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Towards Gender Sensitization: Approaches, Responsibilities & Measures

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Abstract

In this paper an attempt is made to understand the importance of studying the problem of gender sensitization which is a prime issue in present era, with special reference to approaches responsibilities & remedial measures to overcome this problem of gender sensitization.

Introduction

After independence Indian democratic constitution has accepted three basic principles i.e. freedom, equality & Fraternity. Therefore equality of man & woman came in existence only within the framework of constitution. Various laws are implemented with the important objective of improving women's status in India. Of course no proper co-ordination in the law and what is in actual practice could be achieved. However, even after so many years of independence the prime objective of improving the status of women in India could not be fulfilled. Therefore, it has become a need of the hour to make social change by organizing various workshops, seminars, conferences on gender sensitization. Deliberate efforts are taking place in this respect, which is very much necessary at present

Several laws have also been passed in respect of women for becoming the situation ideal, but there is actually no proper implementation & ultimately women are facing injustice. Today we are experiencing that there are various problems of women that takes place due to the present social condition. Despite the fact, injustice & cruelty against women have not come in to an end. The main basic reason behind this is "patriarchal" social system.


Significance of the study

"Gender sensitization" is a prime issue in present era not only in India but all over the world. Men are perceived to have greater rights than women, especially because it is assumed that they have more power, strength, economic asset & support for the parents as compare to women. We mostly observe gender discrimination, inequality between Male & Female as we prominently found patriarchy in the world. The main solution to come across this problem is Gender Sensitization.

Background

In ancient times, in all patriarchal societies the birth of a girl was not welcomed at all by the family members as well as society at large. The son was given more importance than the daughter, almost every-




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where. Various reasons were responsible for such type of approach towards Male & Female child. Son enjoyed always higher status because he was a permanent economic help to the family, lived with his old parents, continued the family name and fame etc. Therefore birth of a daughter never welcomed. Many times he abandoned after birth or even killed.

Women have remained confined within the four walls of the home, since time immemorial. Women role always considered as secondary as she dismissed as "The second sex." They did not have any voice in decision making in the family. Role played by her is always only supportive to the male members in the family.

Status of women in contemporary society

Today, though we see that legally & politically women are given more rights as compared to women in traditional society, one would be able to know the position of women at home and in society has not yet changed as per the expectations. Birth of a boy is considered more desirable & is delightfully accepted than that of a girl. Even today in many parts of the country the birth of a daughter is regretted.

Objectives

- 1) To study why discrimination is in status of men and women in society
- 2) To understand impact of gender based discrimination on society.
- 3) To examine need of gender sensitization in present society.
- 4) To suggest remedial measures for the problem of "gender sensitization."

Difference between the term Sex & Gender

In English two words are being used with similar meaning for the word sex, one is sex & another is gender. The word sex is used biologically & gender mostly in the context of socialization.

After the birth of a baby, baby is introduced as girl or boy but while shaping the personality they behave as per the "stereotype patterns" of behavior which they acquired through process of socialization. When they are grown up they are known as man & woman having different identity. Many cultures establish clear distinction between Male & Female which are not the result of biological difference.

Social construction of Gender

Men & Women behave differently due to gender differences. Gender roles are defined as expectations regarding the proper behavior, attitudes & activities of Males & Females. These are known as sex "stereotyped behaviors."

Gender roles are evident not only in people's work & behavior but in how we react to others. It is adults, of course, who play critical roles in guiding children in to these gender roles deemed appropriate in society.

Gender Sensitization

"Gender sensitization refers to the modification of behavior by raising awareness of gender equality concerns"




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Gender sensitization " is about changing behavior & instilling empathy in to the views that we hold about our own & the other genders. It helps people in examining their personal attitudes, beliefs&questioning the realities they thought, they know."

Approaches

Gender sensitization is intrinsically linked to sustainable development &is very much important for the realization of human rights for all. It is interlinked with gender equality & empowerment. The overall objective of both gender sensitization, gender equality i.e. a society in which women & men enjoy the same opportunity, rights &obligations in all spheres of life

In a country like India, with very much diversity existing in terms of its customs, traditions, socio cultural values, rituals& family beliefs& individual perception, the need for a more systematic, well planed & more professional approach is desired to inculcate this sensitivity. It requires primarily to highlight on the contribution of both the genders in creation & development of a well balanced society.

