



REVIEW ARTICLE

Vol. 3. Issue 1.,2016 (Jan-Mar.)

ISSN INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA
2395-2628(Print):2349-9451(online)

DO WE NEED TO STUDY GENDER SENSITIZATION?

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ABSTRACT

As far as scientific and technical advancements are concerned we reached new heights; but we forgot that whatever we achieved are for the betterment of human beings. This forgetfulness cost us a lot. We became insensitive towards ethics and human values. Therefore, differences in society on the grounds of caste, color, ethnicity, region, religion and sex cropped up. We need to be sensitive towards these issues. But before we take up any other issue, we must begin it from our home itself or to be more precise towards homemakers. Gender sensitization is the only issue, which can be corrected right from home and not only this; it is the only one which is worse affected also. It must be taken as the stepping stone to erase all sorts of discriminations and create sensitivity in society. Gender sensitivity must be the first step in creating human values and ethics.

Key words: Need, Study, Gender, Sensitization.

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Discrimination in society is a common phenomenon. These could be on the grounds of caste, color, financial status, region, religion or sex. Now the question arises if we are insensitive towards several other issues why should we study gender sensitization in particular? Is this more essential than any other issues? The answer could be implicit in a close study of gender related problems.

In fact, gender discrimination is more complex than any other discrimination. In other discriminations, the whole group is kept at a distance, not allowed to mingle with the main group but this one is very different. Women are kept at home; but given continuous pain and torture which is not there in any other discrimination. The reasons for such discernments could be patriarchal society, women having less representation in public dealings, the traditional concept of deifying husband, masculinity defined at their expense, their socialization in sanctity of marriage and their limited right to live in parent's house.

To counter their continuous persecution; the government of India has enacted several laws like 'Family Law', 'Labor Law', 'Human Rights and Women Legal Aid', Hindu Widow Remarriage Act (1865), Child Marriage Act (1929), 'Special Marriage Act' (1955), The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act (1956), Hindu Succession Act (1956), Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act (1971),The Indecent Representation of Women

(Prohibition) Act, 1986, The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 (28 of 1961) (Amended in 1986), The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987 (3 of 1988), PC&PNDT Act, 1994, Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005)', The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013, The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, to name a few. But in fact, laws could not be enforced effectively due to culture, customs, and traditions. The profound beliefs take preference over laws. Women who protest their sufferings or those who react or retaliate are looked down upon.

Violence against women is seen in many forms throughout their lives. Even when they are in the womb, discrimination begins. Sex-selective abortion or female feticide is not uncommon. Female infanticide is frequent. Even if she survives she is mentally, physically and sexually intimidated. During girlhood; child marriage, female genital mutation/cutting (FGM/Cutting), incest, child prostitution and pornography are very much there. In adolescence; dating and courtship violence, and in adulthood; acid throwing and date rape are not uncommon. There are also instances of voyeurism, economically coerced rape, sexual harassment, forced into flesh trade and pornography, trafficking in women, partner violence, marital rape, dowry abuse and murder, partner homicide, psychological abuse of women with disabilities, forced pregnancy etc.

If not all, some of these almost every woman faces at different stages of her life. But what is most painful is the violence caused by her husband and in-laws. She comes out of her comfort zone putting all faith in them but the treatment she meets is that of a hostage or war booty.

They are abused by pushing, arm twisting, slapping, punching, kicking, choking, burning, taking complete control over her money, food and clothes, damaging her property, socially isolating from her family members, yelling, name calling, crazy making behavior, undermining her parenting skill, criticizing her beliefs and abilities, preventing her from attending religious ceremonies, threatening to harm her family members, threatening to break up, killing her pets or even herself.

The torture men devise, women suffer. Not only that when she becomes elderly, the younger generation takes the charge of violence against them. Widows are forced to commit suicide or homicide for economic reasons. At this age they become more vulnerable to mental, physical, and sexual abuse.

The United Nations Secretary-General's study on all forms of violence against women was launched in the General Assembly on 9 October 2006. The report identifies the following forms of violence against women: female genital mutilation, forced pregnancy, forced sterilization, female infanticide, femicide, sexual harassment, sexual violence, sexual violence in situation of armed conflict, stalking, domestic violence, harmful practices, maltreatment of widows, marital rape, honor crimes, dowry related violence, acid throwing, early marriage, forced marriage and trafficking.

Even if a woman survives all odds done to her, she is physically and psychologically impaired. It becomes difficult for her to regain power by reporting the violence; because legal procedures are embarrassing, humiliating and time consuming. Not only that violence against women is executed or overlooked by the State either through its agents or policy. State agents include members of the executive, judiciary or legislative branches as well as officials having public authority.

We must endeavor to create a gender sensitive society but there are many impediments in making it. Before that, we should work out strategies for prevention and control of violence against women as well as change in the cultural mindset about them. We should be in a propensity to support the victims. For all these we must study gender sensitization and educate our fellow beings.

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