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The Scoping Examination of How Gender Preference Affects Girls' Access to Quality Education in both Developed and Developing Nations

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Abstract

In the discourse of gender studies, parental gender preference leading to childhood discrimination remains a significant and contentious global issue. This study addresses the pervasive problem where parents allocate a disproportionately larger share of household resources to their sons' education compared to their daughters'. This allocation bias is often rooted in traditional beliefs that daughters are transient family members expected to marry and leave. At the same time, sons are the primary caregivers for parents in old age. The core objective of this study is to systematically identify, review, and evaluate the existing body of research on parental gender preferences in the allocation of household resources for children's education globally.

Using a rigorous scoping review methodology, our research aimed to map the extent and nature of the literature, clarify research objectives, and reduce misconceptions about discriminatory discourse in early childhood education across both developed and developing nations. The scoping review highlighted that millions of girls under the age of 18 are still denied access to a high-quality education due to above-mentioned pervasive gender biases.

The collected evidence revealed that while the form of discrimination can differentiate geographically, the underlying preference for sons in educational investment is a consistent global phenomenon. The findings strongly advocate for urgent policy interventions and community-level awareness campaigns to challenge avove-mentioned entrenched norms and ensure equitable access to quality education for all children, regardless of gender.

Keywords: *childhood discrimination, developing nations, educational equity, gender preference, household resources, quality education, scoping review*

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Introduction

When people are disadvantaged because of their gender—which would not always be sexual in nature—this is known as gender discrimination. Disparities in human rights because of a person's sex or gender identity are examples of this, which are frequently caused by out-of-date cultural and individual ideas about what gender is, how it should be expressed, or how individuals of various genders should act (Dinh & Kilenthong, 2019). For instance, many people mistakenly think that a person's gender, beliefs, children's right to an education, and behaviuor are always determined by their biological sex. Regardless of these opinions, mistreating someone according to their gender or perceived gender is never acceptable (Stanford University, 2025;Belbase, Khanal & Pun, 2025).

Fundamentally, bias and prejudice—particularly the idea that women are less competent or superior to men—are the root causes of gender discrimination, which resulted in unfair treatment and perpetuate antiquated preconceptions. Crucially, gender discrimination violates anti-discrimination legislation.

In the educational sector, it is unlawful for educational institutions or schools to mistreat people or deny them opportunities because of their gender identity, depriving them of their access to a high-quality education (Zajda, 2025; Shor, 1992). In many SAARC nations, women are still perceived as having inferior intellectual and physical capacities to men.

A disproportionate number of domestic duties are still performed by women (Mahtab, Parker, & Kabir, 2016). Due to male-dominated customs and deeply rooted cultural norms, gender discrimination is still a significant problem in SAARC countries, restricting women's access to leadership positions, healthcare, education, and employment prospects (Mahtab, Paker & Kabir, 2016;Bellani & Ortiz-Gervasi,2022).

With an emphasis on rural and underprivileged communities, our study explores the gender gap in Nepal's allocation of household resources to girls' rights to high-quality education. Girls still face obstacles like prejudice, discrimination, financial hardships, and traditional roles despite regulations, which deny them the right to a good education and cause enrollment and dropout rates to decline, which impede development by perpetuating poverty and inequality. Providing equitable opportunity, empowering girls, and questioning conventions are all part of the solution.

Gender disparity still exists, particularly for girls, despite laws that provide free elementary education. Participation and success are impeded by socioeconomic problems that stem from cultural, economic, sociological, and religious traditions (Bak, 2014).

Nepal's overall growth is significantly impacted when females' education is neglected (Kathmandu Post, 2015). Girls in Nepal face limited educational options, parental bias, household chores, absenteeism, and restricted study time (Adhikari, 2019;Ciaccio,Bronson & Contrada, 2020). For economic development and societal welfare, achieving gender equality is essential (Khanal, 2018).

Even though Nepal offers free basic education, girls still face obstacles such as financial strains, cultural customs, discrimination from family members, and a lack of resources, which increases their risk of hunger and death (Khanal, 2018; Panday, 2008). Gender discrimination harms girls and impedes progress by denying them access to high-quality education, denying them rights, and causing early marriage, violence, and missed chances.

Rationale of the study

The gender gap in girls' access to high-quality education is evident, and in Nepal's rural areas, numerous sociocultural customs continue to impede this right. The issue of gender inequality in children's education must be addressed immediately since men and women are like two wheels on a single card; if one is weak, the other cannot function properly (Adhikari, 2019; Dinh & Kilenthong, 2019).

This scoping review highlights the gender discrimination in children's education and recommends further discussion to address it. In addition to providing recommendations for

the future regarding specific gender concerns in children's education, this study also addresses the contemporary issue of gender inequality in diverse nations and contexts.

Aims and objectives of this study

Understanding how parental gender preferences influence girls' education and access to quality schooling sheds light on gender discrimination in Nepal. Our article reviews secondary data on how parental preferences affect household resource allocation.

The primary focus is on the association between gender disparity and girls' right to quality education globally.

Three primary goals are used in this article to address its research questions:

To conduct a thorough study of the literature on the gender preferences of parents when deciding how much money to spend on their kids' education.

To find and evaluate scholarly publications about how sociocultural elements affect girls' academic achievement in schools.

To find and evaluate pertinent scholarly works about how domestic duties affect girls' academic achievement in schools.

To suggest further research on Nepali girls' entitlement to high-quality education

Our research examines how the scientific literature on secondary data analysis assesses parental gender preferences in allocating household resources, addressing these three research questions. "What is the association between gender disparity and girls' educational performance in secondary-level schools?" is the main study topic. Additional sub-research questions include:

What effects does the gender gap have on how household resources are allocated to girls' right to a good education in schools?

What effect do sociocultural elements have on girls' entitlement to a good education in schools?

What effect do domestic duties have on females' academic achievement in schools?

Our study concludes by examining the barriers to parental gender preference, socio-cultural beliefs, and how household chores affect girls' rights to quality education as described in the literature (see Table 2). It also clearly identifies and assesses factors such as parental sons' preferences, socio-cultural influences, household chores, child marriage, and parents' stereotypical social practices.

