

A comparative study of British and Indian informal activities of girls.

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Abstract

This research study aims to investigate the informal social activities of youth age girls in England and in India . Culture has been perceived to be the pivot point on which human beings peg their socialization orientation and characterization (Piranha, 2009). However, with the current trends, including globalization and technological advances, it is hypothesized that the world's youths engage in similar informal activities. This research therefore, tries to prove the hypothesis of whether girls informal activities are the same in a secular society and a closed society; England and India respectively. The aim of this study is to critically examine the similarities and differences between Indian and English young girls with regard to how they spend their free time in their respective countries. It aims to address these issues from a historical as well as current view points and tries to postulate how long the activities will still be pegged on regions and cultural orientations of the society.

The research will examine these trends and endeavor to explain the reasons why the differences still exist or what has made them erode. India and England have unique differences in terms of their histories, economic power, level and type of education, cultural orientation, population and lifestyles (Piranha, 2009). This research therefore, attempts to investigate how these themes constitute the development of policies for the young girl. The way children, and girls in particular, are raised in Indian and English societies will be investigated to establish a link between the upbringing and the girls' future development.

1. INTRODUCTION

This comparative study of the informal social activities of English and Indian girls in the identified age groups serves to point out tentative differences in the two different civilizations. The present study will seek to explore the nature of environmental and cultural challenges that affect girls in the general process of growth and development. The study adds weight to, or challenges some of the propositions that have been developed by Anderson and Taylor (2007) on the matter of cultural diversity as concerns the socialization of girls. The present study is to be understood together with study conducted by Anderson and Taylor (2007), which have attempted a comparative analysis of girls in different societies. By providing a comparative analysis of the situation, the present study develops a body of information on the similarities and differences with regard to the informal social activities of English girls and Indian girls. In broader terms, the present study will be of value in building upon understandings of converging and divergent systems of socialization; with specific reference to the informal social activities of girls within two small-scale contrasting European and South East Asian communities: Northern Delhi and Northern London.

2. BACKGROUND

The process of identity formation is fundamental to the development process of girls in different cultures (Johnson, 2008). This is manifested in many ways although in some societies (developed societies) the girls are freer to seek their identity at a much younger age than in less developed or developing societies (Johnson, 2008). An analysis of the English girls and that of their counterparts in India is made in relation to their informal activities. One fundamental observation is that, the Indian girls are more conservative and their exploration of the outside world is more gradual than that of English girls. The English girls spend most of their informal time doing activities with their peers while adolescent girls in India spend their time mostly with their mothers. Girls in England are experimental, playful, reckless, and even carefree than their counterparts in India" (Kohn, 2003). This can be drawn from the nature of societies the countries exhibit. While England is seen as a more liberal and secular society where the freedom of children is advocated from all corners of the country, the Indian society is enshrined in conserving the religious practices, and therefore the girls must adore their parents at all times.

However, it is interesting to note that since India had a large population and limited resources, girls in India are not beholden to their parents any longer in late adolescence and are forced to go out and supplement their parents'

incomes (Dowling, 2009). In addition, unemployment has led to many girls in India engaging in early sexual activities. This has explanation in two fronts; the parents are increasing unable to monitor the activities of their girls as they are out working or seeking employment (Dowling, 2009) and poverty is forcing girls to go out and seek sexual activities with older richer men in order to make a living. This is in direct contrast to the English girls. As much as English girls 'hang out' more with their peers in the early adolescent stages, the girls are not necessarily involved in sexual activities. However, an important note to make is that in their late adolescent stages, English girls are as active as their Indian counterparts (Dowling, 2009).

3. THE LITERATURE REVIEW

issue of how girls spend their leisure time has continued to elicit debate and concern in both the developing and the developed societies. Studies conducted by Behura (2005) and Christopher (1999) have attempted to find out how best young girls can be trained and guided to enable them spend their time more constructively. For this reason, several programs have been designed to ensure that the young girls' leisure time is not construed to mean an opportunity to engage in mischief and self-destruction (Springhall, 1986). Some of these programs have not been very successful because they are designed with the erroneous perception that young girls lack the proper judgment of what is right from wrong, hence the young people reject them (Springhall, 1986). Christopher (1999) established that young girls and the youth in general are perceived as latent victims of pollution by adults, or as being dangerous even to their peers (Boyden 1997).

