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Gender Sensitivity Level among Rural Masses

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Author NR managed the literature searches, wrote the first draft of the manuscript and data collection. Author KD designed the study and wrote the protocol. Author PM performed the statistical analysis of the data. Author Komal data collection and managed the tables and figures of the study. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Women play a fundamental role in the economy of any society. They work as a farmer, on wages basis, as business person, administrator, and entrepreneurs. Women in rural areas face constraints in engaging in all activities viz. cultural, social, economical, health and nutrition etc. Because of gender-based discrimination and social norms, most of their work remains unseen, unrecognized and undervalued. Therefore, this study was conducted on 600 rural (300 male 300 female) people to assess the educational status and sensitivity level. Data was collected with the help of self structured questionnaire by survey method. Results of the study shows that illiterate females (42.90%) were almost double of male (24.40%) that shows high degree of gender disparity in educational level and male members were more sensitized on different aspects (Household responsibility 4.407*, Economical 3.815*, Health and Nutrition 3.243*, Political 2.548*, Media and Technologies 2.126*) as compare to female regarding equality. So, there was a need to promoting gender equality and women's economic empowerment.

Keywords: Education; gender; male; sensitization; women.

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1. INTRODUCTION

From the last three-four decades, sex and gender biases have been identified in biomedical and public health research (Beery 2010 and [1]. India has taken deal with modernizing its economy, reducing poverty and improving living standards of its inhabitants. Women power is essential to the overall growth of any country. Indian constitution has approved equal rights to male and female but women are always face differential treatments. A girl child does not enjoy as much care and attention of her parents as a boy child enjoyed. India cannot flourish as a nation unless and until efforts are being made for equality so that there is equal participation of women in economic and overall growth of the country. The social construction of gender role and identities is largely depends on dominant groups who allocate works, roles and responsibilities in the society and according to the division they give opportunities to and have expectations of males and females individually. The process of socialization inculcate gender role in children according to the societal demands and pre mind set of the members. Pre mindset of society for gender affects all part of life for instance; it is societal stereotypes that the toys as well as dresses also set by the gender. Girls have to play with dolls and kitchen toys whereas boys should play with cars guns and other machines. Although the T.V. serials which is commonly meant for children has same concept like Chota Bheem, Doremon, Sin-chain etc. In this cartoon boy character are portrayed as strong where girls are contrary. The impact of cartoons is intensely rooted in the psychic of children. Gender refers to social arrangement of men and women into masculine and feminine. Gender is a social construct by a number of social institutions like family, educational institutions, religious and cultural system, workplace, values and beliefs of the society. The gender identity of men and women are psychosomatic and collective which means gender is historically, socially and culturally determined. Gender sensitization is the effective approach to reforming the society and eliminates gender based discrimination. Gender sensitization is the process of changing the stereotype mind set of the society for male and female. Members of the Society strongly believe that male and female are not equal entities and for this reason they have to behave and function differently in different socio- economic space. Gender sensitization develops a attitude in men that the stereotypical image of traditional women

is no longer work, Rather women are seen as liable and equal buddies in socio- economic development of the family and society.

Gender sensitization refers to the modification of behaviour by raising awareness of gender equality concerns. Gender Sensitization implies accepting the basic rights associated with Gender equality among all persons but, not against women to man. Gender sensitivity helps to generate respect for the individual regardless of sex [2]. The general opinion of male and female on the rigid division of works and other roles and responsibilities related to gender start to die downward. Female member of the society also be likely to develop the sensitivity that they are no inferior to male member of the society and they also have an equally significant roles to play in decision making at workplace and household, society and organization level. The men, who are hesitant to acknowledge women's input, come ahead by the influence of gender sensitization to recognize contribution of women in the development of the society. In present times women's empowerment, gender equality, and the understanding of women's rights is equally important to promote sustainable development of the society. The continuous existence of discrimination between male and female in control and access on assets, and discrimination against women throughout the past, at the present seen as an barrier in the national and international developmental agendas [3]. These practices were a cause of health and survival inequality for girls. While gender discrimination is a universal phenomenon in poor nations, a 2005 UN study found that social norms-based gender discrimination leads to gender inequality in India. For the elimination of discrimination it is necessary to achieve gender equality by good governance, human rights, environmental sustainability, and poverty reduction. Equal recognition of women and Women empowerment is the only way to achieve the goal of sustainable development of any country.

Women play important roles in the rural economy. They work as farmers, wage earners and entrepreneurs. Indigenous women have an important role as custodians of traditional knowledge that is key for their communities' livelihoods, resilience and culture. In addition indigenous. Women can make a unique contribution to natural resource management. Women in rural areas face constraints in engaging in economic activities. Rural women are less likely to be wage earners, and when

they are, they earn less than men. Rural women are often concentrated in low-skilled, low-productivity and low or unpaid jobs with long working hours, poor working conditions and limited social protection. Furthermore, they shoulder a disproportionate burden of unpaid care and household work, including food provision, caring for children, the sick and the elderly. Promoting gender equality and women's economic empowerment go hand in hand. Both are important in ensuring that women enjoy their human rights and can contribute to inclusive and sustainable development. This study was conducted by keeping these views in mind.

