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Learning Beyond Textbooks: How Mothers' Education and Job Status Shape Gender Stereotypes

Talmeez Fatma Naqvi[1*], Naushad Husain[2]
[1,2]College of Teacher Education Bhopal, Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India
[1]naqvitalmeez@gmail.com, [2]nhusain@manuu.edu.in

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Abstract: The present study investigates the levels of gender stereotyping among prospective teachers and examines the influence of maternal education and job status, along with the students' gender and locality, on their gender-role attitudes. A descriptive survey design was employed on a sample of 147 graduate and postgraduate students from teacher education institutions of Bhopal, India. Data were collected using a standardized Gender Stereotypes Scale. Findings revealed that a slightly less than three-fourth of respondents held average gender stereotypes, and nearly one-fourth displayed low stereotypes. Findings revealed that higher maternal education was inversely associated with gender stereotyping, with the lowest stereotypes found among students whose mothers were postgraduates. Working mothers were also linked to lower gender stereotype scores compared to homemakers. Regression analysis confirmed that maternal education, locality, and student gender significantly predicted gender stereotype scores, collectively explaining one-third of the variance. The results highlight the pivotal role of maternal factors, especially education, in shaping egalitarian attitudes in future educators. Implications for teacher education and gender sensitization programs are discussed.

Keywords: gender stereotypes; gender roles; prospective teachers; mothers' education; job status.

INTRODUCTION

Indian society is profoundly structured and controlled by ingrained patriarchal norms. This system imposes strict gender roles, resulting in systemic, gender-based inequality. The separation in gender roles, behaviors, and expectations by sex is a primary driver of gender stereotyping.

It is a well-accepted fact that the most important aspects of overcoming gender roles are education. A national survey, carried out in nineteen states, disclosed that Indian youth are certainly becoming more modern in their appearance and consumption habits, but their thoughts and views reflect a troubling inclination towards intolerance and conservatism. The survey found that modern values such as gender equality did not seem to have much purchase. (Sampath 2017). The question arises, then: where does the problem lie?

Teachers, essential in shaping societies - in shaping nations - are expected to be egalitarian by virtue of the role they possess, yet studies have found this not to be the

case. Naqvi and Ahsan (2021) found that the prospective (male) teacher's perception of the opposite gender, as evident from the noted traits or characteristics, is demonstrative of socially nurtured attitudes, and is carried forward even after completing educational programs up to and even beyond the graduation level; that is, even after receiving gender-sensitization related education. Ghosh and Yadav (2025) found that male prospective teachers have a gender stereotypical attitude towards women's usage of technology, which is being nurtured by patriarchal society. It is evident that teachers, like everyone else, come from a society that is patriarchal, and possesses gender stereotypical attitudes - the reflection of which can be seen in teachers' behaviors and teaching style. School teaching has usually been regarded as a middle-class or lower-middle-class profession allied with modest income, job security, and social respectability. Several sociological studies indicate that teachers, particularly in government and aided schools, largely come from middle and lower-middle socioeconomic backgrounds. (Chandran et.al., 2025; Parashari, 2024). Globally, teaching has been seen as an upwardly mobile profession, one which the working and lower middle classes may aspire to, with those from more privileged backgrounds aspiring towards more 'elite' professions (Coolahan, 2003, Schleicher, 2014). The middle class is evidently a borrower, with taking forward traditional values and culture and gender roles amongst them. The question arises, then, that what is the role of parental education, and job status, in the formation of attitude and perception towards gender and gender roles.

Social cognitive theory and feminist theory offer lenses for understanding how the socialization process develops and fosters ideas in children about gender roles. According to social cognitive theory, both personal development and social surroundings play key roles in shaping a child's understanding of what it means to be male or female (Bussey & Bandura, 1999; Martin & Ruble, 2009). The fundamental principle of this theory is the idea that cognitive processes are bidirectional: as a child develops, she or he interacts with others and establishes a social network. Within this network, the child continues to develop at a cognitive level, creating a sort of feedback loop whereby social experiences and cognitive processes inform one another (Bussey & Bandura, 1999; Martin & Ruble, 2009).

The idea of modeling is a dominant feature of this theory children learn to distinguish between male and female roles largely by observing parents, family members, and his/her social setup at large. Parents, in particular, serve as powerful role models, both through what they do (explicitly) and what they imply (implicitly). However, one critique of this theory is that it doesn't fully consider the broader contextual factors like race, social class, and ethnicity that may influence children's gender development processes.

From a gender perspective, Bem (1985) asserts that children adopt the gendered expectations at an early age, which is usually promoted by their cultural environments. Most children's initial learning about gender happens within the family context, like parents' direct or indirect messages about gender roles (Epstein & Ward, 2011; Gelman et al., 2004). Traditional gender norms mostly portray women as nurturing and men as leaders, decision-makers, and breadwinners, which reinforces the idea that domestic responsibilities fall on women while men should focus on earning income. Egalitarian values, on the other hand, promote equality between genders and encourage shared responsibilities at home (Perrone-McGovern et al., 2014). Parents influence their children's understanding of gender not only through what they believe but also through how they split household chores and paid work (Turner & Gervai, 1995).

Gender and social class together shape how couples share responsibilities at home, which also determines how children learn about gender (Goldberg & Perry-Jenkins, 2004). It is quite understandable that gendered beliefs are not fixed or biologically determined but they're shaped by our social experiences, through which the concept of gender may take on context-dependent meanings (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Children pick up cues from what their parents do and say, and these lessons may vary based on context.

Feminist theory also draws attention to the mismatch that can happen in working-class families, especially those in low-wage jobs. A parent's beliefs about gender may not always match the reality they live in, for example, a mother who believes in staying home may need to work out of financial necessity. Such contradictions can shape how children perceive gender roles (Allen et al., 2009). These families face unique challenges, and children may be especially sensitive to the inequalities their parents experience.

