

The gender sensitization in schools sociology essay



Gender encompasses socially constructed and culturally based roles of men and women with a view to understand how unequal power relations between them are shaped and operated . Gender and its accompanying power relations are built in all institutions of society be it family , educational institutions , work places , beliefs , norms , etc. Gender relations do not operate in a social vacuum but are the products of the ways in which institutions are organized and reconstituted . Gender sensitization is all about changing behaviour and instilling empathy into the views that we hold about our own and other sex . It helps people in examining their personal attitudes and beliefs and questioning the ' realities' they thought they know . Gender sensitization acquaints men and women with each other's existence and to gain fruitful results in an organization as well as at home . Gender is determined socially ; it is the societal meaning assigned to male and female . All institutions of society exhibit gender disparity as gender is rarely thought to be important and hardly understood and addressed . Gender roles are socially constructed according to their needs ; when needs change these roles are also need to change. Gender sensitivity helps to generate respect for the individual regardless of sex. Educationists, academicians , and faculty greatly influence gender socialization and mould gender roles of students, thus having impact on quality of life and power distribution . Stressing on zero tolerance on indecent behavior towards women , Hon'ble MHRD Mr. Pallam Raju while addressing media said that gender sensitization will be made an integral part of the school curriculum.

In the patriarchal society like India gender bias begins from the birth, women are discriminated in areas like access to nutrition, childcare , education and

work. The most painful devaluation of women is the physical and psychological violence that stalks them from cradle to grave. Patriarchy is created – it is created not by nature, but by a social system. Nature made us complementary, human beings made us unequal. Patriarchy is a social system which considers male superior, gives them more rights and more access to resources and decision making. There is no term or ritual for equal partnership in the family. Women are expected to be subservient to men, leave decision making to men, not to speak out in the public, not to be outspoken especially against men and generally to accept the injustices meted out to them by the system without a

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fight. Because boys are socialized to look down upon girls and to view them as inferior and not capable of making decisions or take up challenges, boys carry this attitude in the schools. Traditional roles of women as home makers and men as breadwinners imposed by society have only reinforced the gender imbalance. Besides this, it is evident that children are socialized to behave according to gender stereotypes from a very young age.

According to Shirley Chisholm: The emotional, sexual and psychological stereotyping of females begins when the doctor says, “It’s a girl”. It is also clear however that when children enter a school they are still developing their gender role identity and will continue to do so throughout their education. Schools and homes are the basic sources of development of the understanding of gender and gender relations. The influence of teachers and educators as change agents in this area cannot be underestimated. The <https://assignbuster.com/the-gender-sensitization-in-schools-sociology-essay/>

broader goal of gender equality is a societal goal to which educational institutions must contribute to.

Our education system needs to be gender sensitive and gender friendly . Schools can play an important role in inculcating gender sensitivity in etiquettes and manners of the students. A detailed action plan with a definite road map is required in the school curriculum to achieve gender equality. One of the best possible strategies to minimize gender discrimination in society is to promote gender awareness in parents and teachers . Parents should be advised to treat both their sons and daughters as equals . Instead of telling their daughters to behave properly , mothers should teach their sons to respect all women as equals . It is important that children should grow up seeing women in their homes being respected by the men in the family . All mothers , aunts , grandmothers should stop telling the young girls of their families that they need to learn how to cook , serve the husband and the in-laws , always adjust and let the man get his way , and whatever else say to make a growing girl feel like she has less access to choice or freedom than her male counterpart .

Gender issues are prevailing in our society at all levels . To minimize these gender issues we need to start changing the mindset of younger generation as they are those who can bring about further change in society , with their innovative ideas , thoughts and practices . To do this we need good educated teachers who have a sound knowledge regarding gender issues . Teachers play a very important part in the early upbringing of the child and their ideas and beliefs can change the thought processes of young students . Children in the formative years easily nurture values and virtues which are

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taught at school. Gender sensitization will change the perception that men and women have of each other. It will create a mindset in which men will no longer see women in stereotypical image. They will no longer consider women as weak and unequal entity. Men will see their female counterparts as responsible and equal partners in socio-economic development . The men who are otherwise reluctant to acknowledge women's contribution will come forward under the influence of sensitization to recognize their contribution. Women too will become more conscious of their capability and contribution and take pride in the same. Gender sensitized persons become instruments of change as far as status of women in the society is concerned . It can foster meaningful participation and integration of women into development process and can lead to better impact on women.

Teachers are important agents of change because of the key role they play in the processes of education as major executors of the teaching and learning processes . A teacher must therefore constantly be aware of the fact that his or her action / attitude / behavior / mindset / outlook will help to shape a child's gender role. He/she may use multiple strategies and interventions to ensure that students have equal opportunities to both create and obtain their goals . For the teachers to bring about a change in the society they should be given a pre hand knowledge of the issues . Teachers not only need gender sensitive curriculum and textbooks but also gender equality education . Academic contents with lessons on gender sensitivity and moral traditions will unconsciously mould the character of the tender minds. It is time to transform India's patriarchal norms .

Recommendations/Suggestions:

It is clear that over the years not sufficient attention has been directed towards the formulation and institution of a gender responsive pedagogy to address the problems that negatively impact on the teaching and learning processes . This calls for the development of a pedagogy that incorporates the gender dimension in the curriculum , teaching and learning materials , teaching methodologies and the overall learning environment . Further suggestions include:

1. It is necessary that the school curriculum should be free of gender inequality .
2. Pictures in the textbooks should be gender sensitive to promote gender equality .
3. Education system should be gender friendly and gender sensitive .
4. Gender neutral language should be promoted in the schools at all levels.
5. Gender sensitivity training programmes to be made mandatory for all teachers.
6. School parents partnership should be strengthened to address gender issues at homes.
7. Gender sensitive counseling by gender experts for teachers and students.
8. Gender sensitive , empowered women can serve as role models for girls and pass on new values to all their students.

9. All policies , programmes, interventions need to be gender sensitive.

10. Classroom interaction , academic delivery and teaching methodologies should be gender responsive.

The requirement is for a lifelong learning on gender sensitization through the development of social partnership between organizations from civil society and political world in order to enhance understanding of women ' s issues as issues of power in society and gender training for teachers and parents is the first step towards the accomplishment of this goal . The day is not far when both men and women would be ready to perceive each other's needs and act in a more cohesive way to harness their combined potential. I would like to conclude with few lines of Mariam Bibi on Gender Awareness.

When you talk about gender awareness

You talk about absolute fairness

It ' s all about peace and equality

Divine justice in reality

It ' s all about humanity

Living together in tranquility

Where no one is powerless and powerful,

Its land of beauties..... Beautiful .