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BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN ACCESSING EDUCATION FOR GIRLS IN URBAN SLUMS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CHALLENGES AND INTERVENTIONS IN RAICHUR KARNATAKA INDIA

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the barriers and opportunities in providing education to girls living in urban slums, with a case study focusing on seven slums in Raichur, Karnataka, India. The study is based on data collected from 490 respondents across these slums, examining their perceptions of the necessity of education for girls, the level of education needed, and the socio-cultural factors influencing educational access. Findings reveal that 78% of respondents affirm the need for girls' education, with higher education being particularly emphasized—55% of participants believe girls must pursue higher education to improve their prospects. The primary motivations for advocating girls' education include employment opportunities (51%) and the development of literacy and knowledge (37%). However, traditional gender norms, myths, and belief systems still act as significant barriers, with 60% of respondents acknowledging that these factors negatively impact girls' access to education. Despite these challenges, there is strong community support for the belief that educating girls contributes to building a healthy society, with 98% of respondents agreeing on this point. The research also explores employment outcomes, showing that uneducated girls are more likely to work in labor-intensive sectors (73% in labor or housework), while educated girls, though more likely to secure company jobs (28%), still face significant hurdles, as 57% continue to work in labor-intensive roles. Moreover, deeply rooted gender inequality persists, with all respondents (100%) recognizing the existence of gender-based disparities in educational opportunities. The study underscores the urgent need for tailored interventions, policy reforms, and community engagement programs aimed at breaking down cultural and economic barriers to education. By addressing these issues, it is possible to enhance educational access for girls in slums and empower them to contribute meaningfully to society.

KEYWORDS: *Girl's Education, Urban Slums, Raichur, Gender Inequality*

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is universally recognized as a fundamental human right and a key driver of social and economic development. However, access to quality education remains a significant challenge for marginalized communities, particularly in urban slums where socio-economic inequalities are rampant. Among these communities, girls face additional barriers due to cultural norms, economic constraints, and gender biases that prioritize boys' education over girls'. This has long-term

impacts on the individual lives of girls and on society as a whole, perpetuating cycles of poverty, gender inequality, and underdevelopment.Swati, M. (2001), one of the most important measures of human development is literacy. Even though India's overall literacy rate has increased significantly since independence, there is still a discernible gender gap in attainment at the national, regional, and local.In India, the situation is particularly alarming. Despite significant improvements in the overall literacy rate, gender disparity in education persists, especially in underprivileged areas like urban slums. Raichur, a district in Karnataka, exemplifies the complex socio-economic factors that hinder educational opportunities for girls. The urban slums in Raichur reflect the broader national trends where access to education for girls is often hampered by factors such as poverty, lack of infrastructure, societal norms, and inadequate policy implementation.It can also help one achieve a higher social status and improve the well-being of both mothers and their children (King and Hill, 1993).This study aims to explore the specific challenges that girls in Raichur's urban slums face in accessing education. It will also examine the opportunities and interventions that can mitigate these barriers and promote greater educational equity.However, children from slum populations are denied access to high-quality education, which increases their vulnerability and marginalization,Makwana, G., & Elizabeth, H. (2022). By focusing on Raichur, this research provides a localized understanding of the issue, which can contribute to broader discussions on policy solutions and community-based interventions. The study will investigate the role of education in shaping the future of these girls, addressing key questions about how education can not only uplift individual lives but also transform communities.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Research on girls' education in urban slums identifies key barriers, including poverty, cultural norms, and inadequate institutional support. Bhan and Rodricks (2012) 45 examined the Right to Education Act and made an effort to comprehend the Indian viewpoint on education-related rights.Economic pressures force families to prioritize short-term survival over schooling, with girls often expected to contribute through labor or household work.The measurement of socioeconomic status (SES) in rural China was provided by Bright et al. (2012) as an index for prenatal care study, and their relationship to prenatal care and outcomes was studied. Deep-rooted gender norms further discourage education, particularly due to societal expectations of early marriage and domestic roles. Additionally, schools in slum areas are often underfunded, with poor infrastructure and unsafe environments, leading to high dropout rates.According to Cameron (2008), families in slums make decisions about their children's education based on a variety of factors, including their financial situation, social background, and immigration history, as well as their hopes and expectations for the future. However, interventions like community education programs, scholarships, and gender equality campaigns are beginning to shift mindsets, as many parents now recognize the importance of education for their daughters' future employment and empowerment.

