

Changing Shift of Gender Discrimination Faced by Female Medical Students in Georgia

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Abstract – The recent years have seen a global movement against gender discrimination of various forms. According to research, female medical students are at higher risk of experiencing sexual harassment from fellow students, or staff. The purpose of this study is to understand the prevalence of gender discrimination among female medical students of Tbilisi State Medical University (TSMU). A qualitative study using a survey questionnaire was prepared and distributed to 60 respondents. 66.7% (n=40) students agreed that gender discrimination is a major problem. 71.7% (n=43) never affected their studies. 56.4% (n=34) pointed out that women are the main target of gender discrimination. 90% (n=54) never personally experienced any forms of sexual harassment. Therefore, the study concluded that the students of TSMU are not faced with harassment and are satisfied throughout their course of study.

Keywords – *Medical School, Medical Students, Gender Discrimination , Female , Gender Inequality*

I. INTRODUCTION

The European Institute for Gender Equality defines gender bias as ‘prejudiced actions or thoughts based on the gender-based perception that women are not equal to men an enduring issue within medicine. (5)

Gender inequality has increasingly been addressed in public disputation and has become an universal issue recently. These inequalities affect the functioning of society and may concern various societal areas such as fundamental rights, access to education, wage differences, and access to high professional positions (1) (2)(3)(4)

Gender bias most severely affects women and other marginalized genders. However, it harms everyone and contributes to health inequity worldwide.

It is well established that gender discrimination can pose a significant problem for medical students’ learning, career progression, and emotional well-being.(6)

A recent report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) found that female medical students were 220% more likely than students from non-science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines to have faced sexual harassment from faculty or staff. It further noted that many features of the medical profession, including its historical male dominance, strong hierarchies, and culture that often tolerates mistreatment, increase the risk of sexual harassment in the workplace more generally. (7)

Gender discrimination (GD) and sexual harassment (SH) occur at all academic institutions worldwide. Medical students report a high prevalence of GD and SH, which may negatively affect their education and health.(11)

Also, it has come to our notice that not much research has been conducted in this country regarding this particular issue and there is a huge knowledge gap as most researches point out gender bias in different medical fields but not in medical universities. Also, there is a lack of long-term studies monitoring the prevalence of gender-based discrimination, especially in medical universities.

To eliminate gender bias in the medical field, medical universities should promote a top-down approach, involving regular reviews of gender-specific issues within each medical school along with a robust, centralized system for reporting issues to the medical school.

II. METHODS

Our goal was to examine female medical students exposure to gender discrimination and sexual harassment during their medical course

We aim to conduct a survey to know if there was gender-biased discrimination among female medical students in Tbilisi State Medical University (TSMU). We have used qualitative data to achieve the results. Our sample group was female medical students from 1st to 6th years.

The questionnaire used in the survey was in the format of multiple choice. The participation was voluntary and anonymous.

We surveyed via mail where the students were asked to participate in the survey and 60 responses were obtained.

This approach allowed us to evaluate the participant's individual perceptions of the issue. We chose this method as it enabled the participants to openly share their opinions about the inequality.

The questions given reflected on how discrimination has affected academic performance. There were also questions regarding sexual harassment and opinions on gender discrimination

III. RESULTS

A total of 60 responses were collected from female medical students of international faculty . 21.7%(n-13) belonged to age group 18-20 years and 78.3%(n-47) belonged to age groups 21-24 years .

21 participants are of 6th year, 14 participants are of 5th year , 12 participants are of 4th. Year, 6 participants are of 3rd year, 5 participants are of 2nd year, 2 participants are of 1st year .

Only 45% (n-27) responded to being satisfied as a student in TSMU (fig-1). 41.7%(n-25) stated that they rarely experienced unequal treatment and only 20%(n-12) have never experienced any unequal treatment. 30%(n-18) of participants agree that no one is at disadvantage at TSMU .(fig-2).

73.3 %(n-44) participants have stated that they have never turned down an opportunity due to their gender in TSMU . (fig-3)

58.3% (n-35) participants stated that they believe that equal opportunities are provided to both genders in TSMU. 46.7 %(n-28) have still stated that throughout of their study they have experienced discriminatory grading due to gender (fig-4).

21.7 %(n-13) participants strongly agree that they have been mistreated due to their gender but 38.3%(n-23) participants also strongly disagree that they have been ever mistreated due to their gender.

66.7 %(n-40) stated that gender discrimination in the medical field is still a major problem. Interestingly that gender discrimination has never affected their studies according to 71.7%(n-43) participants . 56.4 %(n-34) strongly agree that female students are still the main target of gender disagreement .

Among the whole survey, it is very interesting and fascinating that 90 %(n-54) participants never experienced any forms of sexual harassment in TSMU .

Through these results, it's interesting to note that TSMU sets as an example in times where gender discrimination is still a problem in many parts of the world.