Methodology

A scoping review identified research on parental gender preference and gender diversity, clarified key concepts, analyzed previous methods, and identified knowledge gaps (Anderson, 2008; Munn et al., 2018). This method was chosen to address current research trends on gender discrimination in childhood education in response to the researchers' questions.

Objectives and research questions

This study aimed to analyze the association between parental preferences and household resource distribution, advocating for children's right to quality education (Levac, Colquhoun, & O'Brien, 2010; Peters et al., 2021). It evaluates how parental gender preferences affect girls' right to quality education in developed and developing countries and highlights the concepts and challenges of parental gender inequality in childhood education (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005).

The main research question was selected as,

What is the nature and extent of the evidence on how gender-based disparities—covering different household resource distribution, societal norms, and the domestic workload—affect girls' access to and success in quality education?

Criteria for eligibility

Similar to the inclusion criteria in a systematic review, the eligibility criteria for a scoping review determine which literature are included or excluded based on the review's objectives and research questions (Tantawi et al., 2024). This review included only English-language articles that examined children under fifteen years, with an emphasis on the outcome of interest: early parental disparity in allocating household resources (PDAHR) and its impact on girls' right to quality education. Parental disparity in children's right to

quality education refers to the unequal distribution of household resources for children's education, as well as the unequal access to educational resources and opportunities that children have based on their parents' educational backgrounds.

Key indicators were unequal allocation of school fees, differences in the provision of learning materials, unequal opportunity to select a school, unequal opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities, variation in school quality, unequal support time and support, unequal priority of educational needs, different investment in higher education, and gender-based or cultural differences.

Key indicators were considered based on children's access to education and enrollment of boys versus girls, parental practices on allocating household resources for boys versus girls, distributions of household chores, school environment and quality education for boys versus girls, parental and community attitudes between girls and boys, the difference between decision-making power of boys verses girls and long term outputs of boys verses girls (Adhikari, 2019. , Adhikari, 2025).

Eligible studies also needed to include at least one measure of social inequality (for example, socioeconomic factors, race and ethnicity, or geographical/residential location). This scoping review is not limited to specific countries, allowing for a diverse range of articles, contexts, populations, and results to provide a holistic view of data and insights.

Inclusion Criteria

This review clarifies gender discrimination in childhood education by examining social, cultural, economic, policy, and system factors, analysing evidence, identifying knowledge gaps, and setting future research priorities to improve girls' access to quality education (Munn et al., 2018; Tricco et al., 2018). Notably, this review did not require ethics or institutional review, and no protocol was formally registered or published.

Table 1. PCC elements

PCC Elements	Inclusion Criteria
P-Population	This study primarily focused on children aged 5-16 and their parents' decisions regarding girls' education. The selected study covered a broad range: children aged 0-15 years, adolescents aged 18 years, and university students up to 20 years. The population of parents was also focused on the 25-55 age group.
C-Concept	The literature of this study openly examines on gender discrimination, gender preference (particularly, male student preference or pro-male bias and allocation of intra-household resources (educational expenses or parental investment in children's education) as well as girls' right to quality education, including their access to quality education (girls' enrollment rate, school attendance, academic performance (educational outcomes, expectations), gender stereotypes, and bargaining power of parents for their girls' education). Central concepts in the source were sex preference, son preference, male-dominated society, inter-household resource allocation, household chores, and socio-cultural norms of the family/society.
C-Context	This study has covered the literature on both underdeveloped and developed countries (low- and middle-income countries), including Nepal, China, India, Australia, Japan, Ethiopia, and Pakistan. The current study has covered studies from different countries, for example, Asia, America, and Africa (especially developed and underdeveloped countries).
Study Design	The study design is based on a questionnaire survey, including econometric analysis, qualitative interviews, case studies, dissertations, a literature review model, and secondary data analysis. The source of this study is primarily a quantitative survey, following the literature review, qualitative, and mixed methods approaches.
Status of publications	This study's primary focus is on full-text articles; if very relevant, semi-accessible abstracts are also considered to map the scope. Master's- and doctoral-level theses published in peer-reviewed journals are included in the review. The types of sources are full access, semi-access, very highly relevant abstracts, master's- and doctoral-level journals, and peer-reviewed journals.

Methods of the search strategy

In order to find pertinent literature on the subject of this study, entitled "The Impact of Gender Preference on Girls' Right to Quality Education in Rural Regions of Nepal," we used three-step searching techniques where a preliminary limited search was conducted on Web of Science, PubMed, and Science Direct, using the listed keywords to ensure maximum sensitivity and high relevance (see Table 1).

The second search was based on a comprehensive strategy across multiple sources (Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, Web of Science, Scopus, UNICEF, World Bank, UNESCO, PubMed, ERIC, JSTOR, and government reports).

Finally, the search step involves reference checking of the full text of articles highly relevant to this study to review additional knowledge on gender disparity in the allocation of household resources for girls' education in the published literature across both underdeveloped and developed countries.

The search strings is constructed by combining key terms from the PCC (Population, Concept, Context) elements using Boolean operators (AND/OR); for instance, combining terms like ("Gender preference" OR "Son preference" OR "Gender bias") with terms like (Girls OR Female) and (Education OR "Access to education"), and context terms like ("Developed country" OR "Developing country").

The search strategy uses specific keywords to search six databases, including ISI Web of Science, ScienceDirect, Google Scholar, SpringerLink, IEEE/Electronic Library, and Engineering Village (see Table 1).

We also searched for relevant literature on the topic of this study, titled "The Impact of Gender Preference on Girls' Right to Quality Education in Rural Regions of Nepal," in the six databases mentioned earlier.

Table 2. List of keywords to search the literature

Gender disparity in education	Parental gender p	Girls' rights to quality education
Primary school programming, gender differences, gender disparity, early childhood education,	Allocation of household resources, childhood education, educational performance, parental gender preferences, daughter preference	girls' educational rights, socioeconomic status, gender equality, human development, low- and middle-income countries, quality education.