Objectives

1. To examine the key socio-cultural and economic barriers that hinder access to education for girls in the urban slums of Raichur, Karnataka, India.

2. To identify and analyze potential interventions and opportunities that can improve the educational outcomes for girls in slum communities, with a focus on sustainable strategies for overcoming identified challenges.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Study Area

The study area is located in a slum, geographically positioned at 16°19'75.83" N latitude and 77°35'61.30" E longitude, approximately 3 kilometers northeast of Raichur city center. Raichur District spans 8,386 square kilometers, with a population of about 1,924,773 as per the 2016 Census. The city itself sits at an elevation of around 407 meters above sea level. Positioned between the Krishna River to the north and the Tungabhadra River to the south, Raichur is also known as Edudorenadu. The district lies in the northern maiden region of Karnataka, a drought-prone area within the arid zone of India. The climate features mild winters and hot summers, with December being the coldest month (17.7°C) and May the hottest (45.0°C). The district's average annual rainfall is 621 mm. The map of the study area is depicted in Figure 1.
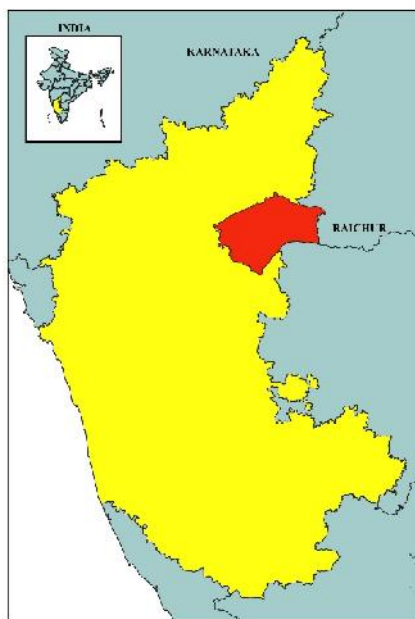
Figure 1. Map Showing the Location of the Study Area

3.2. Methodology

A door-to-door survey was conducted to examine Barriers and Opportunities in Girls' Education in Urban Slums: A Case Study of Challenges and Interventions in Raichur, Karnataka, India, focusing on the slum communities of Sartigera, Ambedkar Nagar, Gajagarpeth, Harijanwada, LBS Nagar, Siyatalab, and Thimmapurpet in Raichur city. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data were gathered through fieldwork, while secondary data were sourced from various published records and reports from international, national, and local organizations. Due to the limited availability of census data and official records for the slums in the study area, significant data were generated through extensive fieldwork, surveys, and interviews. This approach helped identify the root causes of barriers to education and assess the level of awareness regarding educational opportunities. The questionnaires, which included both close-ended and open-ended questions, were administered in Kannada and Telugu, although the questionnaire itself was prepared in English. Interviews, lasting between 20 to 30 minutes, were mostly conducted in the mornings and evenings when residents were available, with some conducted during the day to reach female respondents at home.

3.3. Data Analysis

The relationship between education and opportunities was statistically analyzed, taking into consideration various socioeconomic and environmental factors. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS software and Excel tools to ensure comprehensive insights.

4. RESULT& DISCUSSION

4.1. Education is Needed for Girls at Present

The data collected for the education needed for girls at present, respondents answered with yes or no and can't say based on it result is analyzed. Firstly, from the Sartigera yes is counted as 18 with 25.7% and no is counted as 39 with 55.7% and also can't say is counted as 13 with 18.6%. Secondly, from Ambedkar Nagar yes is counted as 50 at 71.4% no is counted as 15 at 21.4% and the can't say is counted as 5 with 7.1%. Thirdly, Gajagarpeth counted yes as 67 with 95.7%, and for no is counted as 2 with 2.9%, and can't say 1 with 1.4%. Next, Harijanwada counted yes as 62 with 88.6% and no is counted as 5 with 7.1% and also can't say counted as 3 with 4.3%. Furthermore, from LBS Nagar education is needed for girls is 100% yes with frequency 70. Whereas in the case of Siyatalab, the yes frequency is 60 at 85.7% and the no frequency is 8 at 11.4% along with the can't say frequency is 2 at 2.9%. Finally, from Thimmapurpet yes frequency is 57 with 81.4% and no frequency is 9 with 12.9% and also can't say frequency is 4 with 5.7% given in figure 2.

