong and can be violent among each other, but with the girls, they have to keep so many things in mind like not to touch or pat here and there otherwise they would be punished.

During the observation, even the girls were interested in playing with girls only because boys many times while playing use abusive language as well as get violent. The girls accepted that during the physical education period, our teachers selected different games for girls and boys.

Girls prefer to play with rope, hopping, running, hide and seek, whereas boys play physical sports like basketball, cricket, badminton, etc. The boys were encouraged to participate in the inter-school sports competition, whereas girls are not encouraged to participate because teachers also believed that there are many health and security issues associated with the girls. On the other hand, boys are rough and sturdy as well as they can travel any time after the competition, there is less security concern associated with the boys.

The school teacher also preferred that girls should not be engaged in the games of hoping, running, and jumping when they reach the stage of puberty. As a girl's involvement in games like skipping, running affects the bodily development effects on the uterus as well as movement in the games leads to attracting the opposite sex because of different bodily moves. This thinking among the school teachers promotes the gendered selective games for boys and girls. The playground spaces and boundaries used by girls were generally clearly marked by the physical education teacher or by the girls themselves to keep themselves away from the boys and are not allowed to go out of the school boundary during the lunch break or school hours.

On the other hand, boys, however, use whatever space is available and even use playgrounds in the vicinity of the school. During the school, observation boys have crossed the school boundary to buy some food or take back their ball if it falls out of the school boundary. (NCERT, Position paper on Gender Issues in Education, 2005).

During the observation of the boy's cricket team, the physically strong boys tried to create pressure on boys with weak body build as they want to dominate the boys who were not playing well. The winning team always portrays the hegemonic masculinity over the losing team. If any boy did not perform well in the game, then the next time, nobody would like to take that person in the team. The notion is that a good player must perform better and never lose any game; otherwise, our fellow team members would tease him as a loser.

Participation in Co-Curricular Activities

In school space, co-curricular activities were also gendered in a way where girls will do all the dancing and singing activities, whereas debates, extempore, etc. are offered to boys. In schools, there is a lack of gender mix activities among boys and girls. During the observation of music class in school, girls were encouraged to sing and dance with girls only, whereas boys were encouraged to learn an instrument like tabla, dholak, and drum. The girls shared that their parents even discourage them from learning dancing and singing in school because good girls do not get involved in these activities, whereas boys were free to do whatever they want to learn. The girls internalized that their parents have to contribute money in marriage, whereas boys could use playing instruments as their profession.

PATRIARCHAL IDEOLOGIES INTERNALISED BY SCHOOL STUDENTS

- **Males Should Be Financially Responsible For The Family**

The girl and boy students internalized that it is the responsibility of the male members to provide financial support to the family. The students shared that the males must be earning, but females have a choice; it is not necessary to be working. However, the pressure of earning member lies with the males only. The students internalized that if the man is not working but dependent on females, salary will not be seen with respect in society. Males are for outside work, which yields earning and provides financial support, whereas females to take care of their children and other family members who further include domestic work.

The pressure of male earning members is seen in the school system as few boy students after the school engaged in part-time work in the Sarojini Nagar market in order to financially support their family.

- **Restriction on Movement Of Girls Outside Home During Evening And Night Time**

The students shared that parents do not allow going out of the house after 6 pm in winters and 7 pm in the summer season. However, the restriction is more for girls that they are not allowed to go shopping or party even in the day time. In the evening or night time, they are allowed when accompanied by some elderly members of the family; otherwise, they do not get permission. The boy students justified the restriction placed on the movement of girls by saying that “Zamana Kharab hai, logon ki nazar karab hoti hai, galat harkat raat ko hi hoti hai”. That is the reason the parents do not prefer to send girls out of the house in the late evening. The students had this understanding that those girls move out of the house in the late evening or night are not of good character. The boys had this understanding that girls are in a vulnerable position in the context of sexual exploitation. The family members take all possible measures to safeguard the protection of the sexuality of girls.

- **Decision-Making Power Lies In The Hands Of Males**

The students shared that the male members in the family take all the family decisions. In the joint families, the power of decision making lies with grandfather and father. The students justify this by saying that male members have more experience in the outside world as their grandfather and father interact with so many persons and have different life experiences whereas the majority of females perform the household work very few women move out of the house to work. The important reason here is that also the students stated that male members are more interactive in comparison to females. Females generally prefer to talk to females only, whereas males talk to everyone as well as hold ownership positions in shops, businesses, and organizations.