Data collection process

The search was conducted in English only, from October 1, 2025, to October 4, 2025. The data collection process for this study is based on a systematic, transparent approach consistent with the scoping review. The study selection process, as outlined in the flowchart (see Figure 2), initiated with the identification step, which comprised 1,150 records from database searches and an additional 150 records from other sources.

In the next screening stage, 1,300 records were processed to remove duplicates using reference management software and manual checks, resulting in 750 unique records for further review; 550 records were excluded due to duplication. Then, 750 relevant records were screened for headings and abstracts against predefined inclusion/exclusion criteria.

After that 480 articles were excluded by examining further evaluation, yielding 270 full-text articles for through eligibility assessment. During this valuation, two independent reviewers applied the requirements to the full texts; a total of 215 articles were excluded due to an inappropriate population and failed to meet study design requirements. This process stemmed from 55 studies included in the qualitative synthesis (narrative review).

Due to the lack of covering main theme of the research objectives, 15 articles were finally excluded and40 articles were finally included in the quantitative synthesis (meta-analysis) because they had comparable data for statistical combining (see Figure 2).

Identification

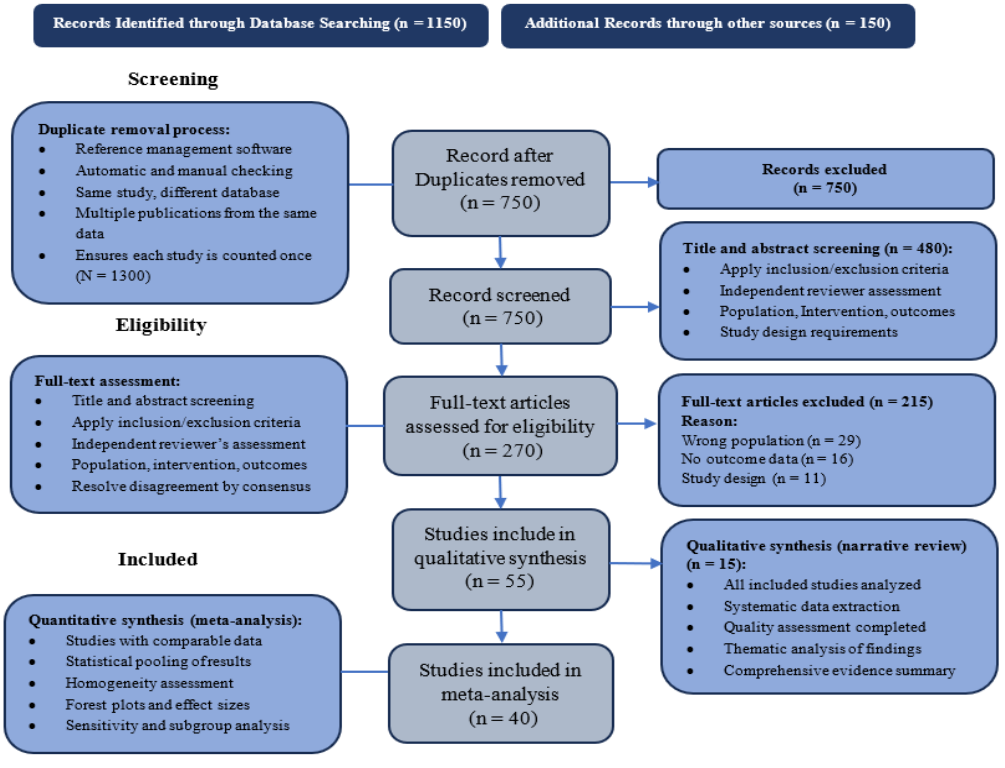

Figure 2. PRISMA model of Scoping Review

Extraction of Data

Following the scoping review methodology standards established by Arksey and O'Malley (2005) and Peters et al. (2021), three authors of this study used data extracted from the included studies to answer the research questions they established at the outset. A quantitative analysis was conducted of the study characteristics, including publication date and research methods. Lastly, all authors participated in the discussion and final editing of the manuscript, including one author who provided an expert-by-experience perspective as both a gender-diverse person and an autistic person (see Table 2).

Criteria for exclusion

Research articles published prior to 2003 were excluded from further analysis, as were research publications that focused on workplace gender disparity, gender disparity in employment opportunities, and the age group of 15 years and above. Additionally, children under the age of 8 were excluded from further analysis due to their inability to express their own opinions and current issues of gender disparity in their right to a quality education, and articles that addressed gender discrimination between male and female issues, rather than children's education, were also excluded.

Ethical statement

This study did not involve patient or public involvement. All open resources were retrieved from different sources, in accordance with each source's ethical criteria. Some articles were requested for full access by

the authors. We included them when the author of the corresponding semi-accessible articles of full texts.

Data analysis process

The study's findings were categorized using a thematic synthesis approach. The findings are based on the characteristics of selected articles, which were critically analyzed by study date, research methods, research article sources, published countries, population age, keywords, and access to full texts and semi-access to the selected articles. One author provided expertise through his lived experience as an autistic and gender-diverse person. The selected articles were published in different countries, including China, India, Turkey, Ethiopia, Germany, Japan, Australia, the Netherlands, Bangladesh, Poland, Niger, the United States, Thailand, Chile, Nepal, Vietnam, Pakistan, Norway, Uganda, Romania, and the United Kingdom (see Table 2). We have used specific AI templates to generate figures, but the text within them is original. Furthermore, we also used AI to generate ideas but did not copy them.

Results, discussion, and conclusion

The final selection for the scoping review consisted of 40 studies (see Table 2). This body of research primarily employed quantitative and qualitative methods, including mixed-methods studies.

