

INTRODUCING A GENDER SENSITIVE APPROACH THROUGH VALUE CHAIN MODEL

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ABSTRACT

Gender sensitization is a vital issue faced by society. It is a process in which individual are taught to respect everyone nevertheless of gender, by raising awareness of gender equality concerns by inculcating empathy towards opposite gender. Individuals need to be more open-minded, lucid and unprejudiced in their thinking and doing.

In this paper the researcher has developed a value chain model to understand the role of different people at different phases of life of an individual in creating a gender discrimination free society. Researcher has tried to facilitate in the systematic incorporation of gender equality dimensions into value chain development programmes. This model helps to understand different sources which can augment human values and enhance awareness on gender inequalities.

The purpose of this paper is to study gender sensitization issue at various stages of life and to develop a new value chain model to identify some remedial activities through which value can be created and added in society.

Related cases from different sources are taken into consideration to develop the model.

KEYWORDS: *Gender Sensitization, Discrimination, Value Chain, Diversity, Education, Initiative.*

Introduction

Gender sensitization is a vital issue faced by society. It is a process in which individuals are taught to respect everyone nevertheless of gender, by raising awareness of gender equality concerns and modifying behaviour. Modification here means changing in behaviour by inculcating empathy towards opposite gender. Individuals need to be more open-minded, lucid and unprejudiced in their thinking and doing. This can be attained by conducting several campaigns, workshop, training and awareness-raising in educational set-up, etc. This sensitive issue is a need of every hour in our country and initiatives can be taken by different domains of society to achieve desired results. It begins early at the foetus stage and continues at different phases of an individual life. In a country like India with enormous diversity existing in terms of its customs, traditions, rituals, social values, family beliefs, there is a need of well planned, professional and systematic approach to develop a well-balanced society.

Gender sensitivity is deep rooted in our society and it is becoming difficult to come out of its clutches. India fares as low as 108 among 149 nations (WEF gender gap index 2018) in terms of gender sensitivity, it seems are we are surrounded by insensitivity from all directions. It is estimated that the global gender gap will take 108 years to close; economic gender parity remains 202 years off.

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A value chain model is developed to understand the role of different people at different phases of life. Researcher tries to facilitate in the systematic incorporation of gender equality dimensions into value chain development programmes. It helps to understand different sources which can augment human values and enhance awareness on gender inequalities. Individual faces different type of gender inequalities at different phases of life. Percentage may vary between male and females but victims are both. Females are more prone to discrimination cases as in India communities are male dominating and media play an important role in exposing these cases. At different stages characters changes, cases changes, victim changes but issue remain same.

Review of Literature

- **Das, A., & Singh, S. K. (2014).** Changing men: challenging stereotypes. Reflections on working with men on gender issues in India. This article describes the journey and lessons of two authors in dealing with men at the community level in different areas of India. Concentrating on the domestic violence issues, the work highlights issues of power, control and freedom within the context of deep-rooted traditions, challenging and changing the roles of men both within homes and outside in different organizations. In reviewing the lessons from their assessment, the authors identified a 'theory of change' for working with men and boys to overcome gender discrimination within the South Asian context.
- **Gy, N.A.T.A.R.A.J.A. (2015).** Legal Status of Women in India—Then and Now-A Macro Study. Although the status of women in India, has been one of the respect and reverence from both historical and social point of view, but the bitter truth is that they are still struggling for their own identity and fighting for the recognition. However, the constitution of India assures about gender equality, still gender discrimination is prevalent everywhere. Bride-burning, battering, molestation and ill-treatment of women can be seen on the front page of newspaper every day, and the most powerful factor in restricting women's behaviour and sense of freedom is the fear of sexual violence. It is the need of hour to take some serious efforts towards weaknesses in dealing with the crimes against women and provide them a safe and secure environment in the country.
- **Kaushik, N., Sharma, A., & Kumar Kaushik, V. (2014).** Equality in the workplace: a study of gender issues in Indian organizations. *Journal of Management Development*, 33(2), 90-106. Author highlighted that in developing countries like India, varying economic and social condition demanded working of women irrespective of their religion, class or social status. But at the same time, women are facing several gender issues like gender stereotype, gender discrimination and sexual harassment at the work places. But at the present scenario, sexual harassment is still left unbridled and gender equality in Indian organizations still seems like a dream to be realized.