1.1 Objective

- To assess educational level of rural people.
- To assess gender sensitivity level of rural people.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The current study was conducted in rural area of Haryana state. *Budak* village of *Hisar* district was selected randomly as locale of the study. Total six hundred adults (300 male and 300 female) were assessed for their gender sensitivity level. A self developed questionnaire was used to collect the data. As part of the gender sensitivity level analysis, data were collected on various socio-economic indicators in terms of educational aspects, social aspects, political aspects, economical aspects, health and nutrition, decision making aspects, household and responsibility aspects and media and technologies aspects. The respondents were given statement where they had to record their response on five scales rating; agree, highly agree, don't know, disagree or highly disagree. For the education status percentages were

calculated and to find out difference between gender sensitivity level of male and female t-test was computed.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section of the research paper presents the findings of the study in two parts: (a) Educational status of adult population and (b) Gender sensitization level of adult population.

3.1 Educational Status of Adult Population

Life and thought process of an individual is directly affected by his/her educational level. Education is recognized by UNESCO [4] as "a fundamental human right – one that all individuals are entitled to enjoy whatever the circumstances in which they live – that also brings important benefits to human society as a whole". Educated women became the agents of change [2]. Educational achievement is the primary and leading action towards improving standard of life, knowledge level and also level of skill of people in the society. Better educational level of individual definitely has a positive impact on gender sensitivity level and equality in the society. A clear gender gap was observed in this aspect. Fig.1 presents the results regarding educational status of adult (>21 yrs of age) population. Results show that illiterate females (42.90%) were almost double of male (24.40%) counterparts which show high degree of gender disparity in educational level. Bhattacharyya, A. [5] also reported that rural women in India are less literate than rural men. There is a negative attitude of the family towards educating the girl child. Only 1.61 per cent female had completed post-graduate degrees and 10.99 per cent completed bachelor's degrees.

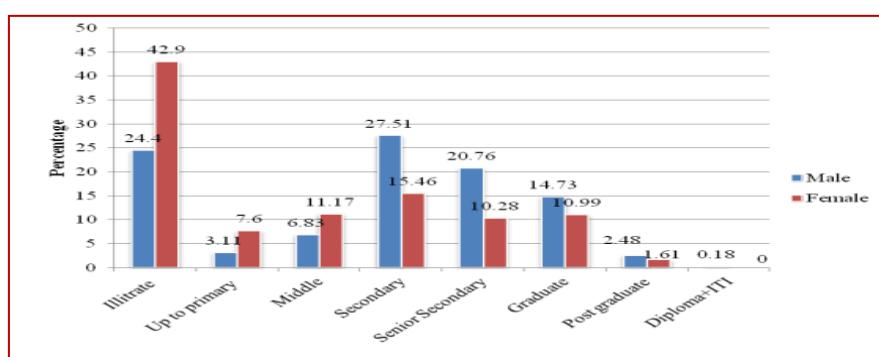


Fig. 1. Educational status of adult population

Table 1. Difference between sensitivity level of male and female

Sr. No.	Aspects	Sensitivity score		
		Male (N=300)	Female (N=300)	t value (p<.05)
1	Educational	26.67 (7.50)	26.43 (7.09)	0.403
2	Social	31.07 (8.63)	30.73 (7.86)	0.510
3	Political	31.19 (8.18)	29.64 (6.71)	2.548*
4	Economical	23.81(6.04)	21.97 (5.80)	3.815*
5	Health and Nutrition	31.07 (7.89)	28.88 (8.61)	3.243*
6	Decision making	22.72 (5.78)	22.19 (6.00)	1.102
7	Household responsibility	25.24 (8.06)	22.61(6.44)	4.407*
8	Media and Technologies	18.40 (6.25)	17.36 (5.60)	2.126*
9	Total	210.18 (45.06)	199.82 (38.33)	3.034*

Values are Mean \pm SD of sensitivity score for respective gender

It can be observed from data that a higher per cent of females left education after completion of their schooling. In rural India girls continue to be less educated than boys [6]. Recently, many studies have investigated those factors that contribute to a lesser amount of educational accomplishment by girls in different regions of India [7]. Kugler examined as the family size enlarged by each additional child after the first, on average there was quarter of a year decrease in overall years of schooling, with this statistic disfavouring female children in the family compared to male children. In addition, the educational level of the mother in the family also plays a role in the educational attainment of the children, the results representing that in families with mothers having lower educational level, the outcomes tended to more unfavourable for educational attainment of the children [8]. An educated woman has the skills, information and self-confidence that she needs to be a better parent, worker and citizen Bosco (2009).

3.2 Gender Sensitization Levels of Adult Population

Gender sensitivity was assessed in terms of educational aspects, social aspects, political aspects, economical aspects, health and nutrition, decision making aspects, household and responsibility aspects and media and technologies aspects. The respondents were given statement where they had to record their response whether they agree or not agree. A higher score depicted a higher level of sensitization of male female equality in term of that aspect. To find out difference between male and female on gender sensitization t-test was calculated. After analysis of t-test significant differences were observed between male and female sensitization on household responsibilities (4.407*), economical (3.815*),

health & nutrition (3.243*), political (2.548*), media and technology (2.126*). Male members were more sensitized as compare to female regarding gender equality. This shows that male members were more sensitized as compared to female members regarding gender equality in term of political aspects, economical aspects, health and nutrition, decision making aspects, household and responsibility aspects and usage of media and technologies.

4. CONCLUSION

Gender sensitization is the process of changing the stereotype mind set of the society for male and female. Society strongly believes that male and female are not equal entities and for this reason they have to behave and function differently in different socio- economic space. Results show that illiterate females were almost double of male counterparts which show high degree of gender disparity in educational level. It can be observed from data that a higher per cent of females left education after completion of their schooling. Male members were significantly more sensitized as compared to females regarding male female equality.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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