Among 490 for education is needed for girls at present answered by the respondent's yes frequency is 384 with 78% and no frequency is 78 with 16% also cannot say frequency is 28 with 6%.
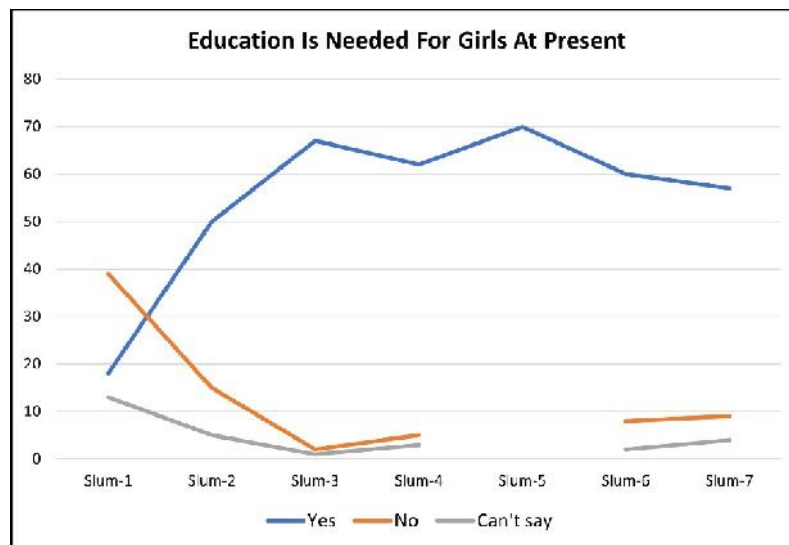
Figure 2. Education is Needed for Girls at Present.

4.2. Level of Education Needed for Girls

From the previous study came to know how essential is the education especially for girls the respondents have given answers but in this present study, the 11 of education needs for girls in present days the data has been collected from the respondents, and the result is analyzed. From Cartagena, the basic education frequency needed for girls is 27 at 38.6%, moreover from Ambedkar Nagar the frequency for it is 31 at 44%, however in the case of Gajagarpeth, the frequency of 11 is 3 at 4.3%, in the same way, Harijanwada the frequency is 12 with 17.1%, furthermore in LBS Nagar the frequency for basic education is 11 with 15.7%, also in Siyatalab the frequency 11 is 9 with 12.9% and at Thimmapurpet the frequency is

11 with 15.7%. The higher education needed for girls in the present day frequency is 22 at 31.4% in Sartigera slum, as well as in Ambedkar Nagar the frequency is 21 at 30%, in the same way, the frequency is 36 with 51.4% in Gajagarpeth, moreover the frequency 45 with 63.9% from Harijanwada, the frequency is 51 with 72.9% from LBS Nagar, on the other hand the frequency 11 is 45 with 64.3% from Siyatalab and the frequency 11 is 51 with 72.9% from Thimmapurpet. Technical Education number is 21 with 30% in Sartigera, whereas the number 12 with 17% in Ambedkar Nagar, the same way, 20 number with 28.6% in Gajagarpeth, number 4 with 6% in Harijanwada, as well as number 7 with 10% from LBS Nagar, and number 13 with 18.6% in Siyatalab and also number 5 with 7.1% in Thimmapurpet. The professional education needed for girls frequency is 1 with 1.4% from Ambedkar Nagar, in the same way, the frequency is 11 with 15.7% in Gajagarpeth, as well as the frequency 11, 6 with 9% from Harijanwada, frequency of 11, is 1 with 1.4% in LBS Nagar, as well as the frequency 11, is 3 with 4.3% in Siyatalab and frequency 3 with 4.3% in Thimmapurpet. Any other education is needed for girls frequency is 1 with one.4% from Ambedkar Nagar and frequency is 3 with 4% in Harijanwada given in figure 3.