Research has found that when parents have more traditional views regarding gender roles, their children also tend to think in more traditional terms (Epstein & Ward, 2011; Fulcher, 2010; Sutfin, Fulcher, Bowles, & Patterson, 2008); on the other hand, when parents hold more egalitarian values, their children tend to have less traditional gender-role attitudes (Sutfin et al., 2008).

Fulcher (2010) found that when middle-class mothers held more traditional ideas about children's gender roles, their children (aged 7 to 12) tended to report more gender-stereotyped career aspirations. Specifically, when mothers expected their children to be interested in traditionally gendered careers, children expressed more interest in careers that promote gender stereotypes.

Even in families where both parents are working, women still do more housework than men (Goldberg & Perry-Jenkins, 2004; Sayer, 2005). However, when mothers take on tasks typically seen as "masculine," their children are less likely to hold traditional gender views (Serbin, Powlishta & Gulko, 1993). Families that divide household chores more equally often raise children who think more flexibly about gender roles (Fulcher et al., 2008). Still, there can be a gap between what parents believe and what they do, especially in working-class families, which makes it harder to predict how children's views will develop.

It has been found that mothers usually take more childcare responsibility than fathers, even when both work full-time (Sayer, 2005). Mothers are more likely to take care of daily tasks like dressing and bathing children (Moon & Hoffman, 2008). Although few studies have looked closely at how this division affects children's gender beliefs, one study found that when fathers were more involved in childcare, their young children had a less stereotypical understanding of gender (Turner & Gervai, 1995). In some cases, economic pressures, like parents working different shifts, lead to a more equal division of childcare (Meteyer & Perry-Jenkins, 2010). As such, circumstances tend to vary based on beliefs and necessity.

A longitudinal investigation by Cunningham (2001) found that daughters whose mothers worked as paid labour during their early years were less likely to do stereotypically feminine housework as adults. Interestingly, this influence was strongest in the early childhood stage and not in the later adolescence stage.

Parents may transmit gendered messages to their children through occupational traditionality (Barak, Feldman, & Noy,1991). Some jobs are seen as more "masculine" or "feminine," which might reflect a parent's beliefs, or just their opportunities based on

education or economic status. Barak et al. (1991) found that mothers in more traditionally feminine roles had kids with more gender-stereotyped interests.

The gap these studies leave is twofold: first, they avoid the connection between parental education and its effect on children, instead focusing on domestic or professional labor division. Thus, the present study would explore a novel, previously unexplored relationship. Second, none of these studies are based in an Indian context, where the dominance of patriarchal values in society will undoubtedly affect perception.

The present study intended to explore the evidence of gender stereotypes among prospective teachers, if any, and its relationship with their mother's educational qualification and job status. The key concern of the present study is whether mothers' educational and job status is a better prognosticator of their offspring's attitudes towards gender roles. These concerns were addressed through the analysis of self-report data collected from graduate and postgraduate teacher education students. The study explores the intersecting nature of gender and social class, as this intersection relates to how children develop gender-role attitudes in the context of their working-class family systems.

The primary research question addressed in the present study is whether mothers' educational qualification and job status are better predictors of their children's gender-role attitudes. These questions are addressed through the analysis of self-report data collected from graduate and postgraduate teacher education students. The key objective of the study is to find out the level of gender stereotypes among prospective teachers based on their gender, locality, levels of mothers' education, and their job status. Null hypothesis was formulated to meet the objectives.

METHODS

The present study employs a quantitative approach with ex-post facto design that followed surveyed data collection from prospective teachers of teacher education institutions situated in the Bhopal City. As was aforementioned, the target population was the prospective teachers of Bhopal City, and for this purpose, five teacher education institutions from Bhopal City were selected through random sampling technique. Amongst these five institutions, 150 prospective teachers were selected through random sampling. The final sample consisted of 147 prospective teachers because three teachers gave incomplete information. A five-point Likert-scale (rating scale), developed and standardized by Arjun Sekhar and Parameswari (2020) comprising 23 items, was administered to the prospective teachers. The internal consistency (α) of the scale was 0.85, and the split-half reliability score was 0.76. The authors established the face validity and content validity for the scale as well. The minimum score one could obtain on the Gender Stereotypes Scale (GSS) is 23, while the maximum score is 115. A low score in the GSS indicates less gender stereotyping and a more egalitarian attitude towards gender; whereas, a high score indicates a high gender stereotype and a conservative attitude towards gender. Data on four demographic variables, namely gender, locality, levels of mothers' education, and mothers' job status, were collected from all the participants. These variables were used to describe the sample and as control variables in the regressions. In order to test the hypotheses, four-way ANOVA and regression analysis were used, and results are represented in tabular and graphical forms wherever necessary, followed by their discussion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Levels of Gender Stereotypes among Prospective Teachers

In the section that follows, efforts are made to study the level of gender stereotypes in prospective teachers on the basis of their gender, locality, their mothers' educational qualification, and job status.

Table 1. Levels of Gender Stereotypes among Prospective Teachers (n=147)

Distribution of Levels of Gender Stereotypes (in percent)			**Total**
Low	Average/Moderate	High	
30.6	69.4	0	100

Table 1 shows the percentage distribution of the level of gender stereotypes in prospective teachers. The table shows that a significant majority of the respondents fell under the average gender stereotypes category, which indicates that while nearly three-fourths of the teachers do not strongly adhere to gender stereotypes, such beliefs are still present to a moderate degree. A substantial minority of the respondents exhibited low levels of gender stereotypes. These individuals are likely more egalitarian in their views, challenging traditional gender roles. Notably, not a single respondent fell into the high gender stereotypes category. This is a positive indicator, suggesting that strongly stereotypical gender beliefs are absent in the sample. It might reflect growing awareness and shifts in social attitudes, particularly in more educated or socially conscious populations.