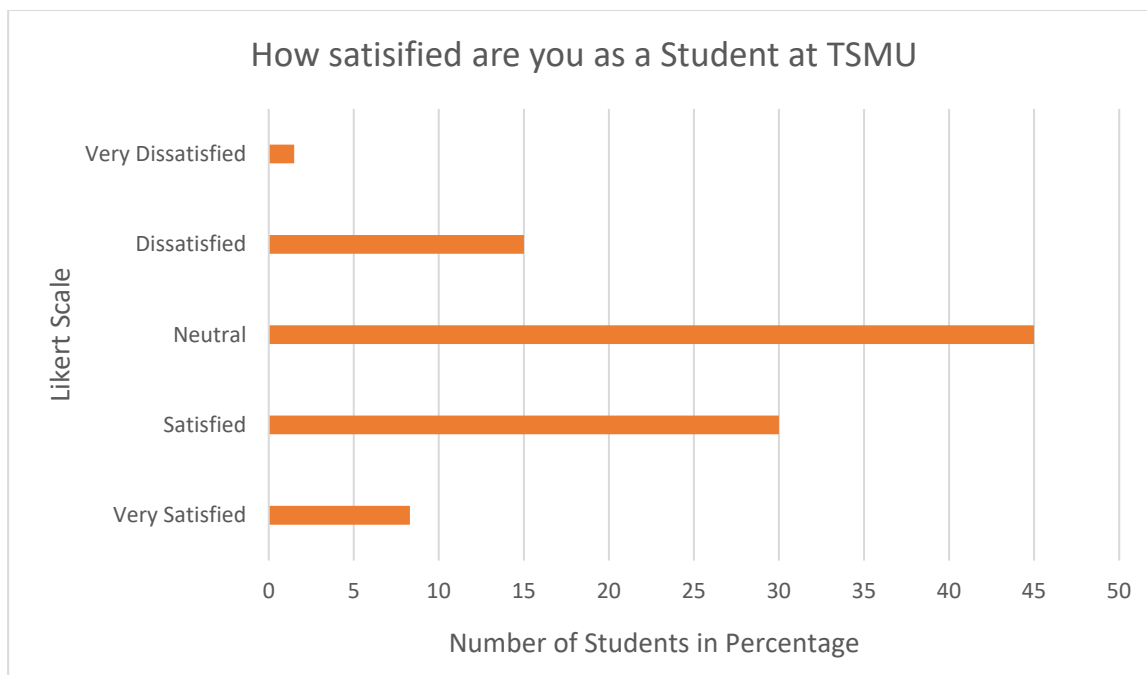


Fig 1 : How satisfied the students are at TSMU

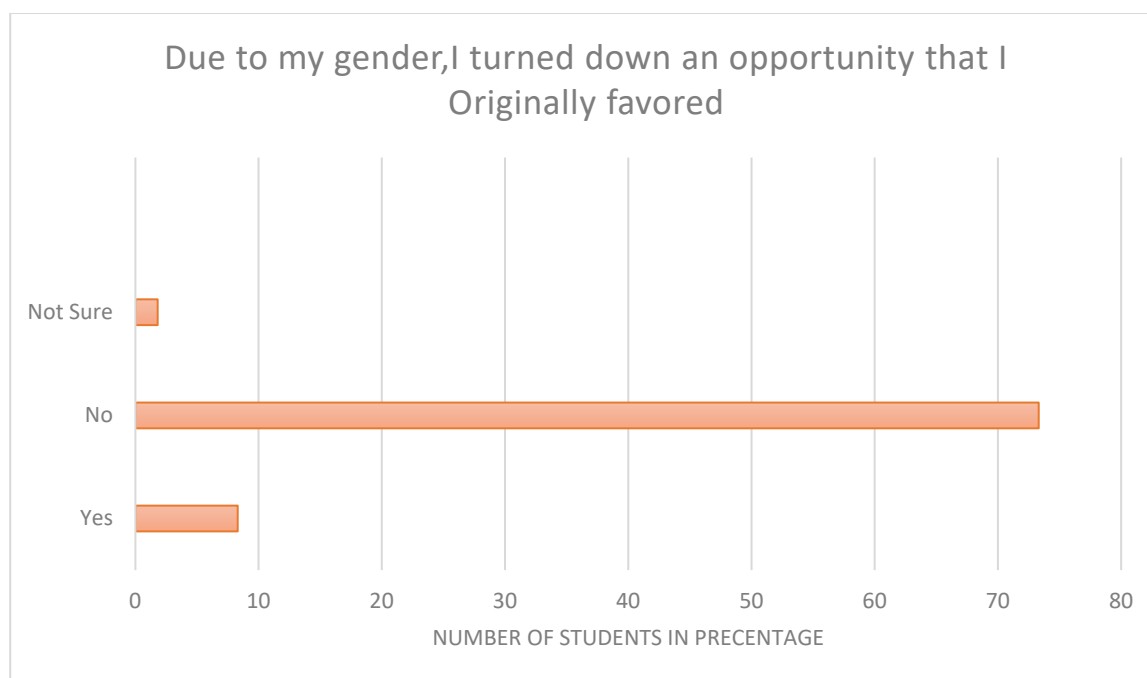


Fig 2 : percentage on students who had to turn down opportunities due to gender

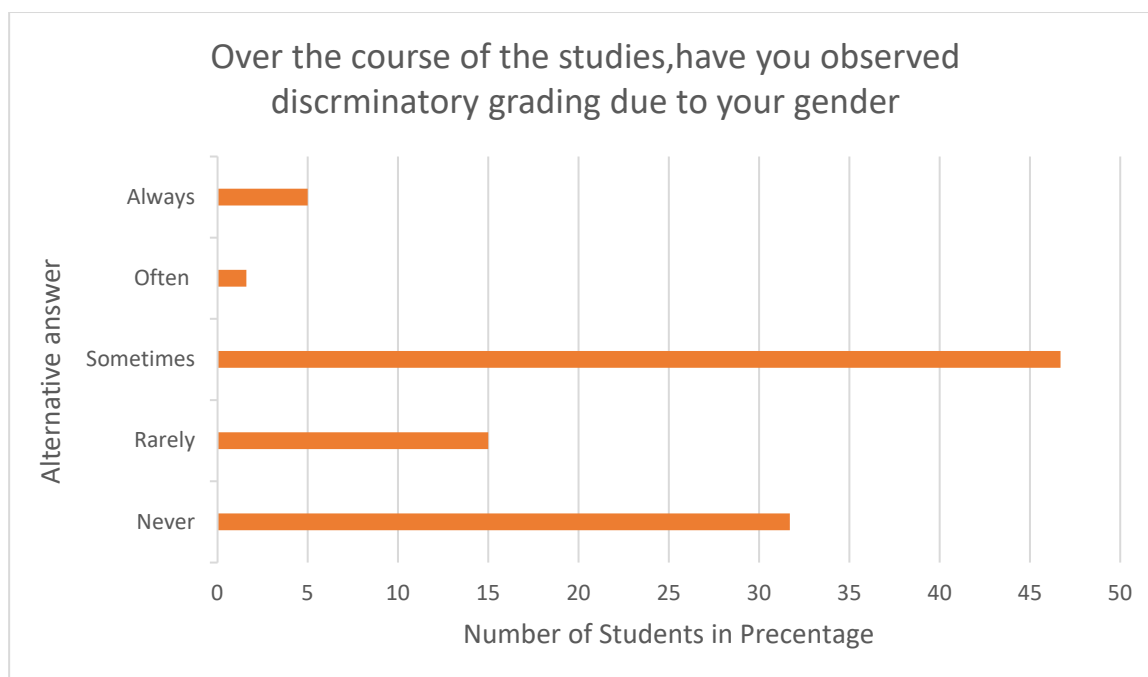


Fig 3 :percentage on discriminatory grading due to gender

IV. DISCUSSION

We conducted a small study survey on gender discrimination. We analyzed the opinion of female medical students on gender discrimination including sexual harassment. Previous studies have shown that mistreatment of students can negatively affect their learning. (8)(9)

There has been a lot of impediments to gender equity which has been associated to medical field like remuneration, leadership and promotion, and academic work and recognition. Also, these barriers have been reported by international studies as well. (10)

The main result of our study is that although most of them believe that gender discrimination is still a major problem worldwide and female students are the main target but fortunately in Tbilisi State Medical University (TSMU), majority of female medical students have not experienced gender inequality and sexual harassments. many students have also responded to believe that both the genders have been given equal opportunities.

Providing more platforms to participate in student body organizations, organizing student committees to address problems female medical students experience and providing medical students with counselors in the university, gender inequality can be resolved.

Although our study consist of a small sample size and only focuses on gender discrimination in medical field through the perspective of female medical students, through this small sample size it is quite evident that TSMU is setting an example in the world where gender discrimination in medical field is still a major concern in the 21st century.