Research Methodology

The researchers have adopted descriptive method to analyze the issue of gender sensitization and devised a new value chain model to challenge the issue and suggest some effective remedies for minimizing the discrimination of both male and female. Related cases from different sources are taken into consideration to develop the model.

Objectives of the Study

- To study gender sensitization issue at different stages of life.
- To understand and develop a new value chain model to identify some remedial activities through which value can be created and added in society and challenge the issue in a more practical way.

Gender Sensitization at Different Stages of Life

• Foetus

Gender discrimination begins early. Modern Technology had made it possible to determine a child's sex in the earliest phase. Besides the female foeticide cases in India, more than 200,000 girls below the age of 5 years, die every year in the country as per a Lancet study led by an Indian-origin

researcher. Even after the aggressive push for 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' scheme, as per the sex ratio at birth data, no girl child was born in last three months in as many as 132 villages of district Uttarkashi in Uttarakhand. China and India, are the world's two most populous countries, suggesting sex selective foeticide and infanticide, despite the initiatives to eradicate these practices.

- **Child**

How we pass on gender Biases to kids? We all often have heard people say, "Ladki se haar gaya?" or "don't cry like a girl?" "When we raise our kids with such biases, we create gender biased society. The Indian society is still in the process of modernization where sections of the population continue to have traditional mindsets. Though the gender gap has been closing steadily over the past few decades, nearly 1 of every 5 girls who enrolls in primary school in developing countries does not complete a primary education. The global prevalence of child sexual abuse has been estimated at 19.7% for females and 7.9% for male.

In many poor Indian houses males are fed first and the left overs are eaten by the females. The scenario is even more complicated in rural India where parents prefer to send the boy child to school and keep the girl child at home to help them in domestic work, or to assist in income generating activity. This inequality deteriorates the personality of women and they think themselves as inferior to men right from childhood.

- **Youth**

A deeper look at the country population brings out a remarkable image of increasing gender inequality in the form of unequal treatment of men and women. India is a country that constitutes 37% of its population as young (15-25 years), is facing this problem at extreme situation. The practice of gender biased sex selection in jobs, early marriages, dowry system, rape cases, domestic violence are some of the inevitable issues in our society at young age.

- **Adult/Corporates**

At this stage of life, individual faces discrimination from various parts of society. The problem can be in the form of sexual harassment, domestic violence, discrimination at work places etc. The women are more prone to cases like sexual harassment, rape cases. The #Me Too Campaign was a tool to trap or breaking silence to win the war. The movement initiated in the Bollywood industry in the year 2016 and it is spreading in India. It is a wave that has recently expanded in India as more women have begun sharing their experiences of sexual harassment on social media.

Workplaces in today's India too are not gender sensitive. The data discloses the fact that among different sectors, the information technology (IT) sector accounted for 272 of the total complaints filed, where Wipro reported 101 cases followed by ICICI bank with 99 complaints. The high number is reflective of the gender ratios as well, since IT companies have a higher percentage of women employees than the others. However companies are taking actions to overcome this burning issue. Multiple companies across all industry sectors are beginning to take note of these issues and address them. However proactive approach is seen in only in some organisations, many others have been sluggish to recognize the need while the rest have completely overlooked it.

- **Seniors**

Gender inequalities and its social causes not only faced by young girls but it influence elderly women's life and economic conditions also. It is a multidimensional issue that alarms younger and older women alike. Paradoxically, in India, due to high illiteracy rate and negligence these women are not aware of their basic rights.

