



Role of Media in Gender Sensitization

¹Subrata Pradhan, ²Dr.Vineeta Diwan

¹Research Scholar, ²Assistant Professor

^{1,2}Department of English, Faculty of Arts and Humanities

^{1,2}Kalinga University, New Raipur, Chhattisgarh

Abstract

In the recent years with the rise of internet and modern technology with AI peeping into the tech field common people are well empowered with media which is widely distributed. Media is also regarded as the fourth pillar of democracy in India. However at times it is noticed that media tells half truth and even lies propagating the fake news therefore authenticity of news in present times cannot be guaranteed . Every media group also showcases its own ideological and political biases and at times some media houses are even owned by certain political groups. Women have to face lot of challenges in the today's world and media becomes an effective weapon to deal with this aspect. There are increased rates of crime and sexual exploitation and molestation of female at various spheres for which media can play an important role to create awareness and sensitivity among people in society.

KEYWORDS: - Media, Gender Sensitization

In the age of advanced technology common people are bombarded with new information every second. There is a blend of media and technology in such a way that it has effectively unearthed almost every information related to new phases of development, scientific researches and new horizons in social, and political spheres of life with many lost stories and civilizations to uncover the real truth beneath. Media has great strength to change both social and government attitude towards various key issues of the world.

Gender sensitization is defined as the process of making people aware of their gender related issues around them and the incidents happening in the world that highlight exploitation and discrimination in the grounds of gender differences. The society witnesses lot of inequalities which are gender related and therefore gender sensitization makes efforts to promote equality and remove biases to respect all genders of the world. It challenges and changes attitudes,



behaviors and practices that reinforce gender stereotypes, discrimination and oppression based on gender.

Some of the main functions of gender sensitization include increasing awareness on the concept of gender roles, expectations and stereotypes related to different genders in order to understand that gender is not simply a binary concept of male and female sexes but rather there are different gender identities existing in the world that involve bisexual, transgender, gays and lesbians. It aims to understand the gender inequality by recognizing and understanding the unequal power dynamics, privileges, advantages and disadvantages that are existing between various genders in different spheres of life which involve education, employment and job sectors including family and politics.

Gender sensitization aims to challenge and break down those stereotype and traditional gender roles that act as hurdles in the path of progressive ideas and society. They also confine particular gender types to certain limitations and prevent them from accepting opportunities of the hanging times in the world. Therefore they critically question the existing social norms which involve the aspects of masculinity, femininity and gender expression. By doing so they promote equality in the social scenario and advocate for equal rights, opportunities and treatment for people of all genders. They involve fairness and justice in addressing issues such as gender based violence, discrimination and exclusion. The promotion of equality and unbiased thoughts leads to foster empathy and a respect for other sexes, identity and expression. It recognizes and values the experiences, perspectives and outlooks of the other gender and tries to understand their demand and their place in the society.

The main aim of gender sensitization is to bring about changes in the mental setup and behaviour of the people in the society with changing times instead of sticking to the old orthodox beliefs that mismatch with the changing times. It promotes inclusive language and actions against gender issues. Apart from things taking place at the social level government has also taken initiatives time to time to promote gender sensitization in society and nation:

Many governments are signatories to international agreements and conventions aimed at promoting gender equality and women's rights, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Governments may implement measures to fulfill their obligations under these agreements and participate in international efforts to advance gender equality.



In the researches conducted on gender sensitization in media majority (80%) respondents stated that Advertisements in electronic media are female oriented, dominant, active whilst males are weak. It indicates that in spite of having young enthusiastic blood and high qualifications, the advertisement media are still very much surrounded by women. The change in media is coming at a very fast pace and the gender portrayal revolves around the female images in advertisements.

As far as Portrayal of Women is concerned about 85% respondents thought that woman's presence is necessary for the marketing of products, particularly in the electronic media. One of the respondents from Advertisement agency said, "...without women TV becomes black & white....." More than 90 % respondents agreed that women are used as a decoration piece. To pull the audience regardless of their need in advertisements, most of the respondents (65%) agreed that electronic advertisements have a great impact on youth and gender portrayal of roles is followed by them in real life situations.

In the context of working ability of males and females the data indicates that females are expected to work better in advertising industry particularly in electronic media. In fact, the perceptions of the advertisers reflect that the modern assignments should be given to women in the society undergoing to transform into modern one.

Regarding the adoption of Gender Equality only few respondents (23.7%) had an understanding of international and national commitments made by India regarding gender equality. 70% of the respondents were found to be aware of gender equality and 50% adopted its acceptance whereas only 40% were found agreed towards showing the women in advertisements.