V. CONCLUSION

Our researched aim was to explore student's perceptions of gender bias in university. Gender discrimination differs from country to country as well as from university to university. Medical students perceive gender discrimination and sexual harassment as real phenomena with differential expression across academic activities, specialty areas, and medical training environments. To stop gender inequality, it is necessary to address the bias and also discuss student's experiences and find ways to protest and actively demand change. To overcome these barriers, it is necessary to secure women's leadership positions in four gatekeeper organizations—medical schools/academic medical centers, funding agencies, journals, and medical societies

Our surveys demonstrated that Tbilisi State Medical University (TSMU) has set a great example against gender discrimination and that students had not faced any kind of gender bias and were extremely satisfied throughout their study.

VI. CONTRIBUTION

Concept : Harika korrapati , Harshad khan Siraj , Gauri Parvathy

Survey design : Harika korrapati, Gauri Parvathy, Yasmine Tarek Elsherif

Results segregation: Harika korrapati , Harshad khan Siraj

Literature search :Harshad khan Siraj , Yasmine tarek elsherif

Manuscript writing :Justly Ann Thomas , Vanya jalal rashid , Gauri Parvathy

Draft review : Gauri Parvathy , Harshad khan Siraj, Harika korrapati ,YasmineTarek elsherif

Editing of the manuscript :Gauri Parvathy ,Yasmine tarek Elsherif

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