- **Girls Should Wear Traditional Dress**

In the context of dressing of boys and girls, the boy students stated that girls should wear the traditional dress after the class V. The traditional dress here implies as Salwar Kameez with Dupatta, for girls before marriage and Saree after marriage. The students share their life experiences concerning the dressing of their mother. The mother wears Saree and Salwar

Kameez with Dupatta and covers the head with Dupatta, specifically in front of the elderly male members like Tauji, Grandfather, and another unknown male member.

Many students shared that if by chance, their mother forgets to cover the head in front of other male member's results in a fight in the family. The notion is that if the women are not covering the head after marriage is not showing respect towards the elderly male members. The girl students shared that restrictions placed by the family members wearing jeans, pants, and shorts in the age group of 14-18 years or when they attain the puberty stage. The girls' parents prefer to wear Salwar Kameez with Dupatta, specifically when they are visiting their relative's place. The girl students shared that it is not justified to place restrictions on wearing the jeans just because boys get attracted. The majority of boy students stated that those girls wear jeans that are not of good character, "Setting Karna Chahti hai, and ladke patana chahti hai" as they want to get involved in a relationship of girlfriend and boyfriend.

- **Boys are considered as an important family member to own property**

The students shared that in their family is the desire to have at least one male/boy child in the family. As per students, their family member considers boys as an important member of the family because, in old age, boys look after their parents as well as look after the property and business of the family. The boys are entitled to family property rights. The family progresses through male line property rights. In the context of girls' property rights boys, students explicitly stated that girls would get the property of their husband, and at the time of marriage, dowry is given to girls by the parents in order to settle in the in-laws family. The boy in the family is always held responsible for their parents, so the property rights should be given to boys. The girl students shared why society thinks that marriage is necessary for girls and cannot look after the parents in old age. The girls are also capable of taking care of their parents. The boy students stated that those girls who do not marry are not seen with respect in society. Even if boys do not marry once in acceptable but girls unmarried in the family is not acceptable. The students shared that in their family, those elder girls are married at the age of 18 years, many times marriage fixed before the age of 18 years, but boys get full chance to complete their studies and set up the business or get employment. The boy students through socialization in family internalized that boys are an important member of the family and girls have to accept the norms set by the society and not allowed to raise their voice against the prevailing rigid family conceptions.

- **Use Of Violence To Control Behavior**

In the context of violence in the life of students give the understanding of violence they deal in everyday life as well as their perception of usage of violence in daily life. The students shared that in school as well in the home, parents use physical punishment to control undesirable behavior.

The students shared that in their daily routines, they witness the violence in the following manner:

- In schools, teachers use physical punishment to control and manage the class discipline. The tendency to get physically beaten by teachers for boys is more in comparison to girls for the same mistake committed by girl and boy students. The students said that teachers think that girls are weak, that is why they should not be beaten, but boy students stressed that for the same mistake, the same punishment should be followed. Boy students shared that many times boys are not involved in creating indiscipline in class, but girl students blame the boys. Teachers in school without knowing the facts start beating the boy students.
- In family, both mother and father usually punish the child whenever the children of family do not follow the instructions, but the differential method of giving punishment is followed for the boys and girls in the family. The parents used physical punishment for the boys, whereas scolds or minimal use of physical punishment for the girl child. Boys in the family are subject to harsh punishment in comparison to girls. The male/ father in the family uses more physical punishment, beats the boy child as well as using abusive language in comparison to females. The students stated that boys are subject to more punishment in daily routine but girls are physically beaten by the father whenever girls involved in the relationship of girlfriend and boyfriend, not following the instructions of dressing sense.
- The students reside in the Pillanji Village and Kotla Mubarakpur urban villages located in South Delhi, where the student resides usually witness the usage of violence among the males in the neighborhood area.

The students shared that mostly male members such as their father, Uncle, etc. after consuming the alcohol engage in the fight and use abusive language; this is the main reason that boy students are well aware of the abusive language and use in peer interaction in school.

- The students shared that most of the time, fathers in the family return from the work drunk which results in the fight among their parents. Many times fight results in violence where the father beats the mother whenever she raises her voice or question against the will of the father.

The students internalized that only through violence, physical punishment men can show power over the other person if the boy does not show power to prove his point no one in the society respect those men. The students justify the usage of violence in their life stating that teachers in school, parents in the family use physical punishment, and senior boy students win the fight by actively engaging in fighting and hitting each other. However, few boy students believed that it is not necessary to use physical power to resolve the conflict but dialogue and talk can be used. The students shared that girls should not engage in any fights specifically physical fights. The society expects that girls should not fight back with the men physically as there is more chance of getting hurt as it does not look good that women /girls attack the male members.

