

Attitude & biased perspective of society- a major hurdle in achieving women empowerment

Ms. Sejal Macwan^{1*}

ABSTRACT

The best and magnificent creature of almighty god in this universe is a woman. She is the best illustration of love, peace, tolerance and full of feelings, sacrifice and devotion at all stages of life. The woman has been always found the subject to study from ancient to modern world. As far as status of woman is concerned, she has been a character who has experienced as being worshipped, exploited from one time to another. Empowerment of Women has been recognized as key route for the development of our society. It is to identify the needs, encourage commitment, ensure sustainability & personal development, create self-esteem & enable them to share power. The present paper briefly highlights the long life history of woman from ancient to modern. It also reveals the conceptual idea of attitude, biasness and stereotype as well as how such negative terms have stuck development of women and also how they be the hurdles to women for testing their fruits of development and empowerment.

Keywords: Empowerment, Self-esteem, Power, Biasness, Stereotype

When viewing the attitude or behavior of individuals or a social group, often times one form an opinion based on first impressions without knowing that in reality it is an example of bias or stereotype. In other words, social bias is a groundless negative attitude; it is a set of concepts, ideas, beliefs, symbolic stereotypes, overgeneralization, and simplification of the face values of a group of people which results in inaccurately describing other people's characteristics. Social bias toward groups of men or women is known as **gender bias**.

Gender bias is defined as an expectation of gender in a way that one is preferred over the other, and a basic belief or attitude in which one gender has more power than the other, or one gender should or should not have the ability to do something, or one gender may or may not be able to do as the other in society.

All these preferences have been embedded in the human psychology throughout generations. Due to the pervasive unequal treatment of women, the definition of gender bias emphasizes the stereotyping of women. As a matter of fact, gender bias does not reflect the actual capabilities of women. Misconceptions regarding intellectual women are formed by

¹Assistant Professor, Gujarat, India

*Responding Author

Attitude & Biased Perspective of Society- A Major Hurdle in Achieving Women Empowerment

the traditional gender stereotypes, so **gender biases causes negative discrimination against female in comparison with male.**

A woman faces many transitions in one life. Almost every tenth year brings a major change in her life. With each transition, her role and position in society changes drastically. She needs attention, support, care and love of her near and dear ones during transition from one phase to another – in her childhood of her parents and close relations, in her youth of her spouse, in her old age of her sons and daughters. It is usually apathy of people concerned, at every stage of her life, which makes a woman's life miserable. Discrimination against her starts much before she is born- in the form of feticide and continues till her last breath. The customary interpretation of women in society was to stay back at homegrown, to be engaged in cleaning, raising children, and to help in the family farming. This got commenced to converse in the late 19th century and during the developed insurrection. The brief introduction about the status of women in India from ancient to modern era has been discussed as below:

The status of women in modern India is a sort of a puzzle. If one side you find her at the peak of tree of accomplishment, on the other side she is mute and suffering the viciousness afflicted on her by her own family. In comparison with the old women scenario & status, she has achieved a lot but in fact, a long way to go and the ways are full of blockages.

Now, the women have left behind the secured territory of their home and are now in the battleground of life, strengthened with full of talent. They have demonstrated themselves. But in India she is yet to receive her duties.

Indian women are confronting several dilemmas roughly every day, which has become the part & parcel of her daily living. As far as the gender development & empowerment of women is concerned, this is due to the stereotypical role & attitude & the prescribed Barbie doll type image which a daughter/wife/mother pursues or gifted to her by their ancestors or lady ancestors.

Position of Women in Ancient India

The position of women was not always so bad in India. In ancient India, during the Vedic period, women were placed on a high pedestal. In her role of a good wife and a worthy mother, she commanded a great deal of respect and honor in the society. They were known for their mental alertness, intuition and spiritual qualities of love and service.

Position during medieval period

With the downfall of Hindu Raj and continuous invasions of Turks, Afghans and Mughals, the position of woman deteriorated fast. Right to education was taken away from them. They became the victims of illiteracy, ignorance, complete male-domination and many kinds of religious and social restrictions. Patriarchal system institutionalized unequal nature of family laws and traditions. Property was inherited only by sons.

In some parts of northern India, Bengal and Rajputana, women from families of Rajah, Chiefs, Zamindars and upper castes suffered from social evils like 'Purdah system', 'Sati Pratha', 'dowry' 'polygamy' and 'infanticide', renunciation of all the comforts and happiness by widows (young or old).

Attitude & Biased Perspective of Society- A Major Hurdle in Achieving Women Empowerment

Position of women in modern period

During the second half of the nineteenth century, modern education drew the attention of some sensitive Indians and reformers like Swami Dayanand, Maharshi Karve, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Gandhiji, etc. towards the oppressive and evil social customs, practices and traditions. They tried to put to an end those evil practices.

In 1923, due to sincere efforts of Mrs. Ramabai Ranade, Women India Association was formed with branches all over the country.

POSITION AFTER INDEPENDENCE

Brighter Side of Women's development

The Indian Constitution of India has given freedom, equality and entrance to education and occupation to them. Government of India issues guidelines, from time to time, to Central and State Government for formulating and implementing action programs for women. It has identified areas of health, family planning, nutrition, education, vocational courses for women, employment, legal provisions and social welfare for its future action plans.