Table 2. Summary of data for further analysis of scoping review

Years	Titles	Sources	Countries	Methods	Access	Population	Publications	Keywords
Maralani and Pinar (2024)	Spousal Agreement on Sex Preferences for Children and Gender Gaps in Children's Education	*Population and development review*	China	Quantitative survey	Full texts	8-14 years	Wiley online	sex preference; son preference; couples; gender; education
Kang, Fu, and Zhao (2024)	Maternal relative income, bargaining power, and children's education expenditure	*Economic Analysis and Policy*	India	Quantitative Survey on Econometric Analysis	Full texts	0-15 years	Elsevier (Science Direct)	maternal relative income; children's education expenditure; bargaining power
Fei and Li (2025)	Does education level impact parental gender preferences? A comparative perspective on fathers and mothers in China	*Acta Psychological*	Turkey	Quantitative survey	Full texts	12-18 years	Elsevier (Science Direct)	parental gender preferences; son preference; daughter preference; education; spouses' education; educational assortative mating
Alvi and Dendir (2014)	Parental Education and Children's School and Work Status in Urban Ethiopia: A Note on Gender Bias	*South African Journal of Economics*	Ethiopia	Quantitative Survey	Full texts	7-14 years	Sage publication (Wiley online)	parents' education; school enrolment; child labour; siblings; birth order; Ethiopia
Campbell et. al (2017)	Parents' interest in their child's education and children's outcomes in adolescence and adulthood: Does gender matter?	*International Journal of Educational Research*	Japan	Quantitative Survey	Full texts	12-15 years	Science Direct of Elsevier	parent engagement; parent interest; educational outcomes; gender; LSAC

Sakata et. al. (2022)	Chen, Wang, and WangDing (2024)	Abuhele, Behrman, and Bravo (2017)	Mammen (2020)	Burns and Manning (2024)	Nam and Huang (2009)	Nam and Huang (2011)	Leung and Zhang (2008)	Ciaccio, Bronson, and Contrada (2021)		
Birth Order, Gender, and the Parental Investment Gap Among Children	The Interplay of Sibling Sex Composition, Son Preference, and Child Education in China: Evidence from the One-Child Policy	Parental preferences and allocations of investments in children's learning and health within families	Children's Gender and Investments from Non-resident Fathers	The complexities of negotiating school choice for parents with gender diverse children	Equal opportunity for all? Parental economic resources and children's educational attainment	Changing Roles of Parental Economic Resources in Children's Educational Attainment	Gender preference, biased sex ratio, and parental investments in single-child households	Gender Stereotypes and Parental Status: A Comparison of Fathers, Mothers, and the Childless-by-Choice		
Singapore Economic Review	*Population Research and Policy Review*	*Social Science and Medicine*	*Journal of Family and Economic Issues*	*Australian Educational Researcher*	*Children And Youth Services Review*	*Social Work Research*	*Review of the Economics of the Household*	*Psychology Of Men and Masculinities*		
Japan	Australia	Netherlands	Bangladesh	Poland	Niger	China	India	United States		
Semi-access	Full texts	Semi-access	Full access	Full texts	Full texts	Full texts	Full texts	Semi texts		
Quantitative Survey	Secondary database of the Chinese population Census	Quantitative Survey	Quantitative Survey	Quantitative survey	Quantitative Survey	Review of literature	Literature review	Literature review		
14-18years	Children = 6-18yrs Parentyrs 30-55	6-18 yrs	12 yrs	15-17 years	13-18 yrs Parents 27 -45 yes	Parents aged 25-50 years	Parents aged 30-55 years	Parents aged 22-55 years		
World Scientific Publ Co Pte Ltd	Springer	Pergamon-Elsevier Science Ltd	Springer International Publishing AG	Springer	Pergamon-Elsevier Science Ltd	Oxford Univ Press Inc	Springer	APA PsycArticles		
birth order, gender, parental investment	sibling sex composition; son preference; one-child policy; education; China	Chile; parental preferences and within-family investments; child development; birth weight; weight; height;	gender; child support; union dissolution; child well-being; father involvement	gender and sexuality diversity; parents; school choice	Education; Economic resources; Assets (wealth); Income; Mobility	assets and debt; cohort; education; income; inequality	Gender preference; Parental investment; Marriage	stereotypes; parental status; childless; childless-by-choice; fathers		

Huang and Gong (2022)	Educational Expectations of Left-behind Children in China: Determinants and Gender Differences	*Applied Research in Quality of Life*	Turkey	Quantitative Survey	Full texts	Children 9-18 years	Springer	Gender differences; Left-behind children; Well-being; Educational expectations; China
Begum, Grossman, and Islam (2018).	Gender Bias in Parental Attitude: An Experimental Approach	*Demography*	Thailand	Quantitative survey study	Full texts	9-18-year-old children	Springer	Parental bias; Gender; Allocation task; Field experiment
Susanli (2013)	Gender And Household Education Expenditure in Turkey	*Review of the Economics of The Household*	Ethiopia	Mixed methods approach	Full texts	18- 20 years university students	Springer	Gender differences; Household expenditures; Early childhood
Kugler and Kumar (2017).	Preference for Boys, Family Size, and Educational Attainment in India	*Demography*	Japan	Literature review	Full texts	Children under 18 years old	Eurasian Business and Economics Soc	Education Expenditure; Household; Gender; Turkey
Azam and Kingdon (2013)	Are Girls the Fairer Sex in India? Revisiting Intra-Household Allocation of Education Expenditure	*World Development*	Chile	Literature review	Full texts	Sample of 5-18 yrs	Springer	Gender bias, educational expenditure, hurdle model, school choice, India
Demirel-Derebasoglu and Okten (2022)	Gender Gap in Intergenerational Educational Persistence: Can Compulsory Schooling Reduce It?	*Population Research and Policy Review*	Australia	Literature review	Full texts	Sample of 5-8 yrs	Pergamon-Elsevier Science Ltd	gender bias; educational expenditure; Engel curve; Hurdle model; India
Basnet (2013)	Gender Discrimination and Children's Right to Education in Nepal	*Master thesis*	Nepal	Quantitative survey	Full texts	12-16 yrs students	Norwegian University of Science and Technology	gender discrimination, educational rights, resource allocation, socio-cultural practices, developed and underdeveloped countries
Nanda et. al. (2012)	Study on Gender, Masculinity, and Son Preference in Nepal and Vietnam	*International Center for Research on Women (ICRW).*	Nepal and Vietnam	Quantitative survey	Full texts	18-49 years old parents	International Center for Research on Women (ICRW)	son preference, gender-based violence, men's attitudes, masculinity, discrimination against women, Nepal, and Vietnam
Đinh and Kilenthong (2019)	Do Parental Absence and Children's Gender Affect Early Childhood Investment? Evidence from Rural Thailand	*The Singapore Economic Review,*	Thailand	Quantitative survey	Only abstract	9- 15-year-old children	World Science Connect	parental investment, early childhood investment, left-behind children, parental absence, child's gender, elasticity of substitution