Out of 490 respondents answered 11 of the education needed for girls such as basic education is counted as 104 with 21%, higher education is counted as 271 with 55%, technical education is counted as 82 with 17% and any other education counted as 8 with 2%.
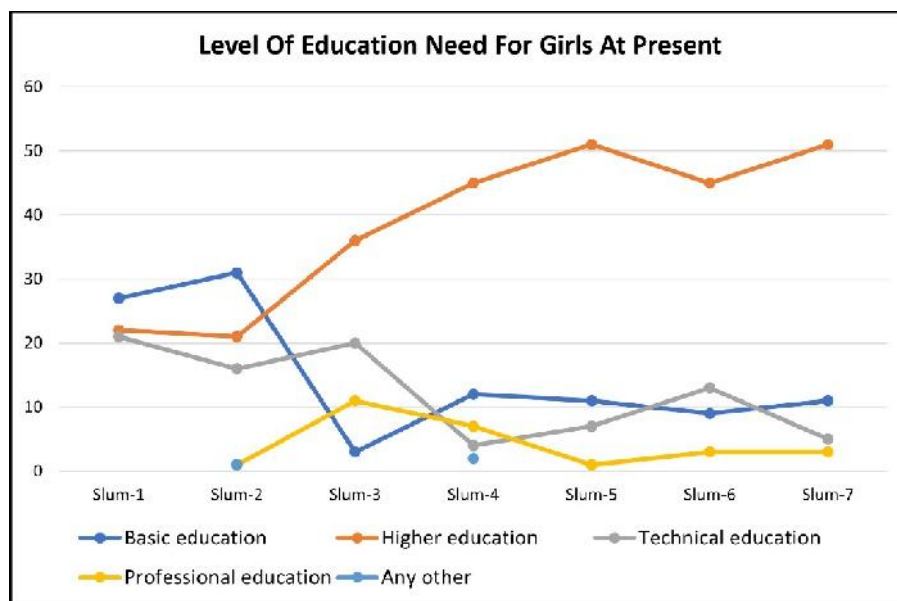

Figure 3. Level of Education Need for Girls at Present.

4.3. Purpose of Education for Girls

The main purpose of education for girls data has been collected from the respondents and the result is analyzed, to get good employment based on education number 33 with 47.1% from Sartigera, number 39 with 55.7% in Ambedkar Nagar, and also number 51 with 72.9% from Gajagarpet, meanwhile, number 35 with 50% in Harijanwada, as well as number 44 with 62.9% in LBS Nagar, in the same way, number 29 with 41.4% in Siyatalab and the number is 18 with 25.7% in Thimmapurpet. To get better marriage prospects, the frequency is 11 with 15.7% in Sartigera, and frequency 6 with 8.6% from Ambedkar Nagar, as well as frequency 8 with 11.4% from Gajagarpeth, frequency 11 with 15.7% in Harijanwada, whereas frequency 5 with 7.1% in LBS Nagar, frequency 13 with 18.6% in Siyatalab and frequency 4 with 5.7% in Thimmapurpet. To know reading and writing and gaining knowledge frequency for this is 26 with 37.1% in Sartigera,