Table 2. Levels of Gender Stereotypes in the prospective teachers based on Gender

Gender	**Distribution of Levels of Gender Stereotype (in percent)**			**Total**
	Low	Average	High	
Male	40	60	0	100
Female	24	76	0	100

Table 2 shows the percentage distribution of the level of gender stereotypes among the prospective teachers on the basis of gender. The table shows that male prospective teachers showed a higher proportion (40%) in the low gender stereotypes category compared to female students (24%). Conversely, female students showed a greater concentration (76%) in the average/moderate gender stereotypes category compared to males (60%). The higher proportion in the low category of the male prospective teachers may indicate a slightly more gender-neutral or egalitarian attitude. For female teachers, the majority falling into the average/moderate category might reflect internalized societal gender norms or perhaps greater awareness and critical reflection, leading to moderate responses. The absence of high stereotype levels is encouraging, particularly in the context of teacher education, as future educators play a vital role in shaping equitable classroom environments.

Table 3. Levels of Gender Stereotypes in the prospective teachers based on Locality

Locality	Distribution of Levels of Gender Stereotype (in percent)			Total
	Low	Average	High	
Rural	24.28	75.71	0	100
Urban	36.36	63.63	0	100

Table 3 shows the percentage distribution of the level of gender stereotypes among the prospective teachers on the basis of locality. The above table presents a comparison of gender stereotype levels among rural and urban prospective teachers pursuing a professional degree in education. Similar to previous findings, none of the prospective teachers, whether from rural or urban backgrounds, fall under the high gender stereotype category, which suggests generally a progressive orientation among future teachers regarding gender roles. Urban prospective teachers exhibited a higher proportion (36.36%) of low gender stereotypes compared to rural teachers (24.28%). Rural teachers, on the other hand, showed a higher percentage (75.71%) in the average stereotype category, indicating a more moderate or traditional gender role perception. The output suggests that urban teachers may be slightly more gender-sensitive or egalitarian, potentially due to better exposure to gender awareness, media, education, or progressive environments. The higher average stereotype levels in rural areas may reflect the influence of traditional societal norms, limited exposure to gender discourse, or prevailing community values. The urban-rural gap, while not extreme, highlights the importance of contextual gender sensitization programs.

Table 4. Levels of Gender Stereotypes in the prospective teachers based on their Mothers' Educational Qualification

Mother's Educational Qualification	Distribution of Levels of Gender Stereotype (in percent)			Total
	Low	Average	High	
Illiterate	10.64	89.36	0	100
Up to High School	25	75	0	100
Graduate	44.44	55.55	0	100
Postgraduate	82.35	17.64	0	100

Table 4 presents the distribution of gender stereotype levels among prospective teachers categorized by their mothers' educational status. The table shows that there is a clear inverse relationship between the mother's educational level and the presence of gender stereotypes in prospective teachers. As the educational qualification of the mother increases, the level of gender stereotyping in their children decreases significantly.

A vast majority of the prospective teachers (89.36%), whose mother was illiterate, held average gender stereotypes, and a mere 10.64% exhibit low stereotype levels. The reason may be a limited exposure to gender-sensitive perspectives, possibly due to traditional or conservative values passed on from less educated family environments. Respondents whose mothers' educational level was from literate up to high school showed a little improvement. 25% showed low gender stereotypes, while 75% still fell in the average category, which indicates some positive influence of education, but not enough to significantly reduce stereotypical attitudes.

A substantial proportion (44.44%) of the children whose mothers completed a college degree held low gender stereotypes, indicating stronger exposure to gender-equitable views. A dramatic shift is observed at the postgraduate level, with 82.35% of

prospective teachers from this group showing low levels of gender stereotype. Only 17.64% have average stereotypes, and none fall into the high category. This demonstrates a strong positive impact of higher maternal education on promoting egalitarian gender attitudes.

The output in Table 4 highlights the significant role of maternal education in shaping the gender perceptions of prospective teachers. As mothers attain higher levels of education, they are likely to instill more progressive, equality-oriented beliefs in their children, reducing gender biases. This emphasizes the intergenerational impact of women's education, not just for individual empowerment but also for cultivating a more gender-sensitive and inclusive future society.

Table 5. Levels of Gender Stereotypes in the prospective teachers based on their mothers' job status

Mother's job status	**Distribution of Levels of Gender Stereotype (in percent)**			**Total**
	Low	Average	High	
Homemaker	19.11	80.89	0	100
Working women	48.27	51.72	0	100

The given table presents output on the levels of gender stereotypes among prospective teachers based on their mothers' job status. A majority (80.89%) of prospective teachers whose mothers are homemakers fell into the average gender stereotype category. Only 19.11% of them fell into the low category. This suggests that having a homemaker mother may not strongly challenge traditional gender roles, possibly reinforcing moderate gender-stereotypical attitudes. A relatively larger proportion (48.27%) of prospective teachers whose mothers are working women demonstrate low gender stereotypes. Only 51.72% are in the average category, which is significantly lower than that of the homemaker group. The conclusion may be drawn that exposure to a working mother, a figure who actively participates in the workforce and challenges traditional roles, may contribute to more progressive and equitable gender attitudes. The nature of the mother's work appears to play a significant role in shaping the gender perceptions of their children. Working mothers may model greater gender equality, promoting less stereotyped thinking in their children. This highlights the importance of family environment and parental role models in gender socialization during formative years. The output suggests that prospective teachers whose mothers are working women tend to exhibit lower gender stereotypes than those whose mothers are homemakers.

