

A Study on Gender Sensitivity Among Students of Bachelor of Arts of Kumaun University, Nainital

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Abstract:

Gender sensitization is the process of changing the old beliefs in society that think men and women are not equal and should live in separate roles. It helps change how men and women see each other. When this happens, men start to recognize the work women do. Their pride in being better than women starts to fade, and they begin to support women in a good way. Because of this, people who are gender sensitive become important in improving the position of women. They take active steps to help women develop their skills and abilities. Even though India has made progress in the last 20 years, there are still big differences between men and women. Programs that teach gender sensitivity during adolescence, when people form their views about gender, can help reduce these differences. This paper looks at how sensitive students in the BA programme at Kumaun University are towards gender issues.

Keywords: Gender, gender sensitization, gender inequity, empowerment.

Introduction:

Gender sensitization is a very important topic in today's society. In India, where we are still working towards building a fair and equal society, there are serious problems like acid attacks, violence, rape, sexual harassment, and unfair treatment of women that harm the country's progress. It is important to understand the ideas, thoughts, and culture that have made women less important in a society that values men more. There is a big need for gender sensitization training at a large scale to change people's attitudes towards women. This training helps prevent many violent acts against women and starts the process of understanding gender differences. Research on gender sensitization is needed now, along with special policies and strategies to deal with these issues. Gender refers to the roles and responsibilities that are given to men and women in a society based on cultural and social norms. These roles are shaped by many factors such as religion, traditions, laws, and class. The attitudes and actions people have towards gender are learned and can be changed. In a global world, equality between men and women is important for developing the country.

It is important to make sure women are included in the development of the country. In India, women make up about 48.1% of the population. The government is taking steps to correct the

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imbalance in the population. It has introduced policies like a 10% quota for women in politics, 33% seats for women in local bodies, and 17% in legislative bodies to address harassment and violence against women. Gender sensitivity is a way of thinking that shows care and respect for different genders, especially women. It tries to change the old ideas that men and women should be treated differently. It encourages people to think critically about gender differences. Gender sensitization helps make women equal and stronger. It is a way to create a society where people can make good decisions and changes for the better. In most societies, women are considered less important than men. This leads to problems like discrimination, dowry, abuse, and violence, which are caused by the way society values men more. Women are usually given the tasks like cooking, cleaning, child care, and taking care of the home, while men are seen as the main providers and leaders. Social customs, traditions, and the way we raise children force women to believe they are inferior and that their main role is to take care of the family. Even though there are international, national, and constitutional laws for women's protection, their position is still not equal to men in many societies. Many committees and documents have been made to help with sexual harassment, but there is still a big gap between what is planned and what happens in reality. Because of this, many crimes against women continue to happen. Films, web series, advertisements, and online campaigns have become important tools to break stereotypes and raise awareness about gender issues. These tools help with gender mainstreaming. One main reason for violence against women is the old and conservative views of society about women. Even though society is changing quickly, the old attitudes towards women have not changed. People struggle to accept the new roles that women are taking on. The increasing number of crimes against women is a big challenge. Society needs to change its cultural and psychological views about women. The root cause of these gender issues lies in our education system. There is a lack of teaching on moral values and ethics, and the education system doesn't give enough attention to gender sensitization. It is important to change the belief that men are superior and promote equality. The first step a society can take is to treat women as equal human beings, not just as tools for use. Young people are unaware of the struggles women face, so they follow what they see. Since the roles of women vary in different families, children develop different views about women based on what they see at home.

Therefore, it is important to show children a picture of equality where every woman is respected and valued in their families. We need to look at the bigger picture if we want to fix this problem. Gender discrimination isn't just a separate issue—it is connected to deeper problems that affect our society in many ways. To end this kind of discrimination, we need to start by changing the values and attitudes in our society. The young people of India need to be taught properly by their families and communities so that they can develop a better understanding of gender roles. It's also important to understand the cultural and social factors that lead to discrimination based on gender. This term also includes the ways in which society teaches boys and girls to behave or what opportunities they are expected to have, like pushing boys to play sports or not expecting girls to do well in sports. We need a society that is more aware of gender issues. Being gender sensitive means changing how society thinks about women. We should also think about whether the family background or the school environment is more responsible for gender discrimination and sensitivity. Education plays a key role in passing on both cultural values

and gender attitudes. One important thing to remember is that education is influenced by the culture of the society in which it happens.

Objectives of the Study

- a) To study the level of gender sensitivity among students of BA in Kumaun University, Nainital.

Hypotheses of the study

- a) There is no significant difference between the mean scores of males and females of B.A 1st Semester students towards gender sensitivity.
- b) There is no significant difference between the mean scores of students from the urban and rural areas of BA 1st Semester students towards gender sensitivity.
- c) There is no significant difference between the mean scores of students with respect to their family structures towards gender sensitivity.

Review of Literature

Shukla (1995) looked at how gender, religion, family type, and age influence people's views on the role and status of women in India. It was found that women's attitudes are changing quicker than men's. Men tend to be more traditional and often think, feel, and act in traditional ways. In terms of age, younger people were found to have more modern views and are less religious compared to older people.

Chanana and Karuna (1994) studied how socialization, education, and women's exploration affect gender identity. They said that the clothing someone wears can lead to gender-based judgments. Different types of clothing and how they fit can be seen as messages or "texts" that people interpret in terms of gender. Men are more likely to see certain clothing as a sign of interest in sex, while women are less likely to make that same connection.

Arora (2003) said that the low number of women in top positions may be because of bias or unfair hiring practices, or because women lack interest and commitment in their careers.

SCERT (2011) studied gender sensitivity in schools in Chhattisgarh and found that 22.5% of professionals said there is a lot of gender discrimination in school practices. Similarly, 23.85% of girls said they experienced the same kind of discrimination. This suggests that both teachers and girls face higher levels of gender discrimination.