Ra'ana Malik (2013) made a study on the topic "Gender Sensitization of Media about Violence against Women" in which views of 280 media operational in different capacities in print and electronic media from four main cities of Pakistan namely- Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad and Peshawar were taken. Comprehensive interviews were conducted from the participants to gather the facts in depth. Studies found strong evidences of media personnel related to gender equality and violent behavior with women.

Sharanya Mukherjee (2013) made a discussion with the hostel students on how 'AxeDeodorant's promotional advertisements are completely disgusting whereas 'Unilever' has been advertising the product line with mercantile that shows women in an objectionable



manner. Not only in advertising media but also in movies, woman is being presented as an object in the “Item Songs”. This discussion reached the conclusion that a woman will be presented the way she wants, so she needs to be thoughtful in choosing the right place and path of finding the honor and respect in the society. Umaire Effendi (2014) stated that so many advertisements then ever looked to promote women upliftment and gender equality in the year 2014.

Adhikari Sharda (2014) made the comparison of men and women exposure in both Indian magazine ads as well as in other western ones. India versus Western countries, similarity has been traced in men and women stereotypically representation but stereotypical descriptions in India witnessed to be bit by bit ‘softening’. In both of the cases, Indian as well as western advertisements, both the genders promoted different products of which character portrayals were seen to be influenced by the type of the product in the case of women as in other countries. Different studies with different outcomes initiate the process of gender sensitization through the media components. Furthermore, women were found only 4 percent in political stories and just 1 percent in economic stories. But advertising industry curved the page, where it is turning to be gender sensitive.

The Fourth Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP 2009-2010) was a comprehensive study on gender biasness and consequent moves in news media which demonstrated women’s image in the media. Report of the study showed that mere 24 percent of the respondents made to be seen or listened to or read about on TV and print news at global are women.

Gender is Socially Learned behavior, based on social expectations from Men & Women Gender Sensitization gives a clear and precise view of Gender and helps to understand that GENDER is not about “Women” it’s about “People”. Gender sensitizing "is about changing behavior 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.

Gender Sensitization is one basic requirement for the normal development of an individual. The women and children are the most vulnerable group in this situation. And it’s the undue pressure on Boys & Girls to live up to the established norms of Masculinity & femininity that creates a vacuum between them. Gender equality is achieved when women, men, girls and boys have equal rights, conditions and opportunities, and the power to shape their own lives and contribute



to the development of society. It is a matter of equitable distribution of power, influence and resources in society. It is also the belief that no one should have poorer life chances just because of the way they were born, where they come from, what their beliefs are, or whether they have a disability or belong to different ethnicity.

Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. Simone De Beauvoir in her book “The second sex” had cited ‘one is not born but becomes a woman’. It is the predesigned mental apprehension that women are an inferior being and men are superior which leads to patriarchal mindset. Kate Millet’s work ‘Sexual Politics’ explains the gender concept as “patriarchal ideology exaggerates biological difference between men and women, where men play the dominant or masculine roles and women are conferred the subordinate or feminine ones” Another initiative taken up by The UN was He For She campaign. He For She is an invitation for men and people of all genders to stand in solidarity with women to create a bold, visible and united force for gender equality.

When women are fighting alone, they are considered radical and strange, but if men and women join together, they will seem a strong force and be strong. Movements are always stronger when people in large numbers fight for the same cause. There will always be people who oppose, but they will not always overtake the majority. It is not only about women and girl child, this situation leads to unwarranted pressure on both the sexes to live upon the established conditions of masculinity and femininity. Girls endure unnecessary social control, discrimination and domination whereas boys are discouraged from being emotional, gentle or fearful.

Educating girls saves lives and builds stronger families, communities and economies. An educated female population increases a country's productivity and fuels economic growth. Girls’ education strengthens economies and reduces inequality. It contributes to more stable, resilient societies that give all individuals – including boys and men – the opportunity to fulfill their potential. Among 775 million illiterate adults in the world 2/3rd are women.

The statistics are alarming yet the challenge can be overcome with better opportunities and initiatives for women. Education is a key area of focus. Although the world is making progress in achieving gender parity in education, girls still make up a higher percentage of out-of-school children than boys. Approximately one quarter of girls in the developing world do not attend school. Investing in girls’ education transforms communities, countries and the entire world.



BUT many economically backward and conservative families spend the limited sources that they have on boys' education and the girls' education takes a backseat. This thought may have its roots in the upbringing of the children, and stems from the idea that boys are the sole bread earners of the family and women are labeled as child-bearers and homemakers. That is the patriarchal/venerable mindset and subservient attitude of women.