But what do homemakers get in return from the society or the nation for spending all their time and energy in managing all family affairs/chores efficiently and making everybody in the family happy, comfortable and contented. It is not recognized as a fulfilling and respected job by modern society.

A home-maker generates in each and every member of family a feeling of being wanted and loved. She provides to her husband tension-free atmosphere to develop his personality in full and prosper in life.

But what do homemakers get in return from the society or the nation for spending all their time and energy in managing all family affairs/chores efficiently and making everybody in the family happy, comfortable and contented. It is not recognized as a fulfilling and respected job by modern society. It is considered as a thankless job.

From the outline of the status of women it is assumed that females were developed at some point of time, then the state of underdeveloped came, later on by experiencing such days they received pity of some national reformers. Due to their tremendous efforts women have retried to achieve the state of development but in still it is on the way. It means the way is so long. The thing is, it could have been achieved by women, but she is alone in this path. Not ever her better half or family taking a cross to help her. Various factors are responsible for the same.

It is saying that anything can be written on a blank & clean board. The new & growing generations in family are given that way training that female are the subordinators & males are the supreme in family though the only creature of god which can survive a universe, not mere importance is given to them.

As per the saying charity begins at home. Females only can bring change in their image & status. From the ages, she is neglected by people so she has now assumed that societal orthodox people are correct in their words when they say females are worthless. This ideology needs to change, because this hinders her holistic development. There are certain requisites in this regard.

Attitude & Biased Perspective of Society- A Major Hurdle in Achieving Women Empowerment

Empowerment

The year 2001 was declared by the Government of India as “Empowerment Year of Women” with a prime focus on looking women on equal platform to men. This has been further augmented with few sects of females becoming progressively self-conscious of their discernment in many arenas of personal and public life.

Need for empowerment

The crucial requisite of the age is Gender sensitization and gender teaching. The battle for gender equality has to be carried out at each & every level without any discrimination of caste, class, religion and race. It is to be accepted fact that the equality is not overnight changing phenomenon. At this moment, it is required to start up with a small step to be succeeded. That can be commenced by working with them (women) for them (women) at very grass root level.

REQUIREMENTS OF 21ST CENTURY

The measures for improving the status of women should not destroy those valuable components of Indian culture, which sustains life, activity and happiness of all within a family. Without them a woman’s life becomes just like a bouquet of paper flowers, which does not have any fragrance and after sometimes loses its charm.

Nucleus family system gives enough space and opportunity to grow and adjust with each other. Her husband shares all her familial liabilities and willingly takes care of her parents and blood relatives. This does not indicate that joint family has demerits or adverse in women empowerment. The nucleolus family stands for this positivity that openness is more about thought & perception in this discipline.

Husband shares the responsibility for parenting/child-rearing and home-management.

Reservations for Women

1. The need of special attention in case of women arises not because they are intellectually inferior to men, but because they miss many opportunities, when some crucial years of their life are spent in fulfilling familial responsibilities.
2. That time they serve humanity and the nation by taking care of the future generation, inevitably become part of one’s nature and provide guidelines for their wholesome behavior pattern.
3. Enhancement of women’s self-esteem, stopping their progress from getting de-railed and getting their active participation in constructive work, the attention of social and political authorities is required to be focused on social mobilization and transformation of outdated social values.
4. Creating gender sensitization is necessary.
5. A woman herself should make efforts for her empowerment and well-being – be it physical, emotional or spiritual and become an ‘enlightened woman’.

CONCLUSION

It is of course a bunch & bulk of challenges for the feminists to convert the orthodox people to turn into a modernized as the disequilibrium and emancipation are the core of the Indian patriarchal system since the ages. It is ironic fact that the India is rich in its heritage and the diversified culture but along with it, it has an obnoxious cross too. It was a Goddess at one time, the “Sati” too at other time. A quiet spectator, the worried women have struggled a lot in Indian culture. Framing & designing legislations and policies are not sufficient as it is

Attitude & Biased Perspective of Society- A Major Hurdle in Achieving Women Empowerment

observed that manner of the times these legal aspects and policies just remain on a piece of paper. To develop & nurture women is nurturing a society in different manner. Still it is like an unfulfilled dream of development of women.

REFERENCES

- Barik, B., Kumar, P., & Sarode, U. Gender & Human Rights. Jaipur: Rawat Publications
<http://wcd.nic.in/newact.pdf> retrieved from national commission for women Act accessed on 5.3.2017.
- International Journal Publication in Academic Education and Research -Educational Technology. Vol. 01, Issue 01, April, 2015
- Prabhakaran V. (2004). Women in Rural India. New Delhi: Dominant Publishers & Distributors
- Roy, A. (2003) Violence Against Women (1st Ed.). New Delhi: Rajat Publications
- Seth, M. (2004), Women and Development: The Indian Experience. New Delhi: Sage Publication.

Acknowledgements

The author appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interests.

How to cite this article: S Macwan (2019). Attitude & biased perspective of society- a major hurdle in achieving women empowerment. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 7(4), 365-369. DIP:18.01.041/20190704, DOI:10.25215/0704.041