Table 6 (a). Summary of four-way ANOVA with Gender Stereotypes as Dependent Variable

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Sum of Squares	F	Sig. (p)
Gender	31.677	1	31.677	.239	.626
Locality	373.985	1	373.985	2.821	.096
Mother's education	4727.728	3	1575.909	11.89**	.000
Mother's job status	558.873	1	558.873	4.22*	.042
gender * locality	74.334	1	74.334	.561	.455
gender * mother's education	384.841	3	128.280	.968	.411
gender * mother's job status	22.203	1	22.203	.167	.683
locality * mother's education	440.143	3	146.714	1.107	.349
locality * mother's job status	.372	1	.372	.003	.958
Mother's education * mother's job status	925.216	3	308.405	2.326	.078
gender * locality * mother's education	188.664	3	62.888	.474	.701
gender * locality * mother's job status	162.580	1	162.580	1.226	.270
gender * Mother's education * Mother's job status	11.182	2	5.591	.042	.959
locality * Mother's education * mother's job status	1184.095	3	394.698	2.98*	.034
gender * locality * Mother's education * mother's job status	.000	0	.	.	.
Error	15778.090	119	132.589		
Total	599386.000	147			

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.
**. The mean difference is significant at the .01 level.

In order to find out the influence of gender, locality, mothers' educational qualification, and mothers' job status on gender stereotypes of the students pursuing a professional degree in education, four-way ANOVA was employed. The obtained output has been presented in the above table.

The above Table 6(a) shows the output of the four-way ANOVA summary, which may be categorized into two sections, namely main influence and interactional influence. These have been discussed under separate headings below:

Main Influence:

Table 6(a) shows the output of four types of main influences on the gender stereotypes of the prospective teachers. Mother's education is the strongest individual predictor of gender stereotypes ($F=11.89$, $p<0.01$). Higher maternal education tends to be associated with less stereotypical thinking in children. The F-values of the gender stereotype score for gender and locality are 0.239 and 2.821, respectively, which are not significant at the .05 level. (df=1,147). Neither gender nor locality alone significantly influences gender stereotypes, indicating that the individual's environment and experience may not be enough to predict gender bias without family background being considered. It may be concluded that gender and locality do not influence the gender stereotypes of prospective teachers. On the other hand, the F-value of mothers' job status

for gender stereotype scores is 4.22, which is significant at the .05 level (df= 1,147, p <.05). It implies that mothers' job status does significantly influence the gender stereotype of prospective teachers. Mother's job status also matters, though less strongly, suggesting working mothers may influence more progressive gender views. Most two-way and three-way interactions are not significant, indicating that the influence of variables tends to be independent rather than interactive, except for the interaction of locality × mother's education × mother's job status, which is statistically significant. The non-significant four-way interaction suggests that while individual and two-variable combinations may matter, combining all four variables doesn't add predictive power, possibly due to sample size limitations or overlapping variance.

This four-way ANOVA reveals that a mother's education is the most important factor in shaping gender stereotype levels. The job status of the mother also plays a significant role. The combined effect of locality, mother's education, and her job is statistically important and deserves further investigation. Since, in this study, two categories of mothers' job status have been taken into consideration, it implies that there is a significant difference in the selected two categories of mothers' job status itself. Therefore, by finding the mean scores of gender stereotypes for the two categories, we may easily ascertain which category of Mothers' job status has significantly higher scores of gender stereotypes. The mean scores of gender stereotypes for the two categories of mothers' job status have been given in the following Table 6(b).

Table 6(b). Levels of Mothers' Job Status with Gender Stereotypes as Dependent Variable

Mothers' job Status	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Homemaker	65.175a	1.912	61.389	68.961
Working	56.007	1.840	52.364	59.650

As Table 6(b) reveals, prospective teachers whose mothers are homemakers have higher mean scores on the Gender Stereotype (65.18) than those of working mother progeny (56.00). It denotes that the children of working mothers have relatively fewer gender stereotype notions. Children of homemakers tend to exhibit more traditional gender stereotypes. This supports the earlier ANOVA result (from Table 6a), where the mother's job status was found to significantly influence gender stereotypes (F=4.22, p <.05). This could be due to greater exposure to conventional gender roles within the household, where mothers are often seen in nurturing, non-working roles. Children of working mothers demonstrate lower levels of gender stereotyping, likely because they observe their mothers in diverse roles (e.g., authority figures, decision-makers, professionals). They experience less rigid gender role socialization, as the family dynamic may encourage shared responsibilities and egalitarian values.

Further, from table 6(a), it is clear that the F-value of gender stereotype scores based on mothers' educational qualification is 11.89, which is significant at the .01 level (df=3,147, p <.01). It implies that mothers' educational qualifications do significantly influence the gender stereotype of prospective teachers. Since in this study, four levels of mothers' educational qualification have been taken into account, therefore, at this juncture, it is not possible to determine which of the two levels of mothers' educational qualification has a significant difference in gender stereotype scores. This can be found

out by following Table 6(c) Post Hoc (Scheffe) Test of Multiple Comparisons, which is given below.

Table 6 (c). Multiple Comparisons showing Post Hoc (Scheffe) Test with Gender Stereotype as Dependent Variable

Pairs of Mothers' Educational Qualification Levels	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Illiterate Vs High School	3.4001	2.27787	.529	-3.0598	9.8599
Illiterate Vs Graduate	12.3412*	2.78060	.000	4.4557	20.2268
Illiterate Vs Postgraduate	26.0188*	3.25889	.000	16.7768	35.2607
High School Vs Graduate	8.9411*	2.69784	.014	1.2903	16.5920
High School Vs Postgraduate	22.6187*	3.18858	.000	13.5762	31.6612
Graduate Vs Postgraduate	13.6776*	3.56512	.003	3.5672	23.7879

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

It is evident from the above table that there is a clear inverse relationship between the mother's education level and the child's gender stereotyping. As mothers' education increases, gender stereotyping decreases. From the multiple comparison Table 6 (c), it is clear that there are significant differences at the .05 level in *gender stereotypes* in all pairs of levels of mothers' educational qualification except in the pair of levels of *illiterate vs. high school* ($p > .05$). This pair did not show any significant difference in gender stereotypes of mothers having no education and having qualifications up to high school, suggesting that just completing high school may not make a substantial difference in shaping children's gender views compared to no education. All the rest of the pairs of levels of mothers' educational qualification showed significant differences ($p < .05$) in gender stereotypes of mothers having different levels of educational qualification.