frequency 25 with 35.7% in Ambedkar Nagar, frequency 8 with 11.4% in Gajagarpeth, frequency 24 with 34.3% in Harijanwada, frequency 21 with 30% in LBS Nagar, frequency 28 with 40% in Siyatalab, frequency 48 with 68.6% in Thimmapurpet, as well as any other purpose of education for girls is 3 frequency with 4.3% depicted in figure 4.Purpose of education for girls from, out of 490 respondents 249 number with 51% to get good employment based on education, 58 number with 12% to get better marriage prospects, 180 number with 37% to know reading and writing and gaining knowledge and 3 number with 1% are any other.
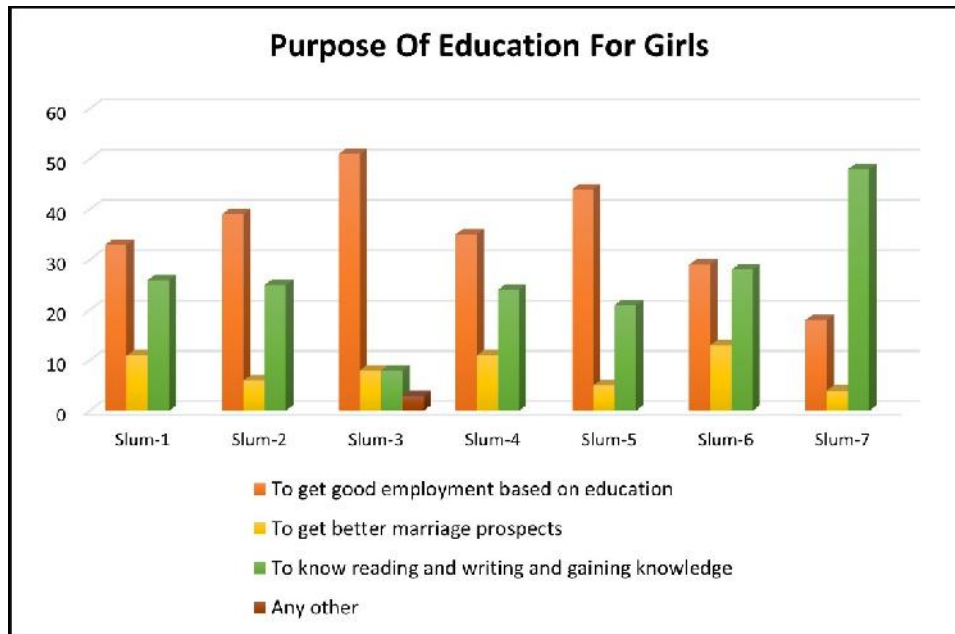

Figure 4. Purpose of Education for Girls

## 4.4. Future of Girls Depends on Education or Any Other

The future of girls depends on education or any other sources the data has collected and the result is analyzed from the respondents for education 11 of the girls the frequency is 54 with 77.1% in Sartigera, and in Ambedkar Nagar, the frequency is 53 with 75.7%, as well as in Gajagarpeth the frequency 11 is 62 with 88.6%, in the same way, contains the frequency 42 with 60%, furthermore frequency 45 with 64.3% in LBS Nagar, on the other hand, frequency 54 with 71.4% in Thimmapurpet. Employment of girls frequency is 12 with 17.1% in Sartigera, frequency 13 with 18.6% in Ambedkar Nagar, frequency 5 with 7.1% in Gajagarpeth, frequency 19 with 27.1% in Harijanwada, frequency 22 with 31.4% in LBS Nagar, frequency 16 with 22.9% in Siyatalab, frequency 11 with 15.7% in Thimmapurpet. Husband and good family after marriage frequency are 4 with 5.7% in Sartigera, in Ambedkar Nagar frequency are 4 with 5.7%, as well as in Gajagarpeth the frequency 11 is 3 with 4.3%, in Harijanwada the frequency is 9 with 12.9%, moreover frequency is 3 with 4.3% in LBS Nagar, in the same way, the frequency is 4 with 5.7% in Siyatalab and frequency 5 with 7.1% in Thimmapurpet given in figure 5. The future of girls depends on education or any other for this respondent answered out of 490, 360 counted for the education level of girls with 73% while 98 counted for employment of the girls with 20% whereas 32 counted for husbands and good family after marriage with 7%.
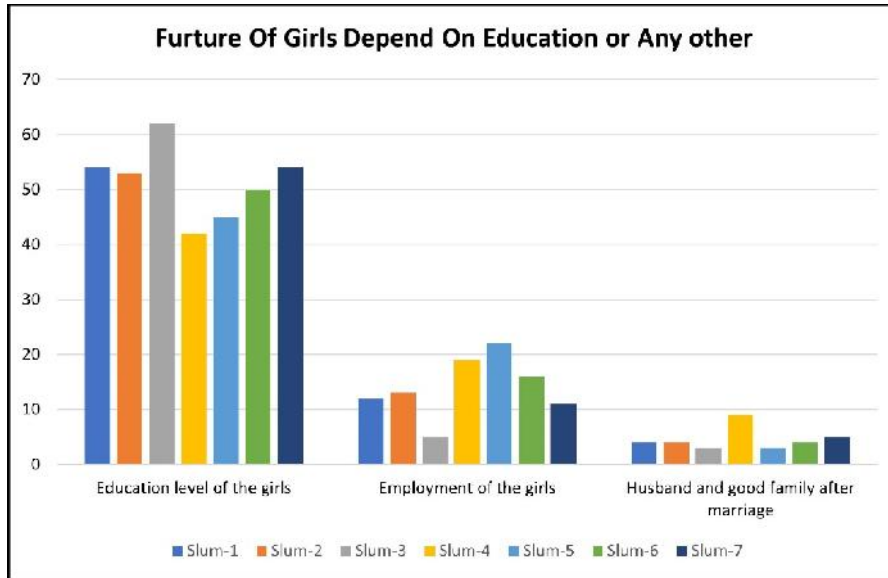
Figure 5. Future of Girl's Depend on Education and Any Other