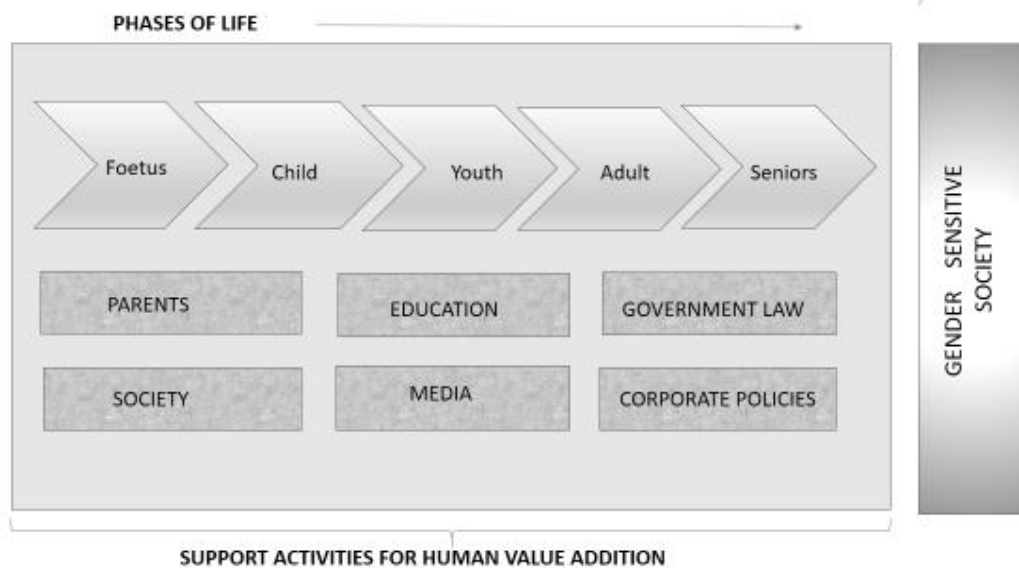
Hence, they face increased incidences of gender inequality in the society. While utilizing tools like value based education, awareness generation, and educating them about basic and human rights of older persons, the problem can be eradicated from grassroot level.

| Sexual harassment complaints filed in Nifty 50 companies in FY18 | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Company Name | | Number of complaints | Company Name | | Number of complaints |
| 1 | Wipro * | 101 | 26 | HPCL | 2 |
| 2 | ICICI Bank* | 99 | 27 | Larsen & Toubro | 2 |
| 3 | Infosys | 77 | 28 | Maruti | 2 |
| 4 | TCS | 62 | 29 | Bajaj Auto | 1 |
| 5 | Axis Bank | 47 | 30 | BPCL | 1 |
| 6 | Kotak Mah Bank | 34 | 31 | Bharti Infratel | 1 |
| 7 | Tech Mahindra | 28 | 32 | Eicher Motors | 1 |
| 8 | Tata Steel | 24 | 33 | Hindalco | 1 |
| 9 | SBI | 18 | 34 | HDFC | 1 |
| 10 | HDFC Bank | 14 | 35 | IOC | 1 |
| 11 | Tata Motors | 13 | 36 | M&M | 1 |
| 12 | Titan Company | 11 | 37 | Sun Pharma | 1 |
| 13 | Vedanta | 11 | 38 | Adani Ports | 0 |
| 14 | Bharti Airtel | 9 | 39 | Bajaj Finance | 0 |
| 15 | Yes Bank | 9 | 40 | Bajaj Finserv | 0 |
| 16 | Dr. Reddy's Labs | 7 | 41 | Coal India | 0 |
| 17 | IndusInd Bank | 7 | 42 | GAIL (India) | 0 |
| 18 | Cipla | 5 | 43 | Grasim Industries | 0 |
| 19 | Asian Paints | 4 | 44 | Indiabulls Hsg Fin | 0 |
| 20 | HCL Tech | 4 | 45 | JSW Steel | 0 |
| 21 | HUL | 4 | 46 | NTPC | 0 |
| 22 | I T C | 4 | 47 | Power Grid | 0 |
| 23 | ONGC | 4 | 48 | Reliance Ind | 0 |
| 24 | Zee Entertainment | 3 | 49 | UPL | 0 |
| 25 | Hero MotoCorp | 2 | 50 | UltraTech Cement | 0 |

Source: Company annual reports | Note: * Wipro & ICICI Bank calendar year data

Value Chain Model of Gender Sensitization

Michael E. Porter, of Harvard Business School, introduced the concept of a value chain in his book, *Competitive Advantage: Creating and Sustaining Superior Performance*. A value chain is a business model that describes the full range of activities needed to create a product or service. In his concept of value chain, Porter splits a business's activities into two categories, "primary" and "support," in which Primary activities are essential for adding value and creating a competitive advantage. The role of support activities is to help make the primary activities more efficient.



