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Social Science

GENDER SENSITIZATION THROUGH ADULT AND EXTENSION EDUCATION: AN ANALYTICAL SHIFT OF ASSESSING KNOWLEDGE

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Mrs. Musharraf Jahan

Assistant Professor, Centre of Continuing & Adult Education and Extension Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh (India)

ABSTRACT

Gender sensitization aims the modification of the behaviours towards causal effect on gender equality. It does not mean to pitting women against men. It means to educate for sensitive benefits of both sexes. It helps them determine which assumptions in matter of gender are valid and which are stereotyped generalizations. Gender awareness requires not only intellectual effort, but also empathy and open-mindedness. It opens up the widest possible range of life options for both women and men. Issues such as problems of sexual harassment, sexual experiences or sexuality are dealt with sensitization programmes. In this regard, there is a need of extension education and awareness programmes in outreach to improve gender conditions with respect to basic equalities. Gender sensitivity helps to generate respect for the individual regardless of sex.

A change of perception is the need of the hour and requires orientation of policy makers, curriculum developers, media professionals, adult learners and even the public at large. Through the extension education it may be very sophisticated to educate the society and generate awareness among them about the complications and consequences of gender development. Therefore, increased literacy among the common people through the extension knowledge about this right from childhood may escalate safe practices and may help in mitigating the suffering of millions of women. There is also urgent need of community based observation system. This can be achieved through educational programmes, school curriculum and knowledgeable society at large. This research paper would also highlight the major changes in curriculum development to educate the adults towards gender equality.

INTRODUCTION

Gender sensitization presides over gender sensitivity, the modification of behaviour by raising awareness of gender equality concerns. This can be achieved by conducting various sensitization campaigns, training centres, workshop, programmes etc. The role of the extension education cannot be ignored. Sensitization is seen as an awareness informed propensity or disposition which aims at changing behaviour so that it is sensitive to certain issues. When we talk of sensitization which means making someone responsive or sensitive towards the concept or existing issues around the same. Gender sensitization may be seen as 'the awareness informed propensity to behave in a manner which is sensitive to gender justice and gender equality issues'.

The gender sensitization is interlinked with gender empowerment. Gender sensitization theories claim that modification of the behaviour of teachers and parents etc. towards children can have a causal effect on gender equality. Now gender sensitization is about changing behaviour and instilling empathy into the views that we hold about our own and the other genders. It helps people in 'examining their personal attitudes and beliefs and questioning the 'realities' they thought they know.

The vision of 'gender sensitization' clearly expressed by Scott (1986) when she wrote that gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power. It might be better to say, gender is a primary field within which or by means of which power is articulated.

When we talk of gender sensitization it involves from making understand the difference between sex and gender, how gender is socially constructed and the stereotypes around gender roles. This sensitization also can include on understanding violence and how it is inflicted upon by certain masses. How one gender is favoured or dominated at things, spaces, work, etc.

Gender sensitization through informal education

As we know that a new education policy has been drafted by the Government of India regarding the drastic changes of the education system of the country. This policy would be examined in the light of gender sensitization programmes and observed that the same would be cover-up for the

purpose. The formal education system can only be providing a theoretical concept to the learners and nothing to educate the community for gender related problems such as sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and other sexual experiences as we are experiencing in every day of our life.

Following the thought of Brookfield (2009) adult education practitioners should exert an effort of reflection in the exercise of their profession, but such attitude could be congruent with the maintenance of the several roots of inequalities in which our society is build up. It is time to go further and make use of critical reflection, and this means an auspicious tendency by adult educators- and all the entities with educational responsibilities.

Here is the aim of the informal education on the meaning of gender in adult's learning, considering gender as a social order that is entrenched in daily relations. As the research shows, it cannot be any longer ignored that being a man or woman creates a different approach of the learner towards the situation of learning, mainly because formal, informal and non-formal contexts of learning tend to be congruent with a set of messages based on gender stereotypes that can be prejudicial to the individual's development. The experiences related to gender influence the way knowledge is acquired, the expectations people make about themselves, the choices of learning subjects and their self-confidence in learning. The use of gender lenses to deconstruct such learned norms should be included in the field of adult education as a way of promoting social subjectivity to contemporary adult learners.

Though a gender sensitive analysis, of reality it is possible to discover not only discrepancies between each sex predominant spheres of action, but also that gender is commonly associated with an unequal distribution of power between men and women. The contemporary world will require more and more often, people to be members of an open, plural, multi-cultural, individualized and egalitarian society. Education should prepare them for such world because this is what democracy and social justice demand. In this sense, gender sensitive adult education is education aiming at decreasing inequalities (not differences) between men and women in creating life (and educational) expectations and opportunities to reach one's own goals;

inequalities which do not result from the differences in sex but from the organization of institutions and social life in which "masculine" traits and values are appreciated and rewarded. Such education will make it possible to create alternative systems of meanings and going beyond the dominating interpretation and representation of the world, which will enable meeting the demand for creating equal opportunities for men and women.

Prospering the views of the gender sensitization

Formal as well as informal education play equal role in order to understand the meaning of the gender sensitization but the role of the informal education or adult education literacy programme can be best way to spread the gender justice through the outreach programmes.

There are some of the basic points of gender sensitization:

- In a developing country such as India, women are still marginalized and their empowerment still remains a myth in many respects. Can we take a glance in to our own families?
- Why many highly educated married women are forced to quit their job to take care of their husband's family? Why do wives have to hear their in-laws and neighbors falsely blaming them for not being able to manage a good home due to the fact that they are working? Is it only okay for a man to be career minded? Why can't a woman do so too? She can bare more pain in her life. May be that is why she is chosen by the creator himself to be a child barrier.
- There is a need for formulation of policy direction within adult basic education and gender sensitization.
- Despite the rhetoric, neither gender equality nor universal adult basic education is a foregone conclusion. A considerable effort is required not just to keep the themes on the agenda but also to highlight the interlinkages between the two.
- It was also felt important to keep alive the commitment related to adult education in action, using the media where necessary for this purpose.
- Together with adequate funding, at local levels of government training, curriculum development, research and documentation needed.
- Finally, governments and civil societies could provide resources for participating in advocacy at major international forums of gender sensitization programme.
- For this purpose, there needs to be sustained efforts to broaden the concept of adult and extension education literary programmes for active citizenship and women's empowerment.
- In addition, innovative practices should be developed linked to gender needs and the gender support through monitoring and evaluation of programmes.

CONCLUSION

There is a lot into gender sensitization which we can read, watch documentaries and sessions that we can attend but the best will be when we practice it and spread the word. Gender sensitization is teaching children about the basic difference between a person's sex and their gender. While sex is the biological identity, gender, on the other hand, is the sexual identity that we develop as we grow up. Yes, this is our societies' situation. Women still need to go a long way.

The need of adults related to learning contents are clearly connected to the roles they perform in everyday life. Lack of coordination between government departments and civil society, each of which have their own programmes for awareness raising information dissemination and training, Short term planning, and lack of priority and consequently recourses have been identified as key obstacles to providing such an enabling environment of gender sensitization.

Gender pay gap still exists in many prominent areas in India. For instance, a well accomplished school teacher in a private

school, having many years of experience gets lesser pay than her male subordinate, who has less experience. Finally, the gender sensitization is the key to a better world where equality would rule over patriarchy. From every childhood man should be sensitized to respect all girls and women and to be empathetic. So both men and women need to learn to respect and accept each other, and empower each other.

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