Leone, Matthews, and Zuanna (2003)	Impact and Determinants of Sex Preference in Nepal.	*International Family Planning Perspectives*	Nepal	Quantitative survey	Full texts	15-49 years old women parents	JSTOR	gender discrimination, son preference, contraceptive use, fertility rate Nepal
Baral (2015)	Factors influencing the education of girls	*Doctoral Dissertation*	Nepal	Qualitative interview	Full texts		Murdoch University	girls' education, gender discrimination, Nepalese education system, community and private schools, patriarchy
Shahi (2024)	Exploring the Experiences of Girls regarding their Irregularities in School	*Master Dissertation*	Nepal	Qualitative interview	Full texts	12-16 years old girls	Kathmandu University, Nepal	girls' education, school irregularity, gender discrimination, socioeconomic factors, cultural barrier, intersectionality, Nepal
Shrestha and Palaniswamy (2017)	Sibling rivalry and gender gap: intrahousehold substitution of male and female educational investments from male migration prospects	*Journal of Population Economics*	Germany	Quantitative survey	Full texts	6-12 years old girls	Springer-Verlag	migration · gender gap · education · intrahousehold allocation
Saleemi and Kofol (2022)	Women's participation in household decisions and gender equality in children's education: Evidence from rural households in Pakistan	*World Development Perspectives*	Pakistan	Quantitative survey	Full texts	Children 5-16 years	Elsevier Science Direct	empowerment, inequality, gender, household decision-making, intra-household resource allocation
Adhikari (2019)	The gender discrimination in childhood education at Ratnanagar Municipality in Nepal	*Google scholar*	Nepal	Qualitative interview	Full texts	12-15 years old girls	Manzamine of Ratnanagar Municipality	preference, discrimination, childhood education, sons and daughters, interviewees.
Nepali (2012)	Gender Relations and its Impact on Girls' Education among the Dalit Community	*Peer-Reviewed Journal*	Nepal	Qualitative interview	Full texts	Girls aged 6-17 years	Nepal Participatory Action Network (NEPAN)	Education, Gender, Discrimination, Social inequality
Khanal (2018)	Gender Discrimination in Education Expenditure in Nepal: Evidence from Living Standards Surveys	*Asian Development Review*	Nepal	The quantitative survey	Full texts	Children aged 6-18 years old	World Scientific Publishing	decomposition, education expenditure, gender discrimination, household decisions, Nepal Living Standards Surveys
Bhandary (2017)	Understanding some cultural barriers to women's access to education A case study in developeand undeveloped countries.	*Master Thesis*	Nepal	The qualitative interview	Full texts	12-17 years old children	MF Norwegian School of Theology	Developed and undeveloped countries, women, traditional culture, and education

Adhikari (2013)	Gender inequality and the problem with girls' school attendance in Nepal	*Master diss*	Norway	Qualitative interview	Full texts	13-18 yrs	University of Nordland, Norway	girls' secondary school attendance, affecting factors, gender inequality, intervention strategies
Mubiinzi and Mutumba (2025)	Economic growth through gender parity: Evidence from education, labour, and governance in Uganda,	*Social Sciences & Humanities Open*	Uganda	Literature review	Full texts	Age of 6-18 years old	Science Direct	gender parity; Economic growth; education equity; labour force participation; public governance; gender inequality; human capital; inclusive development
Tiwari and Paltasingh (2025)	Why should boys have all the funds? Gender inequality in household education expenditure in India,	*International Journal of Educational Development,*	India	The quantitative survey	Full texts	6-18 years old children	Science Direct	education expenditure; gender disparity; blinder-Oaxaca decomposition; NSS MPCE, quintile; religion; caste
Moriyasu et. al. (2025)	Realizing the right to education for all: Approaches to removing barriers based on gender, disability, and socioeconomic status in 193 countries	*International Journal of Educational Development*	USA	Literature review	Full texts	14-18 yrs	University of California, Los Angeles, USA	Inclusive education; free education; compulsory education; gender; disability; discrimination
Popa and Burcur (2014)	Gender Discrimination and Education Practitioners. Reality, Perception, Possible Solutions.	*Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*	Romania	Literature review	Full texts	10-17 yrs	Science Direct Elsevier	gender discrimination; gender equality; gender prejudice and stereotypes; education system; education practitioners
Hu, Guo, and Ding (2022)	Son preference, intrahousehold discrimination, and the gender gap in education in China	*International Review of Economics and Finance*	China	The quantitative survey	Full texts	Children aged 6-18 years old	Nanjing University of Posts and Telecommunications, Nanjing, China;	education; son preference; gender gap; intrahousehold discrimination
Schnettler (2024)	Parental investment, status, and child gender: Some evidence for the Trivers–Willard Hypothesis from a survey experiment	*KZfSS Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*	Germany	The quantitative survey	Full texts	12-18 years	Springer	evolutionary sociology · gender inequality · social inequality · factorial survey · parental preferences
Kaul (2018)	Intra-household allocation of educational expenses: Gender discrimination and investing in the future	*World Development,*	India	The quantitative survey	Full texts	13-18 yrs	Science Direct	gender discrimination, intra-household inequality, birth order, educational expenditure, pro-male bias, eldest son preference, matrilineal system

This study summarized the authors of 40 articles, topics, journal sources, research methods used in each article, the age of each study's population, countries of publication, key results, and keywords for each article. This study includes 40 articles titled "The Parental Disparity in Childhood Education." Important data has been recorded for additional analysis (see Table 1).