Responsibilities

As we have seen gender sensitization has become a need of the hour. Nowadays, a much stronger need is felt & realized to talk & discuss about this sensitive topic both on personal &professional front. It is our responsibility that we should develop sense of gender sensitization through accepting gender equality. Manjula Thakur rightly explained the responsibilities we have regarding this in her article namely "Importance of gender sensitization"to overcome the various disparities in gender equality which is widely acceptable. Those are as follows:

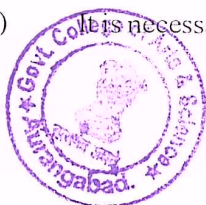
- 1) Individuals need to be more open minded, rational& unbiased intheir thoughts &actions.
- 2) There is an urgent need to shatter, the load of our orthodox beliefs &biased values to accentuate the progressive existence of both the genders.
- 3) Better reconciliation of work toprivate life for both women & men is essential to gender equality.²

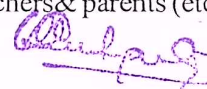
It is our responsibility to arrange training & awareness raising programmers in society which can be helpful to eliminate gender based prejudice & discrimination.

Measures

More concentration is required to be focused on women's problems consistently to to develop gender sensitization. Following are some remedial measures to resolve this issue of gender sensitization.

- 1) In the process of socialization the policy of double standard of socialization is always used. It is necessary to develop the filling amongst women at the time of socialization that they are not playing secondary role while socializing the children.
- 2) It is necessary to have modification of the behavior of teachers& parents (etc) towards chil-




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dren in educational institutions to have a causal effect of gender equality & sensitization.

- 3) A serious thought for the implementation of effective planning & schemes is to be given with meticulous study of the suggestions put forth through various workshops, seminars by proper coordination in National Women Commission & State Women Commission for proceeding towards gender sensitization.
- 4) There is a need to provide steps to safeguard women's safety & for men to be assured that such measures are not an indication of discrimination against the male population.
- 5) Better knowledge & understanding of gender issues at all level of society is essential for communication activities, street plays, roleplays, dramas, documentaries, various other audio visual aids which will raise awareness among both stakeholders & the general public.
- 6) The media like T.V, Radio, and Newspapers should be more alert as their role & responsibilities have become very vital in respect of spreading the message of gender sensitization awareness through contemplative articles, advertisements, reality shows, daily soaps etc.
- 7) The custom of female infanticide & the practice of female feticide is still prevalent in some parts of the country, though legally forbidden. Hence it is necessary to spread the message that gender sensitization should "begin from home." For this help from NGO's, women workers, voluntary organization can be obtained.
- 8) To achieve gender sensitization, conducting various sensitization campaigns & competitions is effectively useful for creating awareness amongst public. e.g. slogan competition, debate & essay competition, poster competition & various gender awareness programmes etc.
- 9) Proper care & responsibility is to be taken while framing the syllabus from primary level. The role of HRD Education Ministry, syllabus framing authorities, educationalists is more crucial in this respect.

Conclusion

It is a necessary fact that we should accept both the genders which are surely a creation of nature. Therefore equality in gender is essential for proper personality development of an individual as well as the sustainable development of any society.

Gender sensitization is necessary in order to enhance knowledge, attitude as well as skills. Particularly to increase male participation in gender sensitization for bringing about a change in their attitudes and behavior.

Mr. Rajesh Kr. Jha put forth his views regarding status of women in India in his book social justice and empowerment i.e. "Against the background of the patriarchal system of society, the women need special attention to ensure their development & participation in the decision making process at home, in the community & governance."³ It is quite appropriate



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While concluding, it can be said that "Gender Sensitization is a weapon towards gender equality, equal opportunity & women empowerment"⁴. It is a basic requirement for the normal growth & development of an individual & sustainable development of society.

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- 4) SIUD www.siudmysore.gov.in>reading material.



A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "A. Jha".

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