4.5. Myths and Beliefs Systems Stop Girl's Education

Myths and belief systems stop girls' education data has been collected from the respondents and the result is analyzed yes or no. Yes, frequency is 35, 39, 40, 51, 48, 42 and 41 with 50%, 56%, 57.1%, 73%, 68.6%, 60% and 58.6%. No frequency is 35, 31, 30, 19, 22, 28, and 29 with 50%, 44%, 42.9%, 27%, 31.4%, 40% and 41.4% from Sartigera, Ambedkar Nagar, Gajagarpeth, Harijanwada, LBS Nagar, Siyatalab and Thimmapurpet, given in figure 6 respectively.Myths and beliefs stop girls' education for this respondents answered yes out of 490 counted as 296 with 60% and answered no counted as 194 with 40%.
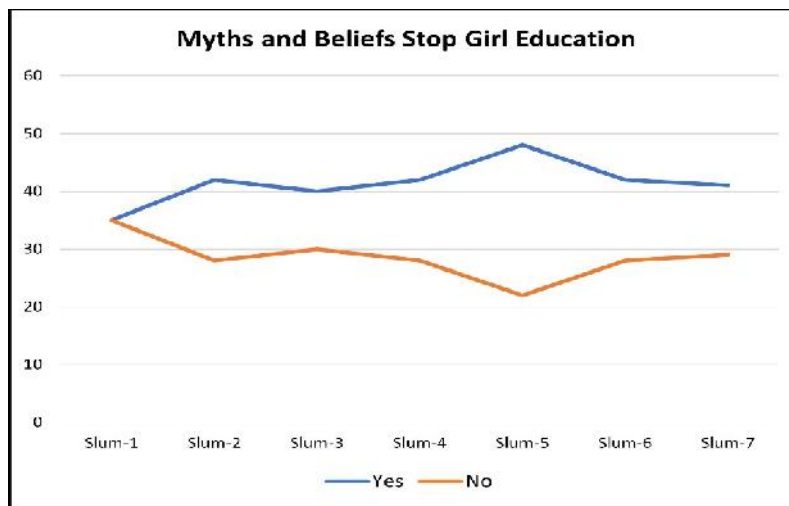
Figure 6. Myths and Beliefs to Stop Girl's Education

4.6. Employment of Uneducated Girls and Educated Girls

Employment of uneducated and educated girls data has been collected from the respondents and the result is analysed. From Sartigera employment of uneducated girls frequency is 48 at 68.6% for labor houses, whereas the employment of educated girl frequency is 23 at 32.9% for a company job, in Ambedkar Nagar the frequency for the same is 48 at 68.6% for uneducated girls and educated girl frequency 20 at 28.6%, Gajagarpeth frequency 53 at 75.1% for uneducated girl and