Question 1: How does the gender disparity affect how household resources are allocated to girls' right to quality education in schools?

According to the findings, husbands prefer sons more than daughters, while wives prefer balanced or daughters, or neither. The degree of agreement varies by country, with India at 59% and Niger at 32% (Tiwari & Paltasingh, 2025; Susanli, 2013). The relationship between sex preferences and girls' right to a good education varies depending on the situation; with few exceptions, girls do worse when both parents prefer sons, better when they agree on daughters, or have no preference (Adhikari, 2019).

Figure 3. Synopsis of parental inequality in distributing household funds for girls' access to high-quality education

According to the results, which show convergent findings across a few selected articles, the push factors driving gender disparity in early childhood education include sociocultural norms, local policy context, contextual variability, material empowerment, resource bias, and parental economic resources and allocation (see Figure 3). In families where parents did not receive much formal education, the way they think about saving versus spending time or effort now strongly predicts their sons' choices for high school tracks and college enrollment; this effect is noticeably weaker for their daughters' right to quality education (Hu, Guo & Ding, 2022). Again, Bellani and Ortiz-Gervasi (2022) emphasize that gender gaps in education are more common when wives prefer sons, but husbands do not (Maralani & Pinar, 2024; Mammen, 2020; Maralani & Pinar,2024).

The results indicate that parents with higher social status are more likely to have male children and invest more resources in them. Conversely, lower-status parents tend to have female children and to invest more in their daughters (Campbell et al., 2017; Schnettler, 2024). The findings also show no gender-specific effects on academic achievement, educational expectations, or adult educational attainment. However, both mothers' and fathers' interests are linked to their children's self-concept, with stronger connections observed in children of the opposite gender, suggesting that parental identification and modeling may play a crucial role in shaping how boys and girls perceive themselves and their abilities (Legewie & DiPrete, 2012).

Chen et al. (2024) investigated the mixed effects of having a brother as the second-born on the educational outcomes of firstborn girls. On the one hand, son-biased resource allocation reduces the educational achievement of firstborn girls; on the other hand, parents' decision to stop having more children after a son's birth improves educational opportunities for firstborn girls. These opposing forces cancel each other out, resulting in a negligible overall impact. In contrast, the sex composition of siblings does not significantly influence the educational outcomes of firstborn boys (Nam & Huang, 2009; Moriyasu.et.al.2025).

The study by Ringdal and Sjursen (2020) highlights that increasing a wife's bargaining power promotes greater gender equality in the allocation of educational resources among children. However, it does not boost overall investment in education, and differences in spouses' time preferences influence household investment: children benefit when the more patient spouse has greater bargaining power. This suggests that increasing the wife's bargaining

power could actually decrease educational investment if she is the less patient spouse. Likewise, the study by Bizenjo (2020) shows that boys are more likely than girls to enroll in low-cost private schools, which worsens gender disparities in girls' right to quality education. However, when girls do access high-performing schools, they tend to perform better academically than boys (Tiwari & Paltasingh, 2025).

Additionally, the same study highlights that parental education influences school choice, with fathers' education having a greater impact than mothers. According to the summary findings, the parental son's preference may result in lower educational quality for girls. This includes the choice of private schools, low maternal empowerment, cognitive bias against girls, and poverty context—all of which are detrimental markers of gender inequality in early childhood education (see Figure 3).

RQ2. How do sociocultural elements affect girls' academic performance in schools?

The results show that there are still many socio-cultural negative indicators of girls' right to quality education. Many studies highlight that son preference and intra-household disparity reduce girls' educational investment, asymmetric parental sex choice shapes outcomes, parental perceptions, stereotypes, and expectations bias investment, composition of sibling and birth order interact with gender preferences to shape investment in children's education, context-specific bias, and local culture and context moderate impact were found the key indicators of socio-cultural negative indicators for girl's right to quality.

They further highlight that parents culturally believe that sons can earn more money, support them in their older age, and do cultural activities during their funeral ceremony after their death education (Adhikari, 2019; Tiwari & Paltasingh, 2025; Susanli, 2013; Hu, Guo & Ding, 2022; Schnettler, 2024; Nam & Huang,2009-2011). The results highlight that social and cultural aspects are more deeply rooted in the rural areas of the different countries, where household chores, sibling care, cooking, and elderly care are the primary responsibilities of girls. They reported that socio-cultural aspects are more influential in hindering girls' right to quality education and better educational performance (Adhikari, 2019; Kaul, 2018; Sakata et al., 2022; Nanda et al., 2012; Moriyasu et al., 2025; Khanal, 2018; Demirel-Derebasoglu & Okten, 2022).

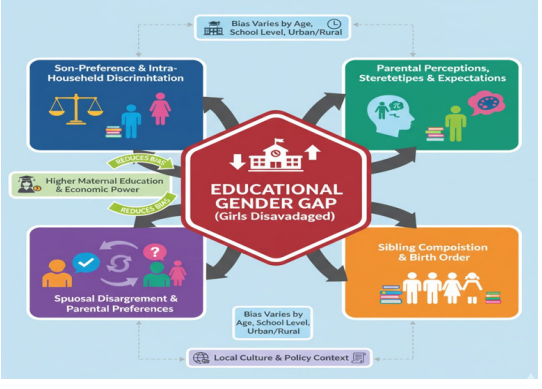

Figure 4. Key indicators of the sociocultural influence on girls' rights to high-quality education are summarized

Key socio-cultural factors that impede girls' access to high-quality education include preferences for sons, intra-household discrimination, spousal disagreement, parental preferences, and local culture and policy contexts. The review emphasizes that gender bias varies by children's age, school level, and whether they live in urban or rural areas. It also depends on parental perceptions, stereotypes, expectations, sibling composition, and birth order (see Figure 4).

RQ 3. What effect do household chores have on girls' academic success in schools?