Thus based on observation and interaction with the school, students revealed that students in the age group of 10-14 years are in the phase of shaping their gender identity in consonance with the social norms, values, ideologies formed by the family, education and daily life experiences. The differential allocation of roles, duties in the family and school, promotes the gendered socialization. The students of class VII- VIII of NDMC schools in Kidwai Nagar and Sarojini Nagar are very well internalized in their behavior differential gender boundaries for girls and boys as accepting the feminine and masculine traits. The childhood is not a uniform category differ according to different socio-economic background, religion, caste etc. The students' population in NDMC schools in the above mentioned area majorly belongs to the lower socio-economic background but the childhood experiences are not the same. Childhood is classified as hegemonized childhood, where the boy students in many situations in school portray the power position over the girls and boys. These school students tend to dominate other students. In the context of hegemonized childhood few boys, students display their physical power in the form of violence to control or oppress the other students. Few students show their knowledge of power over the non-performing well in the academics. The childhood as marginalized where the girls as always expected to be receptive, passive and docile as following the instructions and norms set by society unquestionably. The girls are expected to blindly accept the patriarchal ideologies as a legitimate way of leading life. The boys are pressurized to follow gendered norms if the boy students do not display the

masculine traits in their behavior results in the situation of gender strain. All the boy students are not in favour of violence or troublesome but shy and soft by nature, which results in criticism as “you are a boy, be a man.” In many situations, girl students act as strong not ready to accept the feminine traits but questions the predetermined norms but school teachers through formal and hidden curriculum indicate the students to follow the gendered divisive activities and responsibilities. In the family, parents promote the patriarchal ideologies follows in their family which focusses on the gendered division of roles and responsibilities among the boys and girls as accepted masculine and feminine traits in their behavior as to be an active member in society

CONCLUSION

The understanding of feminist critique of education helped in understanding how social structures remain so rigid despite the students sharing the same classrooms, reading the same textbooks, listening to the same teachers, and having the same criteria used when graded. However, are we having the same experiences in those classes? From our earliest classroom experiences, we are becoming gendered. The student learns more than standard concepts and formal subjects in school. The students learn the importance of being men and women and the attributes they carry with them. In our society, through the teachings we receive from our teachers in the schools that are organized as institutions.

They are described as factories that produce a gendered individual. The official and hidden curriculum runs side by side to produce gender differences that are held responsible for gender inequality.

By engaging in the research and exploring the construction of childhoods in schools broaden the understanding that school promotes the gendered childhood where childhood is not a uniform category, but it has different aspects. There was an impression that girls are vulnerable and face all challenges in their life, but upon engaging with the male and female students’ lives revealed that it during the period of childhood both boys and girls face challenges in order to accept and internalized the social norms based on gendered ideology.

Gender is constructed within the institutional and cultural context that creates various types of childhoods. Usually, one exercises the hegemonic power over others (Pam Gilbert and Robert, 2017). Schools play significant roles in the creation of boyhoods. School's overall

gender regimes usually strengthen gender dichotomy. However, some practices lessen gender discrimination. Masculinizing processes are deep-rooted at certain sites, curriculum, divisions, discipline systems, and sports.

Construction of identities is internalized and experience based on specific values, norms, traditions, and customs of society. However, the creation of these social processes is not free from gender biases. These constructions generally associated with power relations in each society and assist the social, economic, and political benefits of dominant groups in it. The gender roles are socially constructed as the process of construction is culture-specific, which are the ideological and institutional arrangements of each society.

Education thus conserves and often enhances the societal beliefs present in society. The diverse socio-economic understandings of students have noteworthy inferences on the number of identities or individualities developed among the girls and boys and impact their mindset, abilities, and education, they acquire, which consecutively influence their academic achievement in school. There are numerous factors in their socialization, which helps them in gaining their education in school, while there are others, which locates the schoolchildren at a disadvantage *vis-a-vis* school and discourage learning. To be part of a distinct type of family, social class, caste or gender group and be exposed to a particular type of child upbringing process have definite connotation for the kind of individual we develop into and later on acquire the competencies, possess different outlooks, wisdom and linguistic forms, which in turn impacts our performance in school. The gender-neutral approach in the teaching-learning process is a way to deal with the prevailing gender stereotypes.

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