frequency 17 with 24.3% for an educated girl, Harijanwada frequency is 53 for the same with 75.7% for uneducated girl and educated girl frequency is 19 with 27.1%, LBS Nagar frequency is 52 with 74.3% for uneducated girl and educated girl frequency is 17 with 24%, Siyatalab contains 56 frequency with 80% for uneducated girl and also for educated girl frequency 25 with 22%, in Thimmapurpet frequency is 47 with 67.1% for uneducated girl and frequency 15 with 21% for an educated girl. For labor self-employment of educated girls from all slums, the frequency is 31 with 44.3% in Sartigera, 40 frequency with 57.1% in Ambedkar Nagar, 45 frequency with 64.3% in Gajagarpeth, frequency 39 with 55.7% in Harijanwada, frequency 43 with 61% in LBS Nagar, frequency 39 with 58% in Siyatalab, frequency 40 with 57% in Thimmapurpet. Agriculture labor responded from uneducated girls, as well as educated girls frequency is 21 with 30% and 16 with 22.9% in Sartigera, frequency 22 with 31.4% and frequency 10 with 14.3% in Ambedkar Nagar, frequency 17 with 24.3% and frequency 8 with 11.4% in Gajagarpeth, frequency 14 with 20% and frequency 12 with 17.1% in Harijanwada, frequency 14 with 20% and frequency 10 with 14% from LBS Nagar, frequency 14 with 20% and frequency 5 with 19% from Siyatalab, frequency 21 with 30% and frequency 12 with 17% from Thimmapurpet. Any other type of self-employment of uneducated girls from Sartigera frequency is 1 with 1.4% and from LBS Nagar frequency 2 with 2.9%, whereas any other type of self-employment of educated girls frequency is 1 with 1.4% same for Siyatalab given in figure 7.

Among 490 respondents employment of uneducated girls in labor or housework numbered 357 with 73%, agriculture labor numbered 123 with 25%, own enterprise numbered 7 with 1% and any other numbered 3 with 1%.In the same way for employment of educated girls out of 490 respondents, 137 number are company job holders at 28%, 277 number are laborers at 57%, 73 number are agriculture laborers at 15% and any other employment 4 with 1%.
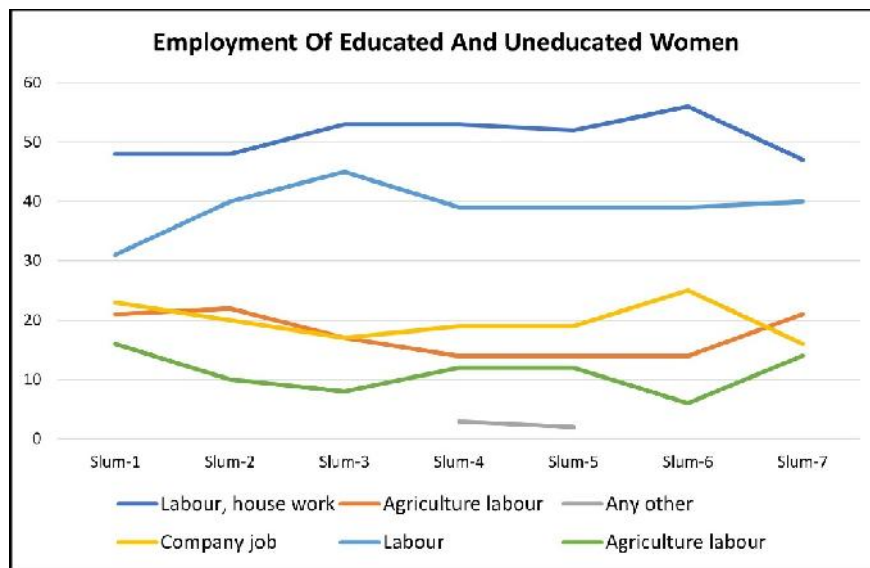

Figure 7. Employment of Educated and Uneducated Women.