VALUE CHAIN MODEL OF GENDER SENSITIZATION

Drawing the inspiration from Porter's value chain model, the model in this paper reveals that management, government regulations, organization policy framework and judiciary system can play an important role in adding human values at every phase of life of an individual. There is a need to be more aware of the challenges that females in our country still face and it is the responsibility of the society to make them feel secure and safe. It is only then, we can build a conscious society. Nevertheless to say it is cumulative efforts on the part of each and every strata of society, whether individual or organization to come forward and make their contribution to make this world more gender sensitive.

Support Activities which Add Value at Various Life Stages:

- **Role of Parents**

Gender sensitization to us simply means feeling of empathy for opposite sex. A major part of the responsibility for developing gender sensitization rests on the shoulders of family members. They are the one who can kindle the feeling of gender equality in both girls and boys and develop the empathy for each other.

It shocks us when a girl child in talk show innocently asks if girls are physically weaker than boys, how they can fight against them. Throughout the life, children observe a mother silently following the commands of a dominating father, similarly a sister being punished for not looking after brothers properly or not carrying out the domestic jobs properly in the absence of parents. Some initiatives which can be taken by parents are:

- The vital role in preventing foeticide can be enhanced by educating and empowering mothers. When mothers are well-educated and endowed to make choices in their lives, than only they can take stand to save their child.
- Another crucial role played by family members to eradicate this problem from society is strict adherence and harsh punishment for Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act, 1994. The main objective of enacting the act is to prohibit the use of sex selection techniques after conception and avoid the exploitation of prenatal diagnostic technique for sex selective abortion.
- Show them that both men and women are strong. We should recognise the 'positive deviants' in our society like Mary Kom, The Phogat Sisters and their father, Sania Mirza, Mary Kom Deepa Karmakar, Hima Das and many more who are creating history in sports which was initially associated with men only.

- **Role of Family**

In a Patriarchal country like India, it is very important to identify and address the gender sensitization issue at a very young age.

We all can start gender practicing by some insightful tips on how to gender sensitive children by doing some little things at home or school-

- Start using a gender free language and avoid saying statements, "boys will be boys" or "man-up".
- Encourage the kids to the task that is not linked with gender.
- Tell them that girls can defend themselves and boys too can cry.
- Be intolerant and stand up for gender justice.
- Safety rules for children should be on priority and government should take strict action against criminals.

Role of Schools and Education System

At this nascent stage of social development, human values can be added by the school education system, society, implementing Government Schemes for girl's education, raising aspirations for girls. Boys must be taught to understand how an egalitarian society is beneficial for all by questioning gender norms, only then they will learn to treat women as equal.

So, Gender Sensitization right from the schools is a correct and effective step in this direction. Here are some steps taken for a gender sensitive society.

- The importance of gender sensitization has been recognised and given due importance by Right to Education Act and its opening arm 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan'.
- Tata Tea's movement "*Alarm Bajne Se Pahle Jaago Re!*" is a good initiative to make Gender Sensitization programmes compulsory in schools.
- CBSE serves as an excellent forum for the society to develop Gender sensitivity amongst pupil by its philosophy of co-educational schools where girls and boys grow up together in a friendly manner,
- The courses in gender studies and women's studies can play a big role in sensitizing students to this issue along with workshops and discussions and other such activities.
- The University Grants Commission (UGC) had also issued guidelines in the Eleventh plan for development of women's studies in Indian universities and colleges.
- Delhi University, for instance, has the Women's studies and Development Centre to address women's issues in higher education.

Role of Society

It is a need of hour to create a culture of continuous dialogue and mutual understanding amongst all generations through inter-generational partnerships. In this regard, children, adolescents, youth, adults, and elders can share their views and ideas to eliminate gender biases and all become champions of gender equality today.

CARE India has been working for the last several decades to empower women and girls from the most marginalized communities across India, empowering them to live secure and resilient lives with dignity. The organization's primary goal is to work with 50 million women and girls and help them meet their health, education and basic necessities of life.