Further, from table 6(c), the mean difference of gender stereotype scores between levels of *illiterate vs. graduate* is 12.34, which is significant at the .05 level. It is higher for offspring of illiterate mothers as compared to those with graduate mothers. This reveals that gender stereotypes are higher in the students who are the offspring of illiterate mothers than graduate mothers. Similarly, the mean difference of gender stereotype scores between levels of *illiterate vs. postgraduate* is 26.02, which is significant at the .05 level. It is also higher for the offspring of illiterate mothers as compared to the mothers who have completed their post-graduation. This shows that gender stereotypes are higher in children of illiterate mothers than in those whose mothers have completed their post-graduation. Moreover, the mean difference of gender stereotype scores between levels of *high school vs. graduate* is 8.94, which is significant at .05 level. It is higher for children of mothers who have completed high school, as compared to the children of mothers who have completed their graduation. This reveals that gender stereotypes are higher in offspring of those with mothers who have completed high school than in those with mothers who have completed their graduation. Similarly, the mean difference of gender stereotype scores between levels of *high school vs. postgraduate* is 22.62, which is significant at the .05 level.

It is higher for children of high school-graduated mothers as compared to the children of mothers with a post-graduation. It shows that gender stereotypes are higher in offspring of mothers who have completed high school than those with mothers who are graduates. Finally, the mean difference of gender stereotype scores between levels of *graduate vs. postgraduate* is 13.68, which is significant at the .05 level. It is higher for

children of graduate mothers as compared to the children with mothers with a postgraduate degree. It shows that gender stereotypes are higher in the offspring of graduate mothers than in the offspring of postgraduate mothers. The largest gap is between illiterate vs. postgraduate (mean diff = 26.02), highlighting the powerful impact of higher education on mothers' influence over their children's belief systems. Educated mothers likely model more equitable behavior, encourage critical thinking, and expose children to broader social roles, thus reducing traditional gender biases. Postgraduate mothers, with the highest level of education, appear to foster the most egalitarian gender attitudes, perhaps due to a combination of better resources, exposure, and more liberal ideologies. These findings support educational policies promoting female education, not only for individual empowerment but also for the socialization of future generations with less stereotypical, more inclusive attitudes. The higher the mother's education, the lower the child's gender stereotyping. Targeted interventions to increase female education, especially beyond high school, can have intergenerational benefits in reducing gender bias. The above-discussed differences in the mean scores of gender stereotypes for various levels of mothers' educational qualification can be verified with the means given in the following table, 6(d).

Table 6(d). Levels of Mothers' Educational Qualifications with Gender Stereotype as Dependent Variable

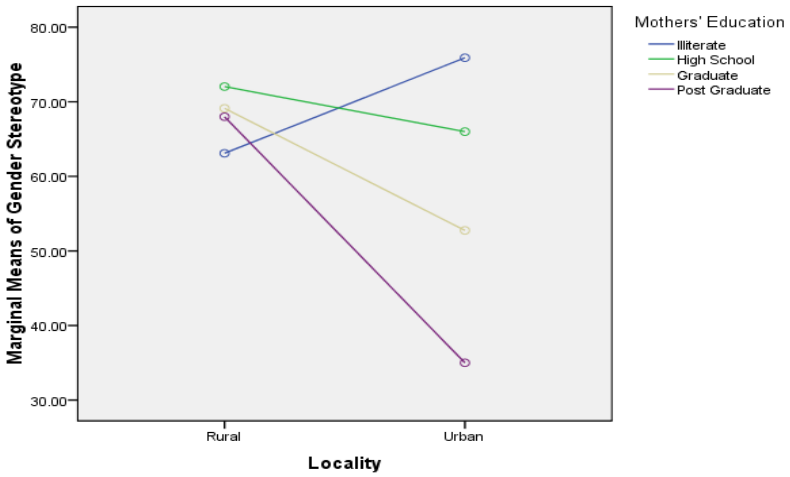
Mothers' Educational Qualification	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Illiterate	70.439	2.584	65.323	75.555
High School	64.849	2.273	60.348	69.35
Graduate	56.988	2.398	52.240	61.736
Postgraduate	43.639	3.460	36.788	50.490

The above discussions illustrate the partial main influence of gender, locality, mothers' educational qualification, and mothers' job status on the gender stereotype of prospective teachers. Their interactional influences have been discussed in the following section.

Again, from table 6(a), it can be observed that the F-value for all the interactions (formed by different combinations of gender, locality, mothers' educational qualification, and mothers' job status) are not significant ($p > .05$). It may be inferred that different combinations of categories/levels of gender (male/female), locality (rural/urban), mothers' educational qualification (illiterate/high school/graduate/postgraduate), and mothers' job status (homemaker/working) do not produce any difference in the scores of gender stereotypes of prospective teachers. Only one interaction (combination of locality, mothers' educational qualification, and mothers' job status), i.e., Locality x Mothers' Educational Qualification x Mothers' Job Status, has shown significant influence on gender stereotypes. It means that different combinations of categories/levels of locality, mothers' educational qualification, and mothers' job status are producing differences in the scores of gender stereotypes of prospective teachers. This analysis strongly supports the idea that a mother's education level plays a crucial role in shaping her child's gender attitudes. As mothers attain higher education, their children exhibit significantly lower gender stereotyping**.** The trend is consistent, statistically significant, and practically

meaningful**,** with implications for both education policy and gender equity efforts. This can be further clarified from the following graphs, as depicted in Fig. 1 and Fig. 2:

Fig. 1 Gender Stereotype of Home Maker mothers having different Locality and Educational Qualification



The graph in Fig. 1 depicts significant interactional influence of homemaker mothers of different localities and different mothers' educational qualifications on the gender stereotypes of mothers of prospective teachers. Gender stereotype is higher in children of homemaker-urban-illiterate mothers as compared to children of homemaker-urban-postgraduate mothers, homemaker-urban-graduate mothers, homemaker-rural-illiterate mothers, and homemaker-rural-postgraduate mothers. Also, it is higher in offspring of homemaker-rural-high school mothers as compared to offspring of homemaker-rural-illiterate mothers, homemaker-urban-graduate mothers, and homemaker-urban-postgraduate mothers.

