

## **Gender Sensitization: Raising gender awareness in society**

### **Outline**

#### **1- Introduction**

**Thesis Statement:** Gender awareness refers to an individual's understanding of societal constructs about gender. Patriarchy and improper socialization are obstacles in a way to gender awareness. However, some practices can be used to raise gender awareness in society

#### **2- Contextualizing the term Gender Sensitization and Gender Awareness**

#### **3- Current scenario of raising gender awareness**

#### **4- Challenges of gender awareness in society**

- i. Patriarchal society
- ii. Biased gender education
- iii. Improper socialization
- iv. Cultural and religious constrain

#### **5- How to raise gender awareness in society**

- I. Gender-inclusive policies and practices
- II. Empowering women and marginalized genders
- III. Engaging men and boys as allies
- IV. Education and awareness campaigns

#### **6- Comparison of Gender Gap Index between developed and developing nation**

#### **7- Summation**

#### **8- Conclusion**

Gender sensitization refers to the awareness-based manner that is sensitive to gender justice and gender equality issues. Similarly, gender awareness means both genders are aware of their fundamental rights. Both terms relate to promoting and understanding gender-related issues and challenges. Currently, both genders are not getting equal rights and opportunities around the world. Patriarchal society, biased gender education, and irregular socialization are the root cause of this discrimination. However, education and empowering women can be used to raise awareness. In comparison, the gender gap in developing countries is more worse than in developed nations. Thus, gender awareness involves individual's understanding of societal constructs about gender. There are many challenges of gender awareness in society. However, some practices can be used to raise gender awareness in society.

Before embarking on highlighting the gender awareness need and importance in society, it is important to shed some light on the concept of gender sensitization and gender awareness. It has no single meaning or definition. However, the majority of people, analysts, and organizations agree that gender awareness is the socially determined difference between women and men. United Nations has given a more appropriate definition. It defines, "The ability to view society from the perspective of gender roles and understand how this has affected women's needs in comparison to the needs of men." Similarly, gender sensitization refers to the awareness-informed propensity to behave in a manner that is sensitive to gender justice and gender equality issues. Both terms relate to promoting and understanding gender-related issues and challenges. For instance, gender-based violence and socio-economical issues. Both concepts inculcate the conscious raising of power in both genders. It will help them to understand their importance in society. The purpose of gender awareness and gender sensitization is to do equality among all gender. Now, one may think that how gender awareness can be promoted in society and what are the challenges of it. The following paragraph will explain the challenges and give remedial steps to promote gender awareness in society.

Currently, the gender awareness picture is bleak around the globe. Mostly, nations take sex and gender as the same term. But, when it comes to reality one can see that gender is socially constructed while sex refers to a biological term. According to Simo de Bouvier, "One is not born but rather becomes, a woman. " This quote clearly shows that women are not born but become women due to society's labels. Similarly, both genders are unaware of their basic rights which results in political, social, economic, and legal inequality among them. Let's take an example of the global gender gap (GGG), according to World Economic Forum, "**In 2022, the global gender gap has closed by 68.1%.**" This gap is due to the unawareness of their fundamental rights among genders.

What has brought the world to this state of affairs? A long list of causative agents comes to mind. Important ones, however, are only a few. These are highlighted henceforward.

Patriarchy is the root cause of gender unawareness. Inequality starts at the home, where boys are treated as superior to girls. Boys are allowed to get an education and marry according to their will, while, girls are restricted to the kitchen only. Patriarchal mindset can be seen in the daily life example in which boys are allowed to play with cars, guns, and soldier, while, girls are allowed to play with dolls and kitchen sets. Unfortunately, everyone is leading a life in a patriarchal-dominated society in which every individual is denied his or her right. Hence, this patriarchal society split boys and girls into two different groups where both are treated differently. In a male-dominated society, women are always taken as an obsolete entity, restricted to household management. Hence, patriarchy is one of the most prominent hurdles in a way of gender equality and gender awareness.

Furthermore, biased gender education is another obstacle in a way to gender awareness. Education gives awareness so that one can lead a better life physically, mentally, and spiritually. When one is deprived of education, one cannot enjoy other amenities of life. It is education that gives political, socio-economic, and legal rights. When it comes to society, one can see that education is also linked with inequality among boys and girls. According to UNESCO, "262 million children are globally out of school." In these statistics, the boys to girls ratio are 25 to 75 respectively. Due to a male-dominant society, girls are not allowed to go to school to get an education. The situation is worse in underdeveloped countries. According to the Malla Education Fund Network, out of 22.8 million children out of school, 32% are girls while 21% are boys. This abnormal difference due to prejudiced gender education is a challenge for gender awareness.