4.7. Educating Girls Build Good and Healthy Society

Educating girl help in building a good and healthy society data has been collected from the respondents and result is analysed yes or no. The yes frequency is 69 at 99% and the no frequency is 1 with 1% from Sartigera, and in Ambedkar Nagar, Gajagarpeth, Harijanwada, LBS Nagar frequency is 70 with 100%, Siyatalab and Thimmapurpet yes frequency is 68, 64 with 97%, 91% and no frequency is 2, 6 with 3% and 9% depicted in figure 8.Educating girls helps in building a good and healthy society respondents answered counted as 481 with 98% and no answered counted as 9 with 2% out of 490 respondents.
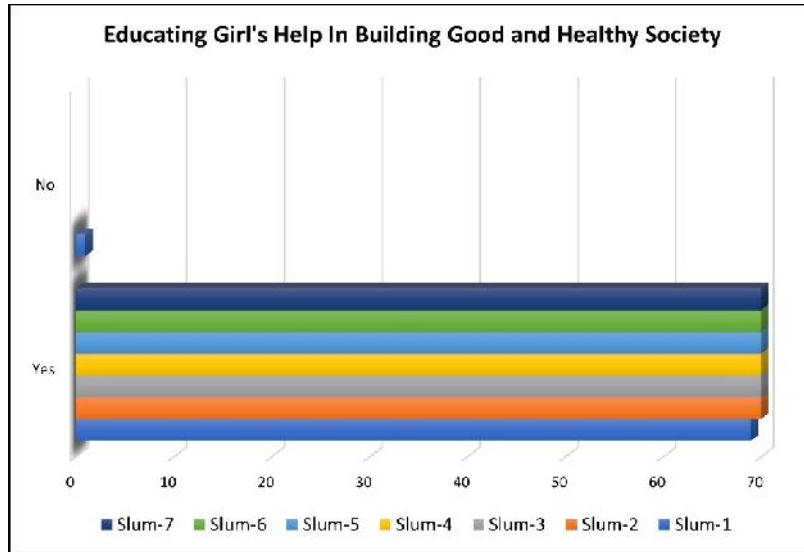
Figure8. Educating Girls Help in Building a Good and Healthy Society

4.8. Parents See Inequality in Gender Basis

Parents see inequality in gender basis data collected from the respondents and the result is analyzed, all the respondents answered yes and the frequency for it is 70 with 100% from Sartigera, Ambedkar Nagar, Gajagarpeth, Harijanwada, LBS Nagar, Siyatalab and Thimmapurpet shown in figure 9. Parents see inequality in gender basis out of 490 respondents who answered yes counted as 490 with 100%.
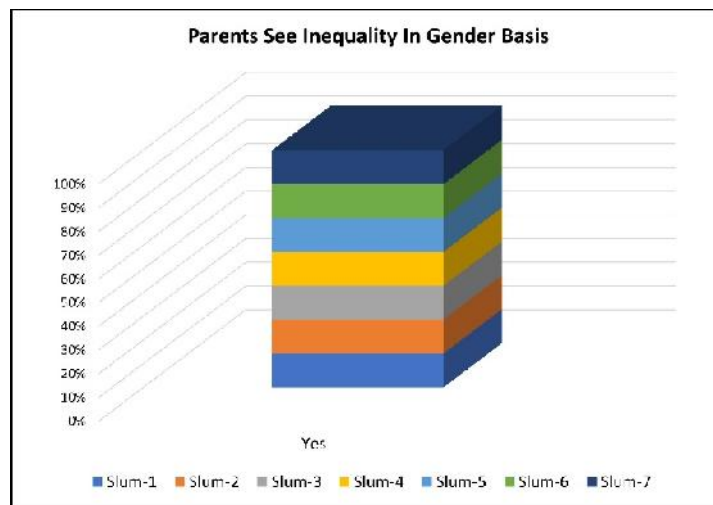
Figure 9. Parents see Inequality in a Gender Basis

The findings from the study on education for girls in the urban slums of Raichur, Karnataka, highlight significant disparities in attitudes toward girls' education across various localities. A substantial majority of respondents (78%) acknowledge the need for education for girls, with varying levels of support across different slums. For instance, in Gajagarpeth and LBS Nagar, 95.7% and 100% of respondents respectively supported the need for girls' education, whereas Sartigera showed a lower affirmative response of 25.7%. Additionally, the level of education required is a key consideration, with 55% of respondents advocating for higher education and 21% for basic education. These findings emphasize the importance of addressing both the demand for and the barriers to girls' education, suggesting that targeted interventions are needed to overcome cultural, economic, and infrastructural challenges. Despite these barriers, a strong

correlation is seen between education and the future opportunities for girls, particularly in improving employment prospects and contributing to societal well-being

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study highlights the persistent barriers to girls' education in urban slums, with significant disparities in access, educational levels, and societal perceptions. The data shows that while there is strong acknowledgment of the need for girls' education, especially for securing employment and improving future prospects, cultural myths, gender biases, and socio-economic challenges continue to impede progress. Despite these obstacles, the majority of respondents recognize that educating girls is crucial for building a healthier society. The findings underscore the importance of targeted interventions, policy support, and community engagement to overcome these barriers and foster an environment conducive to girls' education.

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