Some necessary steps in this direction are:

- There should be sincere discussions about engaging both young women and men in the action towards obtaining gender equality.
- Increasing investment in adolescent girls' and young women's leadership across the society. It is a very important step so as to assure and address that women are not only the leaders of tomorrow, but also the leaders of today.

- There should be some serious conversations about the responsibility and accountability of young men and boys. It is very important not only for attaining gender equality, but also to achieve the goal of planet 50-50 by the year 2030.
- With young women, young men, this discussion must break stereotypes and the silos that have been created through age-old systems of patriarchy embedded in social institutions including the education system, organized religion, and political and financial systems.
- Efforts should be taken to strengthen the life cycle of gender equality through inter-generational partnerships on gender equality.

So, the young generation of the country is needed to be on the frontlines for the fight for gender equality.

- **Corporate Policies**

Corporate policies can play an important role in adding human values at workplace. Remarkable initiatives taken by different companies to pull out this issue from the bottom. On 9th December 2013, The Act is made operative and it makes compulsory (Section 19C), for all companies to train their employees and Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) members.

Also the management is instructed to report the no. of employees covered & workshops conducted by them in this area. It is enacted to make sure a safe working environment for women. It offers a platform for redressal of any complaint that has been lodged by them and should be resolved within given time.

Government Law and Legislation

In India, there is an urgent need for inclusive social security program for women at grass root level. Tools like value based education, awareness programmes, research & advocacy have been introduced in order to protect basic and human rights of women. Here are some steps taken by Government for creating a gender bias free society:

- Policies have been formulated for women with special focus on widows, dejected, dependent elderly women and its implementation with a practical approach.
- Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 is a legislation enacted in 2007, initiated by Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India which provide more effective provision for parents and senior citizens. This Act made it a legal obligation for children and heirs to provide maintenance to senior citizens and parents, by monthly allowance.
- Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act, 1994 is to prohibit the use of sex selection techniques after conception and avoid the exploitation of prenatal diagnostic technique for sex selective abortion.

- **Role of Media**

Social media has enough potential for mobilising attention and accountability to women's rights, challenging gender discrimination and stereotypes. The media is generally regarded as playing a crucial role in defining prevailing social norms concerning sexual harassment. Television, which is widely accessible and intentionally appealing and engaging, can play an important role in spreading messages about gender sensitisation that the majority of the people can easily understand. Media affects behaviours and is of prime importance for adolescents' general ideas of romance, sex, and relationships. Studies have found that exposure to objectifying media can be linked to increased probability of male viewers engaging in sexual harassment, abuse, or acts of violence against women.

In spite of their monumental achievements, women's representation in media remains drastically different to that of their male counterparts.

All forms of media must promote positive gender role models and equitable gender norms through advertisements, movies, shows, documentaries, and articles etc. They can communicate to the masses and have an impact due to the depth of messaging and the reach. Role of media can be identified as under:

- A large number of international institutions and NGOs are advocating for gender equality in the media workplace.

- In October 2017, Alyssa Milano asked the women of Twitter to write '#MeToo' if they had ever been sexually harassed or assaulted. Within days, tens of thousands of women had responded. Within weeks, one of the most powerful men on the planet was toppled and industries from entertainment to politics were given a shake-up.
- In 2018, UNESCO supported 42 media institutions and 16 universities to initiate and apply policies on gender equality.
- Business newspaper Mint, based in Delhi, India, is breaking ground in an industry that counts 50% women in its staff.
- Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram, helps women to find a tribe and amplify their voice who previously felt marginalised and powerless.
- 'Digital Mums' is a company connecting businesses who need social media support with a network of freelance mums, had made gender equality part of its business plan.

Thus, social media has given more people a voice and in particular, it's given women a new and immediate way of communicating and galvanising their agendas.

Conclusion

Females can add values and also serve as role models by raising educational and career aspirations for adolescent girls and their parents. A small step can be taken by engaging boys and young men in gender sensitivity campaigns by challenging the patriarchal beliefs, practices, institutions and structures that drive inequality between men and women.

The safety of woman has been a matter of concern right from the days of yore. In the absence of effective law, legislation and punitive measures for the wrong doers, the safety of the girl child is a topic that plagues the mind of every parent. In life, instead of any escapist tendencies to safe guard women, our effort should be to make the society and the country a safe and comfortable place for women as well as for men.

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