Also, the graph in Fig. 2 illustrates the significant interactional influence of working mothers of different localities and different mothers' educational qualifications on the gender stereotypes of mothers of prospective teachers. Gender stereotype is higher in offspring of working-rural-illiterate mothers as compared to children of working-rural-high school mothers, working-urban-graduate mothers, working-urban-high school mothers, working-rural-graduate mothers, working-urban-postgraduate mothers, and working-urban-postgraduate mothers. Further, it is higher in children of working-rural-high school mothers as compared to those with working-urban-postgraduate mothers, working-urban-graduate mothers, and working-rural-graduate mothers.

From the above discussions, it is concluded that the null hypothesis, "There will be no significant main and interactional influences of gender, locality, mothers' educational qualification, and mothers' job status on gender stereotypes of prospective teachers, is partially rejected because two out of four main influences and one out of ten interactional influences on gender stereotypes of prospective teachers have been found significant.

The next objective of the study was to find the contribution of gender, locality, mothers' educational qualification, and mothers' job status in predicting the gender stereotype of prospective teachers, and the concerned H0 of this objective was "There will be no significant contribution of gender, locality, mothers' educational qualification, and mothers' job status in predicting the gender stereotype of mothers of prospective teachers." To test this H_0, regression analysis was employed, and the obtained output is presented in the following table 7a.

Table 7(a). Model Summary for Gender Stereotypes as Dependent Variable

Model	R	R2	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.577a	.333	.314	12.96629

a. Predictors: (Constant), Mothers' Status, Locality, Mothers' Education, Gender

b. Dependent Variable: Gender Stereotype Total

From Table 7(a), it is evident that the value of the *multiple correlation coefficient* (R) is 0.577, which indicates a high level of the prediction of gender stereotype by mothers' job status, mothers' educational qualifications, locality, and gender of the student.

The value of the coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.333, which shows the proportion of variance in the gender stereotypes that can be explained by mothers' job status, mothers' educational qualifications, locality, and gender of the student. It can be inferred that independent variables jointly explain 33.3% of the variability in gender stereotypes. More accurately, its adjusted R^2 value is 31.4%. The adjusted R^2 (0.314) being close to R^2 (0.333) shows the model is reliable and generalizable, not artificially inflated by adding weak predictors. A standard error of 12.97 suggests that individual predicted scores might deviate from actual scores by around ±13 units, which is acceptable in behavioral and social sciences, where such variability is common.

The model serves as a strong base for understanding social influences on gender stereotype development, especially in a developing context. The findings emphasize the importance of maternal factors and provide a solid starting point for further research into how social and family variables shape beliefs about gender roles.

Table 7(b). ANOVA for Gender Stereotype as Dependent Variable

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11931.334	4	2982.833	17.742	.000a
	Residual	23873.686	142	168.125		
	Total	35805.020	146			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Mothers' Job Status, Locality, Mothers' Education, Gender

b. Dependent Variable: Gender Stereotype Total

From the above table 7(b), it is clear that the value of F is 17.74 (p <.01) which means that mothers' job status, mothers' educational qualifications, locality, and gender of the students are significantly predicting the gender stereotypes. Hence, the ANOVA test validates that the regression model is statistically significant (p<.01) and explains a substantial amount of variance in gender stereotype levels. This supports the conclusion that gender, locality, and especially a mother's education and job status are important social factors influencing gender-related beliefs in individuals.

The predictors collectively contribute to explaining differences in gender stereotype scores. This aligns with earlier findings from the R^2 value (0.333), about 33.3% of the variance in gender stereotypes is statistically accounted for by the predictors. Mother's education and job status are likely the most significant individual predictors, as shown in earlier detailed analyses.

Table 7(c): Coefficients for Gender Stereotype as Dependent Variable

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	82.875	6.594		12.568	.000	69.840	95.910
	Gender	5.997	2.652	.189	2.261	.025	.754	11.240
	Locality	-7.188	2.305	-.230	-3.118	.002	-11.745	-2.631
	Mothers' Education	-7.232	1.160	-.453	-6.234	.000	-9.525	-4.939
	Mothers' job Status	-3.153	2.639	-.099	-1.195	.234	-8.370	2.063

a. Dependent Variable: Gender Stereotype Total

From Table 3(c), the regression equation to predict gender stereotypes from gender, locality, mothers' educational qualifications, and mothers' job status can be formulated as:

Gender Stereotypes = 82.88 + (5.997 x Gender) – (7.188 x Locality) – (7.232 x Mothers' Educational Qualifications) – (3.153 x Mothers' job Status)

Also, unstandardized coefficients indicating the magnitude of variance in the dependent variable (i.e., gender stereotypes) caused an increase of 5.997 (in the scores of Gender Stereotype) by switching the category of gender from 1 to 2 when all other independent variables are kept constant. Similarly, switching the category of locality from 1 to 2 may cause a decrease in the scores of gender stereotype by 7.188, provided that all the other independent variables are kept constant. Further, switching every consecutive category of mothers' educational qualifications from 1 to 2, 2 to 3, or 3 to 4 will cause a decrease every time in the scores of Gender Stereotype by 7.232, provided that all the other independent variables are kept constant. Similarly, when switching the category of mothers' job status from 1 to 2, it may yield a decrease in the scores of gender stereotype by 3.153, provided that all the other independent variables are kept constant.

Further, from the t-values of Table 3(c), it may be concluded that the coefficients of all independent variables except Mothers' job status are significantly different from zero ($p < .05$), and only the coefficient of Mothers' job status is equal to zero ($p > .05$).