According to Kang, Fu, and Zhao (2024), women's relative income consistently has a beneficial effect on household expenditure on children's education. This effect is powerful for boys, younger children, and smaller families, and it remains significant even after robustness tests and endogeneity control.

According to Sakata et al. (2022), Japanese parents spend more on their firstborn children — especially boys — preschoolers, and school-aged girls, and also spend more on their daughters' extracurricular education. In general, parents are

neutral and do not influence sibling disparities caused by differences in endowment; no significant preference differences are observed between families with mothers who are low- or highly educated. Abufhele, Behrman, and Bravo (2017); Susanli (2013); and Burns and Manning (2024) found that parental preferences range from strict compensation—investing more in disadvantaged children—to strict reinforcement—favouring better-endowed children regardless of inequality.

Schneider, Hastings, and LaBriola (2018) and Nam and Huang (2009) demonstrate that higher income inequality is associated with increased parental financial investments, but not with time investments. This partly results from income concentration among top earners in more unequal areas, providing high-income households with more resources for children's financial development. Nam and Huang (2011) and Nanda. et.al (2012) emphasize the importance of multiple measures of economic resources in examining parental resources and children's educational achievement.

Huang and Gong (2022) deepen the understanding of how parental migration, gender inequality, and educational opportunities for left-behind children are interconnected. Azam and Kingdon (2013); Fei and Li (2025); Hu, Guo, and Ding (2022); Schnettler (2024) found that, using a Hurdle model, despite progress in gender equality in education between 1993 and 2005, pro-male bias remains in household spending.

This bias appears in two ways: families allocate resources differently for boys and girls during primary and middle school, and they are more likely to enroll sons in secondary school. The gap is larger in rural areas. The disparity stems from households: boys attend private schools, while girls attend government-funded schools. Additionally, a pattern of son-favoritism in favorable conditions and daughter-favoritism in less favorable ones is observed.

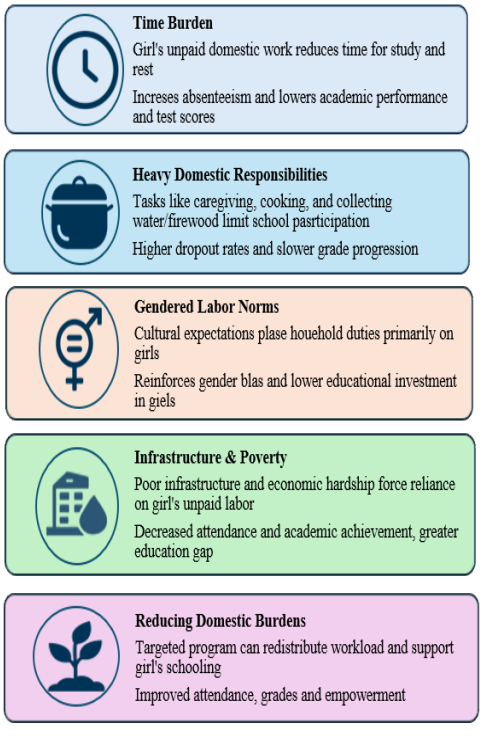

Figure 5. Synopsis of findings regarding how domestic activities affect girls' improved performance

Girls' exclusion from education in tribal Balochistan is driven by patriarchal capital, which is defined as men's social, symbolic, economic, and cultural resources (Arif et al., 2025; Nepali,2012; Panday,2008). Practices such as early marriages, domestic responsibilities, honour norms, and male-dominated schools demonstrate how patriarchal interests outweigh material or geographic barriers, limiting girls to domestic roles and denying them an education.

Time burden, heavy household chores, labour norms, infrastructure, and poverty are the five main convergent findings from the selected articles presented in this review, identified as key negative indicators that hinder girls' academic performance in schools. On the other hand, targeted educational programs can reschedule workloads and support girls' quality performance in schools (see Figure 5).

Display of the keyword analysis

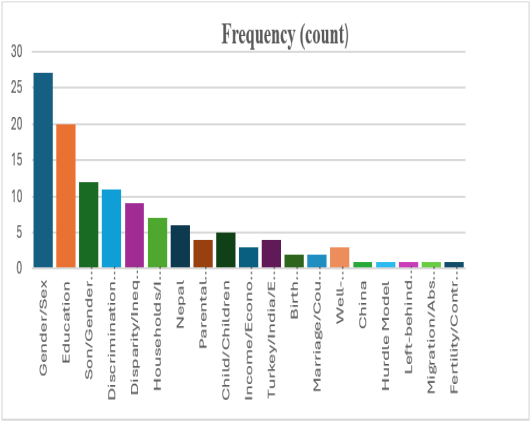

Figure 6. shows the insightful terms that were used repeatedly in the 40 chosen articles.

Gender/sex education is the most frequently used keyword among the 40 selected articles, according to the results. Other frequently used keywords include son/gender preference/parental disparity, discrimination, disparity/inequality, households, interhousehold, family, educational expenditure, Nepal, parental investment, child, children, income, economic resources, birth order, siblings, and others. Further research on gender discrimination in childhood education is necessary because gender issues are still controversial worldwide (see Figure 6).

Discussion

As the results of the selected articles show, girls are frequently forced to attend free, low-quality government schools and perform household chores instead of attending school, indicating that many girls under the age of 18 are deprived of their right to quality education and better educational outcomes. The key findings of this review indicate that many girls under 18 are deprived of their right to quality education and better educational outcomes. Additionally, the results highlight the fact that girls are deprived of their right to quality education due to overburdened households, early marriage, stereotypical social and cultural practices, religious beliefs, and parental discrimination in allocating household resources for their children.