In a developing country like India, girls often face discrimination from a tender age and therefore lack the necessary foundation to build successful careers (Heywood, 2001). It was established that poor health, malnutrition, lack of competent skills and overwork of the girls in India has a direct bearing on the underdevelopment of girls (Ramalingaswami, et al., 1996). In India, there is an over emphasis on the protection of the girls, thus she is afforded limited time to be herself and enjoy her free time, and this leads to the perception that she is a liability (Shah, 2009). This has persisted throughout the history of India from its political independence over sixty years ago (Heywood, 2001). The situation however, has begun to change gradually with the emergence of new economic and social opportunities for the girls (Burt, 2007). Girls are now able to compete with boys on the same footing, although several challenges for them still abound (Burt, 2007).

On the other hand, England is a developed society where girls have more opportunities for growth and self-discovery than their Indian counterparts (Kent, 1990). In England, girls tend to involve in activities with their families when they are still young (Kent,1990). As they enter into their late teens, however, they prefer to spend much more time with their peers than with their families. Due to their developed status, England is better placed to offer superior opportunities for teenagers than India (Sauerteig & Davidson, 2009). Studies have revealed that superior infrastructure and pointed action provide a vital starting point for the creation of a better environment for the young population (Sauerteig & Davidson, 2009). This is primarily because such a developed society provides tangible resources and how significant the development of the young people. Several societies now employ these tactics to better support the development of their young girls (Lyons, 2006). Another critical point to note concerning the development and protection of young girls is the cultural and artistic orientation (Lyons, 2006).

Previous research on the free time programs for young girls confirms that when there are opportunities for young girls in artistic and cultural expression, they tend to have a more positive view of life and higher benchmarks for achievement (Kent, 1999). When such opportunities are limited or totally absent, the young girls lack role models to emulate and get inspired by, hence, they turn to their peers who equally lack ambition (Kent, 1999). They then tend to be reckless, experimental and risk takers, leading some of them into self-destruction (Kent, 1999). They are no longer subordinate to boys with regard to how they want to spend their leisure time. They are spending their leisure time in ways that were traditionally an enclave of boys (Stearns, 2009).

4. METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this study is purely use of secondary data. The explanations for the outcome from the case studies and secondary data will be given in detail in the data analysis and result section of this research. As the study will rely on literature review that explores a range of literature on the subject of the informal social activities of English and Indian girls. This review will rely on multiple sources to determine the comparisons and similarities in the topic. Usually extended literature review uses multiple evidences to determine the relationship between phenomenon and context (Johnson, 2008).. Information will be sought from the sources regarding the cultural influence on English and Indian girls' informal practices. . The present study will rely on the information found in written sources and other archival sources to determine the relationships between the different forms of factors that related to informal activities of the girls..

5. ANALYSIS

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It is evident that there is a great global shift in the roles performed by girls during the pre-colonial period, and in the present time. In spite of this fact, it is arguable that the informal activities performed by girls and boys varied with age, and geographical areas. For example, in India, it is arguable that women underwent a lot of oppression during the pre-colonial period, as the society subjected them to constant subjugation.

However, these experiences among the Indian women varied with castes, religion, place in family hierarchy, and age. For example, most of the activities performed by girls from the lower class girls in the country revolved around domestic chores (Cazenave, 2004). However, it is arguable that with the British intervention, these roles have greatly changed. For example, nowadays most girls are in formal employment, as they are literate. Further, with the introduction of new technology, most girls are increasingly spending their time on social media (Danesi, 2012). Consequently, this has been a major area of concern, as many scholars seek to unravel the effect of these activities on the lives of the girls from the two communities

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The sole reason for rise of the young women power in India is attributable to the easy and affordable education of any and every kind to young girls . The mindset of Indian parents both of urban and rural areas is quite focused , despite the inherent cultural bias and primitive mindset of distinguishing a boy from a girl right from birth. A glance at the young women in India, as a matter of fact, shows that not only are young Indian women competent to compete with men on all fronts in India but Indian women are making their mark at international level , even in England . The major human assets of British healthcare system are Indian Doctors and Nurses , of whom majority are women.

6. CONCLUSION

The issue at hand is not only sensitive but of utmost importance to any society at any point of time as all national human development programmes planning needs an understanding of adolescents based on reliable studies. The current paper has relied upon secondary data produced by eminent researchers and it can be safely concluded that while specific historical nature of the English society as compared to Indian society , a common comparable feature is that neither of the two societies under study can be contradistinguished as both societies are adequately educated, modern and globalised and cultural sensitive .

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