Barodia (2015) explained that teachers can play an important role in promoting gender equality. They can influence students through what they teach, how they teach, and by showing positive examples of attitudes, beliefs, and actions in and outside the classroom.

Vyas, A. N., et.al., (2020), *Gender attitudes in adolescence: evaluating the Girl Rising gender-sensitization program in India*, Gender-sensitization programs can play an important role in forming and changing gender attitudes during adolescence, and have the potential to alter their short and long-term beliefs.

Yadav, A., & Ojha, K. (2024) Gender sensitization is essential for empowering women and furthering sustainable development, to sum up. Communities can build a more equitable,

successful, and sustainable future for future generations by advancing gender equality, dispelling myths, and guaranteeing women's involvement in all aspects of society.

Unikkat, Anagha A.; Roopesh, Bangalore N.; Satyanarayana, Veena A. (2025) The review suggests that youth- and child-centric government policies must prioritize developing and implementing comprehensive and age-appropriate GSPs that include all genders, with regular booster sessions to ensure sustained impact. Such modules should also be grounded in research evidence

Research Methodology

The current research is a descriptive survey aiming to study level of gender sensitivity among students of Kumaun University. The present study was conducted on 60 students (B.A ,1st Semester) of Kumaun University. The following tools were used for data collection in the present study:

- a) Socio-economic status questionnaire.
- b) Gender sensitivity scale.

Norms of the scale

Norms of the scale were prepared by calculating mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) of the total scores of the respondents and using the formula $M-SD$ for lower range of score and $M+SD$ for upper range of score (lower range for the score is 110.92 and upper range for the score is 135.34).

Findings of the study

The main objective of the study was to study the level of gender sensitivity among B.A (1st Semester) students of D.S.B Campus, Nainital.

Descriptive analysis of gender sensitivity scores (gender-wise)

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	t-value	df
1.Male	9	119.11	10.434	3.478	1.189*	28
2.Female	21	124.86	12.745	2.781		

To study significant variation in gender sensitive scores of students with respect to gender, 't-test' was employed. From Table, it is clear that the value of t-ratio ($t=1.189$, $df=28$) is not significant at 0.05 level so the formulated null hypothesis is not rejected. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the level of gender sensitivity with respect to gender is not rejected.

Descriptive analysis of gender sensitive scores (area of residence-wise)

Area of Residence	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	t-value	df
1.Urban	12	123.75	8.44	2.437	0.222*	28
2.Rural	18	122.72	14.42	3.399		

To study significant variation in gender sensitive scores of students with respect to region, ‘t-test’ was employed and the results have been entered in table.

From Table, it is clear that the value of t- ratio ($t=0.222$, $df=28$) is not significant at 0.05 level so the formulated null hypothesis is not rejected. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of students from urban and rural areas is not rejected.

Descriptive analysis of the gender sensitive scores (family-structure wise)

S.No.	Family structure	Number of respondents	Mean	SD	Percentage
1.	Joint	14	120.35	12.26	46.8
2.	Nuclear	11	129.81	8.81	36.8
3.	Single	5	116.2	13.73	16.4
Total		30			100

To study significant variation in gender sensitive scores of students with respect to family structure, F test was employed and the results are shown in the table.

ANOVA summary table for gender sensitivity and family types

Sources	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F-Value
Between Groups	839.816	2	419.908	3.25*
Within Groups	3487.651	27	129.172	
Total	4327.467	29		

*Significant at 0.05 level

Table reveals that when the students of nuclear, joint and single-family type were compared, the difference between mean gender sensitive score of the three groups were found to be $F\text{-ratio}=3.251(df=27,2)$ which is not significant at 0.05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between mean scores of students with respect to their family structure is not rejected.

The findings from the study revealed that majority (73.4%) of respondents were found to be moderately gender sensitive. It was also found that 5 (16.6%) respondents were highly gender sensitive whereas 3 (10%) respondents were found to be at low level of gender sensitivity. Majority of the respondents belong to lower middle class. Family structure of majority of students is joint family, followed by nuclear family and some of the respondents have single parent family structure. 60% of the respondents come from urban areas and 40% of the respondents come from rural areas indicating almost equal representation of respondents from both areas. It was revealed from the study that there was no difference between the level of gender sensitivity among respondents from urban and rural areas, this may due to the penetration of internet technology in the rural areas as well as connect traditional distance between urban and rural areas is bridging due to the improvement in the connectivity between them. Due to this, modern values of urban areas penetrated in the social sphere of the rural areas. Hence, influencing the traditional views about women.

Conclusion

The study aimed to understand how aware Bachelor of Arts (1st Semester) students at D.S.B Campus, Nainital are about gender issues. A descriptive research method was used for this study. Out of 560 students, 40 were chosen randomly using computer-generated numbers. The questionnaire was sent through Google Forms, and the responses were collected. The tools used were a Socio-economic Status Questionnaire and a Gender Sensitivity Scale. The Gender Sensitivity Scale has 35 statements that help measure how sensitive students are towards different gender-related issues in society. The Socio-economic Status Questionnaire asked simple questions about the respondent's name, age, class, community, family income, parents' education, job, place of living, and family setup. With the increasing cases of violence against women and the declining levels of women's empowerment, there has been a growing focus on gender sensitivity worldwide. Both the government and individuals have been trying to discuss and research this issue to better understand gender inequality in our culture. It is important to increase awareness because changes in women's roles and development require adjustments in many areas of life like social, economic, political, and cultural settings. Because young people are still forming their views on gender, programs that promote gender sensitivity and empowerment can help reduce gender inequality in the short and long term.

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Conflicts of interest

No conflict of interest.

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