The atrocities against women start right before the birth of a child in the form of sex selection although banned in many countries around the world.. female infanticide, physical, sexual and psychological abuse during infancy..... child marriage, FGM, incest, child prostitution, pornography during girlhood.....adolescence and young age may result in courtship violence (Acid throwing, date rape) sexual harassment at workplace, forced prostitution, partner violence, marital rape, dowry abuse..... elderly women horror as forced suicide, homicide of widows, economic disparity..... categorically mentioning domestic violence, sexual abuse, forced marriages, honor killings..... including sex trafficking, femicide, wartime sexual violence, gender wage gap, and other oppression tactics.

Micro aggressions are common at workplace as we notice indirect, subtle or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group or race or ethnicity that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative attitudes. It can be a compliment or joke with a hidden insult.

“But in truth society is not a species, for it is in a society that the species attains the status of existence — transcending itself toward the world and toward the future. Its ways and customs cannot be deduced from biology.” SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR

The use of the acronym is intended to be an all-encompassing way to recognize different gender identities and sexual orientations. The addition of other identities to the LGBT acronym also plays an important role in recognizing and connecting them to a larger community. It also means that these individuals are able to gain greater recognition by society as a whole. Rather than being erased, ignored, or denied, acknowledgment can help foster greater visibility of marginalized identities. From a societal standpoint, a trans person can be victim to the stigma due to lack of family support, issues with health care and social services, police brutality, discrimination in the work place, cultural marginalization, poverty, sexual assault, assault, bullying, and mental trauma.



Research and statistics suggest that LGBTQ+ youth also have an increased risk of a range of mental health and social issues, often due to or exacerbated by isolation, marginalization, and discrimination based on their orientation or identity. They can't be subjected to alienation or subjugation just because they choose to be different. Fostering inclusivity and acceptance may be one way to help combat some of these issues.

Recognizing the difference between sex and gender is crucial because it enables us to see that gender inequality is not a natural but a socio-cultural phenomenon. It is not an absolute given authority but a premise that needs to be challenged and changed. The scenario is changed now a day as more and more people are coming out in the open to declare their sexual preferences. The direction of a person's sexual interest, as towards people of the opposite sex, the same sex, or both sexes has changed for a better living. The people in and around the world are more concerned about the well-being and humanity rather than prejudices and incongruence.

The people like Indian Gay prince of Rajpipla Manvendra Singh Gohil, Demi Lovato, Billy Porter, Miley Cyrus, Kristen Stewart, Rickey Martin and many other celebrities have made their choices public regarding their sexual preferences. Not just celebrities many Indian authors are coming up with themes and characters related to this community. Writings such as 'The Boyfriend' by R Raja Rao, 'The Pregnant King by Devdutt Patnaik, 'Me Hijra Me Laxmi by Laxmi Narayan Tripathi, and why not a a mention of 'Lihaaf' by Ishmat Chughtai which was considered to be one of the most controversial short story published in 1942. Many films also highlight this genre such as moonlight, happy together, Philadelphia all highlighting the LGBTQ lives and the prejudices. Even popular hindi films like Kapoor & sons, Shubh Mangal Zyada Savdhan, Margarita with a straw, and why not a mention of Fire by Mira Nair all these films also catering to the lives and disillusionment of these communities. Thus we have to make the road clear and vivid through our conscience paving way for a more affluent amiable and conducive world for HUMANITY.....conforming to the idea HUMANITY HAS NO GENDER....

References

Jaelyn Diaz, Significant problem for LGBTQ, The NPR daily Newsletter. May 10, 2021

Gender equality in Education. <https://www.unicef.org/education/girls-education>

Social Media and LGBTQ Community, Hawke Media. Nov 4, 2020.



LGBTIQ challenges. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2022/05/forcibly-displaced-lgbt-personsface-major-challenges-search-safe-haven>

Gender Inclusivity. <https://genderspectrum.org/articles/what-is-a-gender-inclusive-world>

heforshe. <https://unwomenusa.org/advocacy-3>

Shuvo Ghosh, Gender Identity Gender role, Medscape, Meraki health Centre. Dec 09, 2020
<https://emedicine.medscape.com/article/917990>

heforshe special campaign. <http://webtv.un.org/search/launch-of-...>

Gender- Rights <http://www.kudumbashree.org>

Ravi Chandran, Gender inclusivity priority of modern day workplaces, HR World, The economic times. Sept 19, 2021

Gender divide: inclusive workplace.[http:// www.ungender.in](http://www.ungender.in)