Gender bias and son preference in education

Similar findings have been reported in research studies by Maralani and Pinar (2024), Hu, et al., (2022), Chen, Wang and WangDing (2024), and Fei and Liu (2025) regarding sons' preferences and gender disparities in children's education. In China, parental gender preference persists, affecting both children and parental expectations. Similarly, Leung and Zhang (2008), Kugler and Kumar (2017), Peters et al., (2021), Popa and Bucur (2014), and Tiwari and Paltasingh (2025) have found that parental investments and expenditures tend to favour sons, especially in poor households in India. Basnet (2013), Leone et al. (2003), Adhikari (2019), and Khanal (2018) have reported similar findings, indicating that gender discrimination and son preference reduce girls' access to and continuation in education. According to the combined findings of various writers, cultural son preference consistently hinders females' education by allocating resources for their children in an unfair manner.

The effect of parental education on the education of children

Several authors, including Mammen (2020), Campbell et al. (2017), and Sakata et al. (2022), conclude that educated and involved parents can help reduce gender gaps in outcomes; Fei and Li (2025), Ringdal and Sjursen (2020), Saleemi and Kofol (2022), Mubiinzi and Mutumba (2025) found that mothers' educational levels contribute to gender equality and national human capital growth; and similar findings from various authors conclude that parental and maternal educational levels enhance educational expenditures for both genders (Alvi & Dendir, 2014; Saleemi & Kofol, 2022). According to various writers, parental awareness and education are important mediators in reducing gender bias in educational investments.

Gender equality and decision-making in the home

According to various studies, female empowerment can help lessen the effects of male migration and male-controlled expenditure

patterns. Similarly, female bargaining power and economic contributions improve the fairness of educational resource allocation (Kang, Fu, & Zhao, 2024; Nam & Huang, 2011; Saleemi & Kolfi, 2022; Schnettler, 2024; Shahi, 2024). The aforementioned convergent findings from several writers provide an overview of how equitable investment in children's educational rights is enhanced by mother empowerment and influence.

Contradictory results

There is a contradiction between parental income and education, which occasionally increases sons' preference for education investment. The study by Fel and Li (2025) emphasizes that parental educational level reduces gender disparities in children's education. In contrast, Maralani and Pinar (2024) suggest that even educated parents may still discriminate against their daughters, giving their sons greater preference. The study concludes that higher parental educational attainment does not reduce gender disparities in children's education. Hu, et al., (2022) found that Chinese feminists allocate household resources to their sons' education. In contrast, Susnali (2013), Tiwari and Paltasingh (2025), Alvi and Dendir (2014) found that parents in Ethiopia distribute household resources equally among their children.

Households can redistribute patriarchal power on several levels by addressing household chores; schools can combat gender biases by hiring female teachers and establishing classrooms exclusively for girls; policymakers can ensure resource equity by implementing gender-responsive budgeting for transportation, scholarships, and materials, which aligns with national education goals; and households should encourage open dialogue between fathers and daughters to foster family pride through education and shared experiences.

Effects of sibling composition and childbirth order on females' entitlement to high-quality education

In contrast, Shrestha and Palaniswarny (2017) tentatively highlight sibling effects that have reduced gender gaps in Nepal, suggesting contradictory findings regarding the firstborn or male advantage, which vary by country. Sakata et al. (2022) found that birth order has a substantial impact on parental investment in Japan.

Cultural factors and economic factors

When it comes to the interplay between cultural and economic constraints on children's education, the studies by Leone et al. (2003), Nanda et al. (2012), and Baral (2015) highlight the importance of culture, while Kang, Fu, and Zhao (2024) focus on the economic drivers of children's education.

Findings from a regional review of the similarities and discrepancies

Similarly, studies by Leung and Zhang (2008) and Kaul (2018) have found a gender gap in education expenses in India. However, Tiwari and Paltasingh (2025) argue that parental education can help narrow the gender gaps in childhood education in India. In China, strong son preference and unequal allocation of household resources for children's education were found (Maralani & Piner, 2024; UNESCO,2023; Hu et al., 2022). However, Fei and Liu (2025) found that education does not always reduce parental preference bias.

While a study by Bhandary (2017) found that community initiatives can increase equality in children's education in Nepal, studies by Basnet (2013), Adhikari (2019), and Khanal (2018) highlighted similar results, showing that Nepalese society is deeply rooted in a preference for sons and cultural differences regarding children's education.

Finally, research in African countries by Alvi and Dendir (2014) and Mubiinzi and Mutumba (2025) found that parental education levels can reduce gender gaps. However, these findings lack additional substantial evidence of son preferences in some parts of Africa. Research conducted in Japan and other developed countries by Campbell et al. (2017) and Sakata et al. (2022) found that gender gaps in parental expectations persisted, albeit slightly. However, the same studies produced contradictory results on whether parents allocate household resources based on their children's gender or birth order, which can affect their right to a quality education.

Conclusion

Gender discrimination occurs when individuals face disadvantages due to their gender, which does not always have to be sexual in nature which can include disparities in human rights or unfair treatment based on a person's sex or gender identity, often rooted in outdated societal and personal beliefs about what gender is, how it should be expressed, or how people of different genders are expected to behave. The objective of this study was to review forty articles on the impact of gender preference on girls' right to quality education in developed and underdeveloped countries and to identify research gaps in the discourse on gender disparity.

This study has been applied to a scoping review methodology, which effectively maps barriers and concepts related to parental gender disparity in childhood education. It evaluates the evidence on the impact of parental gender preference on girls' right to quality education in developed and underdeveloped countries. This review concludes that many girls under 18 years are deprived of their right to quality education and better educational outcomes. The results also highlighted that girls are deprived of children's right to quality education due to overburdened households, early marriage, and stereotypical social culture practices, religious beliefs, and parental discrimination in allocating household resources for their children. This study is limited to 40 selected articles, which may result in a small sample and potentially narrow the scope of the results (see Table 1).

Suggestions

Surrounding male-controlled capital scales light on supporting tribal girls' right to quality education. Future research should focus on conducting region-specific primary research and comparing results across regions and countries to determine the exact ranges of gender gaps in different countries. The study presents a culturally informed education policy model that is adaptable to other contexts, despite its focus on a single country, region, or district. Future research should also compare regional patriarchal capital, involve girls as co-researchers, and investigate digital tools to address gaps and assess the sustainability of these approaches.

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