Similarly, cultural and religious constraints have a significant impact on gender awareness. Many cultures and religions have traditional gender roles and expectations, which limit the opportunities available to individuals of a particular gender. These constraints can also perpetuate harmful stereotypes and attitudes towards certain genders. Gender roles can be highly stringent and limit the options open to people of a certain gender in various cultures and faiths. For instance, in certain cultures, women are expected to care for the home and children while males are supposed to provide for the family's financial needs. Regardless of a person's skills or interests, these traditional gender norms may prohibit them from achieving their objectives. Similarly, the religious constraint is also a hurdle obstacle in the way to equality and awareness. For instance, after the downfall of Kabuuul, the Taliban restricted girls at home and banned girl education in the region. Hence, both religious and cultural roadblocks result in a patriarchal mindset which ultimately leads to inequality between both genders. To sum up,

cultural and religious barriers results in the exclusion of woman's participation in leadership positions and other important roles within their communities.

Improper socialization also harms gender awareness. Socialization refers to the process through which individuals learn and internalize the norms, values, and behaviors of their culture or society. If socialization is improper, it can perpetuate harmful gender stereotypes and attitudes. For example, if young girls are taught that their worth is based on their appearance and ability to attract a male partner, this can lead to low self-esteem and a lack of confidence in their abilities. Similarly, if young boys are taught that expressing their emotions is a sign of weakness, this can lead to a lack of emotional intelligence and an inability to form healthy relationships. Improper socialization perpetuates harmful gender stereotypes and attitudes, such as the belief that men are more competent in leadership roles, or that women are better suited to caregiving roles. These stereotypes can limit opportunities for individuals of a particular gender and contribute to gender inequality.

After reading the above discussion, one may think that how to turn these challenges into solutions. The following paragraphs will explain the solution through which gender awareness can be promoted in society.

To raise awareness of gender, it is cardinal to practice gender-inclusive policies. These policies must be adopted to reduce the indifference between men and women. It is the government that makes policies. So, the government of every country, under the supervision of the world organizations of women, should provide a platform where both genders are aware of their basic rights and enjoy equal rights. When both genders work equally, the nation will rise to development. According to the founder of Pakistan, "No nation can rise to the height of glory unless your women are side by side with you". Hence, the government should adopt gender-inclusive practices to promote gender awareness

Empowering women and marginalized genders is essential for creating a more equitable and just society. Empowerment involves giving individuals the tools and resources they need to achieve their goals and aspirations. There are many ways to empower women that include, giving access to education, economics, voting, and legal rights. Women represent the whole family. They play a vital role in bringing up their children. Educating a man means educating an individual, while, educating a woman means educating a whole family. "Gender equality will only be reached if we are able to empower women" Michelle Bachelet. As consequence, women should be empowered so that they can well aware of their role in society.

Engaging men and boys as allies in promoting gender equality and combating gender-based violence is crucial to achieving lasting change. It is the responsibility of parents to start this practice at home. They should engage boys in conversations about gender equality and respectful relationships from a young age. This can involve educating them about the harmful

effects of gender-based violence and encouraging them to be vocal about their opposition to it. Similarly, society should encourage men and boys to speak out against gender-based violence and discrimination and to use their privilege and influence to promote gender equality. Engaging both genders as allies will not only promote gender awareness but also curb gender-based violence.

Lastly, education is a cure for all hurdles. If someone is going down the wrong road and does not respect a woman, he does not need the motivation to spend himself up. What he needed is education to turn him around. Government should give access to education to girls. Similarly, an awareness campaign should be started to promote gender awareness in a true sense. In this regard, the role of media and woman-related organizations is very important. Media, a fourth pillar of the state, should initiate a program at the global level, which empowers women and tell them about their fundamental rights. For instance, World Bank has initiated "I2I work". This refers to invest to innovate concept. It is split into two areas of growth. The first one is to design a gender strategy where the gender-specific constraint is present and the second is to build evidence on gender-specific markets. Thus, both education and awareness campaign is a solutions to promote gender awareness in society.

The Gender Gap Index (GGI) is a measure of gender-based disparities in various areas such as health, education, economic participation, and political empowerment. It ranges from 0 to 1, with 1 indicating that there are no gender-based disparities and 0 indicating significant disparities. When comparing the GGI between developed and developing nations, it is important to note that there are significant differences between the two groups. Developed nations are generally considered to have higher levels of economic development, education, and political empowerment than developing nations. According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report, the average GGI score for developed nations is 0.732, while the average score for developing nations is 0.668. This suggests that developed nations generally have smaller gender-based disparities than developing nations. In conclusion, there are differences in GGI scores between developed and developing nations, it is important to recognize that there is significant variation within each group. Efforts to close the gender gap must be tailored to the specific context and challenges of each country.

Summing up, it can be said that raising gender awareness in society is a solution to many gender discrimination. There are some hurdles in a way to it, which have hobbled development and economic growth. The patriarchal society and biased gender education have, therefore, caused a serious threat to gender awareness. Whatever the causes, the implementation of gender-based policies and the promotion of education have become urgent and indispensable.

In the end, gender sensitization refers to the awareness to highlight gender-related issues. Cultural constraints and improper socialization are a major cause of gender awareness.

However, gender-inclusive policies, education, and awareness campaigns can help the government and individuals to promote gender awareness. It will result in reducing the inequalities and discrimination between men and women. By acting out all these remedial steps, it can be hoped that the world will successfully promote gender awareness and equality.