It may also be concluded that mothers' job status, mothers' educational qualifications, locality, and gender of the students are significantly predicting the gender stereotype with F (4, 142) = 17.74, $p < .05$, R^2=.333. Hence, from the above discussions, it may be inferred that the H0 "Gender, Locality, Mothers' Educational Qualification, and Mothers' Job Status will not predict significantly the Gender Stereotype of Mothers of Prospective Teachers" is rejected.

Discussion

Level of gender stereotypes among prospective teachers

Prospective teachers refer to those undergoing training in educator preparation programs to formally enter the teaching profession. In this process, the focus tends to be on developing conceptual, contextual and pedagogical competencies, classroom management skills, and subject expertise. Teachers, like other people, are not free from gender stereotypes (Kollmayer et.al 2016), although they undergo rigorous training to develop contextual competencies.

The findings of the present study suggested that a good number of the respondents - nearly three-fourth of them - fell under the average gender stereotyping category, denoting that such beliefs are still present to a moderate degree in prospective teachers. At the same time, high level of gender stereotyping was found to be altogether absent in the sample, indicating a shift in the social attitudes held by the educated and socially conscious population – while they do hold gender stereotypes, it is not to a very high degree.

A working paper of UNDP avowed that highly educated and socially conscious demographics still hold gender stereotypes; however mostly at a moderate level rather than extreme, overtly hostile ones (UNDP 2023). If a teacher held some preconceived views/notions about attributes that are, or ought to be, possessed by women and men, or the roles that are, or should be performed, by men and women, this would undoubtedly be detrimental to the very objective of education, i.e., equality and equal opportunity. Gender stereotypes are most harmful when they restrict the capacity of women and men to develop their personal attributes or professional skills, and to take decisions about their lives and plans. Leon & Aizpurua (2023) found even socially aware young people continued to associate men with dominance – believing that they are in positions of power due to their authority and influence (Schneider 2004) - and women with care and passivity. Their gender stereotyping, in one way or another, shapes classroom dynamics, often leading to biased expectations, grading, and career outcomes. Therefore, the functioning of girls and boys at school, in addition to other factors, also faces the attitudes of the teachers, who shape the way young people function in terms of reflecting stereotypical gender differences (Tiedemann 2002). Osadan (2012) reported that boys are generally viewed as different from girls in creativity. Research shows that this is probably one of the gender stereotypes. Several studies examined gender differences in four cultures: the United States, Germany, Australia, and India. This study showed that in the United States, boys scored higher on originality than girls, while girls scored higher in figural elaboration. In all other samples, except those collected from India, gender differences were non-significant. In India, boys scored significantly higher than girls in figural originality, suggesting the importance of cultural factors (Sulaiman, 2009).

Cviková–Juráňová (2003) researched gender stereotypes in the teachers of Bratislava, Slovakia. The results of the research confirmed several stereotypical attitudes in connection with gender. Male teachers insisted on keeping male gender roles and female teachers on keeping female gender roles. Male teachers agreed more than their female counterparts with the statements about boys possessing better logical thinking. They also thought that boys were better leaders. Opening windows and manipulating technical devices were mostly considered boys' tasks. On the other hand, tidying up the classroom and watering flowers were considered to be girls' tasks. Female teachers agreed with statements about the gender roles of girls. For instance, they considered the swearing of girls as less acceptable than boys. Additionally, they considered girls to be generally more disciplined than boys. If it was necessary to collect money or to fulfill some responsible tasks, they preferred girls.

When the data was analyzed on the basis of gender the results show that male respondents registered a lower level of gender stereotypes relative to women, which indicates a slightly more gender-neutral or egalitarian attitude in male prospective teachers. On the other hand, female students show a greater concentration in the moderate gender stereotypes category compared to males. A large survey by the Pew Research

Center (2022) found that 89% of men and 86% of women agreed that "a wife must always obey her husband." It also concluded that women sometimes internalize prevailing social norms to a similar extent as men. Dhatt (2022) conducted a study in Chandigarh and found that several adolescent boys showed comparatively progressive opinions regarding education, sports participation, and careers for girls, indicating reduced stereotypical thinking among urban male youth.

The results also shows that urban prospective teachers exhibit a higher proportion of low gender stereotypes compared to rural teachers. The results suggest that urban teachers were more gender-sensitive or egalitarian, possibly due to better exposure to gender awareness, media, education, or progressive environments. Gender stereotypes in India exist in both rural and urban areas, though they manifest differently. Rural regions often see stronger traditional roles due to cultural norms and limited education. Urban India, while more progressive, still faces biases in workplaces, media, and societal expectations, and is often not divorced from its rural counterpart entirely, due to rural-urban mass migration. Addressing stereotypes in both settings requires targeted efforts in education, policy-making, and media representation (Nispaara Solutions 2025). Priya Dharsini & Samuel Jebaseelan (2017) reported that the government of India has taken initiatives to provide education, nutrition, health care, and an increase in the age of marriage for the empowerment of females, but it has raised the safety and obedience concerns of rural girls. Biswas (2024) found that nearly 80 percent of male rural college students of rural West Bengal India had opined that girls should look after the household and take proper care of their family and children. On the other hand, 66 percent of male rural college students of rural West Bengal India opined that only males are the breadwinners, and females are not allowed to work outside the home.

The results of the present study show a clear inverse relationship between the mother's educational level and the presence of gender stereotypes in prospective teachers. As the educational qualification of the mother increases, the level of gender stereotyping in their children decreases significantly. Jaya et.al. (2016) reported that internet access and mothers' education are associated with progressive attitudes. Students from socially disadvantaged groups reported relatively less progressive attitudes. The study examined adolescents' attitudes toward gender stereotypes and gender-based violence under the Adolescence Education Programme (AEP) and found respondents whose mothers had higher education levels showed lower endorsement of traditional gender stereotypes. The results also showed that exposure to a working mother - a figure who actively participates in the workforce and challenges traditional roles - may contribute to more progressive and equitable gender attitudes. Krishna (2024) emphasized that when mothers are involved in paid employment, it possibly leads children to view women as capable of balancing professional and family responsibilities, leading to weaker traditional stereotypes. Sarkar (2020) argues that the visibility of working mothers' challenges traditional stereotypes that define women only as caregivers or homemakers. Studies discussing the "working mother" stereotype highlight that children growing up in such households are exposed to more flexible gender-role models.

