

GENDER SENSITIZATION AND ROLE OF SOCIETY

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Abstract

“Gender” refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women. To put it another way: "Male" and "female" are sex categories, while "masculine" and "feminine" are gender categories. Gender Sensitization refers to modification of behavior by raising awareness about gender equality. It means that both genders must be aware of and must respect the feelings of other gender. Gender role defines how MALE and FEMALE should think, speak, behave, dress, work and interact within society. It all starts from childhood and gradually family, education system, work culture, media plays a crucial role to build many stereotypes for both genders. Its high time to change our mentality as society to share, think and act equal.

KEY WORDS: Gender, Gender sensitization, inequalities, stereotype, society.

Introduction

Gender encompasses socially constructed and culturally based roles of woman and men with a view to understand how unequal power relations between them are shaped and operate. Gender Sensitization is one basic requirement for the normal development of any individual. Without being sensitive to the particular gender, an individual may refrain from understanding the opposite gender and in some acute cases even him or herself.

Education enables people to use and extend their capabilities, develop skills, improve their livelihoods and increase their earning potential. And it also empowers them to participate in decision-making and in the transformation of their lives and societies. Education is central to the achievement of greater equality in society, including between men and women. It is no wonder that education of the both boys and girl child with a gender-based framework is widely acknowledged as being a single and most powerful vehicle of self-advancement and fulfilment of developmental outcomes for present and

future generations of children. In a more specific way, education of the girl child is widely acknowledged as the foundation of national development and plays an important role in ensuring a safer, healthier, more environmentally sound world.

Gender Sensitization

Sensitization is to make someone familiar with something, such as bad behavior or some problem. It means awareness of other persons feelings and respect thereof. Sensitization can be done about someone's religion, individual needs, caste, etc. Gender sensitization refers to the modification of behaviour by raising awareness of gender equality concerns. Gender sensitization theories claim that modification of the behaviour of teachers and parents towards children can have acausal effect on gender equality. It's about changing behaviour and instilling empathy into the views that we hold about our own and the other gender. It helps people in "examining their personal attitudes and beliefs and questioning the 'realities' they thought they know." Gender sensitisation is a weapon towards Gender Equity, Equal Opportunity and Women Empowerment which is essential for creating sustainable development as cherished in our Constitution. The attitudinal problem of the society against women due to socio-cultural system detrimental to the safety and security of women are posing great threats. Women are pushed to be mute spectators in all the above situations leaving them in a hopeless situation. Gender equality is, first and foremost, a human right. A woman is entitled to live in dignity and in freedom from want and from fear. Empowering women is also an indispensable tool for advancing development and reducing poverty. Empowered women contribute to the health and productivity of whole families and communities and to improved prospects for the next generation.

Gender Stereotype Made By Society

A gender stereotype is a product of a subjective perception built with an aim of confirming a society, in which WOMEN have a lower status than MEN. The consequences of these gender stereotypes are gender inequality and gender-based violence. Gender role defines how MALE and FEMALE should think, speak, behave, dress, work and interact within society.

Gender Stereotypes For Women

— Women should take care of family

- Working Women should stay close to home
- Women are very emotional
- Women should do more house hold work then Men
- Women can't inherit surname & property
- Organizations avoid recruiting female workers, who have small children
- Women are paid lower wages than Men
- Women should look beautiful
- Women shouldn't pursue higher education, as it is not considered good investment.

Effects of Gender Insensitivity

Women are pushed back in every sphere of life because of insensitive society sometimes even family. As a result, they have lack of self-esteem and self-confidence. Even at work places specially in corporate sector difference in wages can be clearly seen. Women leaders are hard to accept in politics also. Violence, Assault, Rape, Murder, Honor killing, Sexual Harassment etc. list of issues arises is very long because of gender insensitivity.

Why Women Don't Speak

Many women don't speak out against injustice with them out of fear. They think that if they will raise their voice they will be scolded or beaten or left segregated from society. To save their family honor they don't come out of this fear. Most of the women bear the burden of this insensitivity for sake of their children. And many times, they think it is their fault because they are taught it is normal. As they have seen and gradually learnt this since their childhood.

Gender Stereotypes for Men

- Men are expected to work and earn money
- Boys shouldn't do housework - they are miniscule and worthless works
- Boys don't cry
- Boys are better in Mathematics

- If men listen to their wives or they are sensitive, do household chores they are labeled as 'Joru Ka Gulam' etc.
- Stereotype behavior puts pressure on boys who dislike fighting, sports, etc.

Its Time To Change Our Mentality As Society

Parents, educational institutions play a crucial role as society to motivate Girls for jobs in fields dominated by MEN like engineering, firefighters, sports, mountain climbing etc. We should allow Boys to express their emotions and involve them in household tasks. Choice of words that are used in day-to-day life, text books journals, newspapers etc. put a great impact on both genders in their upbringing years so choose words that are gender neutral. We need to be sensitized about everyone's needs and different requirements like social acceptance should be there for girls playing football and boys playing with kitchen sets or dolls. Likewise, girls can wear BLUE and boys can wear PINK.

Conclusion:

Gender sensitization should pervade all levels, from top to down at household level. The good thing is that persons at top level of management and policy making are becoming more and more sensitized on the issue. However, a large part of the system and large segment of our population are not really sensitive to gender Importance of Gender Sensitization. | Volume 2 | Issue 5 | www.ijmcer.com | 125 | concern. This calls for serious efforts to launch gender sensitization programme for R&D organizations and for the people at large to achieve gender equity in sharing of benefits. We can visualise a situation where both men and women should be on readiness to perceive each other's needs and act in a more cohesive way to harness their combined potential. In ultimate analysis gender sensitization is very much required to create gender synergy at household, organizational and community level for producing more output and attaining gender equality. Finally, we have begun to raise our daughters like our sons but very few have courage to raise their sons like our daughters. If some men are supporting a women's rights it should not be a HEROIC ACT or RARE ACT. It should be expected like as common as breathing.

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