Main and interaction influence of gender, locality, mothers' educational qualification and job status on gender stereotypes

As can be seen from the output, there appear to be four main influences on the gender stereotypes of the prospective teachers. The mother's educational qualification is the strongest individual predictor of gender stereotypes; higher maternal education

inclines to be associated with less stereotypical thinking in children. It was found that neither gender nor locality alone influences gender stereotypes, indicating that the individual's environment and experience may not be enough to predict gender bias without also considering their family background – conservative views of gender can be found in men and women, in rural or urban areas. The mother's job status is also significant, though less strongly, suggesting working mothers may influence more progressive gender views. Most two-way and three-way interactions are not significant, indicating that the influence of variables tends to be independent rather than interactive the non-significant four-way interaction suggests that while individual and two-variable combinations may matter, combining all four variables doesn't add predictive power, possibly due to sample size limitations or overlapping variance.

This four-way ANOVA reveals that a mother's education is the most important factor in shaping gender stereotype levels. The job status of the mother also plays a significant role. The combined effect of locality, mother's education, and her job is statistically important, and deserves further investigation. Since, in the present study, only two categories of mothers' job status have been taken into consideration, it implies that there is a significant difference in the selected two categories of mothers' job status itself. Therefore, by finding the mean scores of gender stereotypes for the two categories, we may easily ascertain which category of mothers' job status has significantly higher scores of gender stereotypes.

Davis and Greenstein (2009) found that the educational level of mothers significantly influences children's perceptions of gender roles. Higher education in mothers tends to foster egalitarian attitudes in offspring.

Mumporeze (2020) show that Rwandans express ambivalent attitudes toward women's work and gender roles comprising both traditional and non-traditional attitudes. Women, young people, highly educated people, private-sector workers and people who rarely use mass media have non-traditional attitudes while men, old people, less educated people, public sector workers, and media-heavy users hold traditional attitudes toward gender roles. The study suggests that additional dynamics including gender, age, educational level, job sectors, and mass media factors work together to shape individuals' attitudes on women's work and gender roles.

Contribution of gender, locality, mothers' educational qualification, and mothers' job status in predicting the gender stereotype

The last objective of the study was to find out the contribution of gender, locality, mothers' educational qualification, and mothers' job status in predicting the gender stereotype of prospective teachers. From the results it can be inferred that independent variables together explicate 33.3% of the variability in gender stereotypes. Mother's educational qualification and job status are likely the most significant individual predictors, as shown in earlier detailed analyses.

Further longitudinal and cross-cultural research is also needed to assess how contextual factors influence the endorsement of gender stereotypes over time and across different countries.

Traditional Indian family systems place importance on women as primary caregivers, and by that very fact, the parent expected to spend greater time with offspring. It thus follows that a mother's characteristics, attitude, place in society, and, indeed, qualifications, will explicitly and implicitly affect how a child might perceive the world around themselves. Both an education and being part of the labor force, in any manner,

tend to broaden an individual's horizons and tendency to engage (even question) the world around them. It is likely that these novel attitudes are then imparted onto one's own children, whether purposely or by passive, social learning. Altogether, this may result in both parent and child breaking away from traditional structures of thought. Kostas (2021) found that girls in grades 3 and 4 were more likely than boys to question or resist the depictions of gender roles in textbooks. This was particularly the case with girls who had mothers in professional roles in the workforce. It was also found that, while women still contribute more than men to household chores, there has been a considerable increase in the participation of men in family life. Sweden offers an excellent example by providing parents with 480 days of parental leave, which can be taken until the child turns eight. This has given rise to an increasing number of fathers who take leave to care for their children while mothers work outside the home (Will, 2017). Many of the OECD countries, including India, offer some parental leave for both parents, even though there are large disparities in the length of the leave offered to mothers and fathers. The increased participation of men in caregiving and family life can have a positive impact on children, as it creates a challenge to traditional gender stereotypes in the household (van Polanen et al., 2017).

CONCLUSION

The present study highlights the profound impact of maternal education and job engagement on the development of gender stereotypes in prospective teachers. The findings indicate that as maternal education levels rise, gender stereotyping in their children declines. Postgraduate mothers exert the strongest egalitarian influence, while working mothers' model non-traditional roles that further reduce stereotypical thinking. Theoretically, the present research supports the social learning and gender socialization theories, which give due emphasize on family environment and parental role modeling in attitude formation.

Contrary to common assumptions, neither the student's gender nor locality alone significantly affected gender stereotypes, suggesting that familial and educational backgrounds outweigh demographic factors in shaping attitudes. The regression model affirms that maternal education, locality, and gender collectively account for a substantial proportion of variance in gender stereotype levels, with maternal education emerging as the most influential predictor. There may be some other influential factors like socioeconomic status, family environment, and cultural background were not examined. For upcoming research, a more diverse sample, and a longitudinal or mixed-method approach may be adopted for developing a better understanding of the development and transformation of gender stereotypes over time.

These findings carry important implications for policy and practice. Promoting higher education for women can have intergenerational benefits, fostering more gender-equitable attitudes in future educators, who, in turn, influence the next generation. Integrating gender sensitization into teacher education programs and encouraging shared parental responsibilities can help dismantle ingrained gender biases, moving towards a more inclusive and egalitarian society. The findings of the study underline the need for teacher education institutions to integrate gender sensitization programmes and reflective pedagogical practices that challenge stereotypical beliefs among future educators.

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