

Teachers and Students Role in Promoting Gender Sensitisation

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Abstract

In today's time, when, the human race is constantly advancing towards a better quality of life through numerous developments in technology, when the curiosity of humans has made them orbit planets in the outer space, We still see and hear about an imbalance in the society; The imbalance between genders. This imbalance is, as observed, mostly due to ignorance towards basic logic and societal values. This basic logic, if explained to one in years of their philosophical development, can lead to a much better world. In this paper, I oversee the possible remedial measures that the teachers and students can take together to create gender awareness.

Keywords – sensitization, abuse, progress, equality.

Introduction

Sensitization is the act of becoming and/or making someone more aware of something. And Gender Sensitization is the act of becoming and making someone aware of the gender of a person and their limitations and strengths based on their genders. It also includes creating an awareness about the discrimination and abuse which is given rise to, by the insensitivity towards the genders. It involves abolishing the orthodox stereotypes, and understanding the damage gender-discrimination has done to them in the past and the present. It is also a progressive attempt to create an equal and liberal society for everyone, where nobody feels the need to display their power over others. It aims at cultivating respect for everybody regardless of sex. Gender awareness not only requires intellectual effort but also sensitivity and open mindedness.

We consider ourselves to be born equal, regardless of our religion, caste, race, physique, sex, cultural background etc., thanks to the right to equality which is a fundamental right given to us by the Constitution of our country. We believe that regardless of the faith we follow, we'd be given the same opportunities in as our fellow citizens following some other faith. We have the freedom to practice any profession without being restricted by the caste we were born with. We constitute the population of a country which has a very diverse cultural heritage and people belonging to various races coming from varied geographical locations. Yet we don't see a proper balance between the constituents of the society.

The Problem

Today we see and hear about instances of assaults on people only because their race was not as that of the assaulters, or their caste wasn't the same as the assaulters' or worst of these all, their gender wasn't same as that of the assaulters. In the current scenario, the females in a lot of parts of the country are deprived of needs as basic as nutritional food, let alone the right to education or the right against exploitation. The illiteracy, especially in the females, is retarding the country's growth socially and economically at the least. The lack of education in the females has had a negative impact on the control of population (which is one of the gravest problems our country is facing today). The males, nevertheless, continue to dominate and ill-treat their female counterparts at various levels.

Instances of rapes, sexual harassment and sexual abuse are on a steep rise in their reported numbers. They have been reported from various kinds of backgrounds – urban and rural, within a family or in a work environment or even from educational institutes and from numerous other zones. The offenders are sometimes the co-workers, superiors or even subordinates. They may be known to the victims or be complete strangers to them. They are so well dissolved in the crowd that they cannot be spotted until they commit the crime.

The Solution

At work environments and civic places where these offences might happen, the most active people present are students. They could be working as interns at a firm or just commuting in the city, they are the omnipresent beings. They are the most amenable of all people. And for a country like India, they are present in a large number.

Student activism is one of the most powerful, dynamic and creative faces of revolution. It has, over a long past, been influential in bringing about social, economic, environmental and even political change. As of the current five years (2012-2017) nearly 21 million people are taking higher education in India. 11% of the Indian population, today, is between 18-23 years of age. Looking at these figures, we can see an immense potential in today's youth to diametrically change the point of view of the Indian society, provided they are guided by an innovative, convincing, correct and a standardized class of teachers throughout the country.

Teachers and students can together team up to uproot these problems of sexual harassment by means of setting up good role models and following them respectively.

- Teachers working together in a campus should respect each other and the students to instill the quality of respecting others in students. Teachers today, unlike the old days, are involved in various activities of students and students spend a considerable amount of time around them, watching and learning from them.
- They should discuss about the diversity of genders in all relevant aspects at an elementary level, first with each other and then with their students.
- Teachers should create an atmosphere where there are no inhibitions to students, and students could freely discuss their queries and report problems to them.
- Teachers, along with the parents of the students can help a great deal in solving the problems of students, as often these problems have a strong psychological effect on the victims and the students may not be able to share their problems with their parents because of the communication gap. However teachers have a significant role in the lives of students and their parents and hence can be the perfect mediators in such situations.
- Teachers should formulate stringent rules and boundaries of behavior to be followed on campus. They must also take care of their enforcement.
- Students, on the other hand, can be excellent vigilantes because of their presence everywhere. They should always stay connected to each other and team up while in unfamiliar environments, because an offender fears a group of alert people.
- Students can demand improvement in working conditions and security in the library, laboratories and the classrooms to make it more amenable to a humane, harassment-free, exploitation-free set-up. Students can choose to be brave and strong and stand up against colleagues, professors and higher officials if subjected to harassment. At present many cases go unreported because the students fear risking their life and career and meekly submit to the exploitation.
- Students can choose to respect everyone irrespective of their sexual decisions and choices in life. Presently, a section of students (aided by fundamentalists) have this tendency of looking down on girls enjoying pre-marital sex with one or multiple partners in boys' hostels and the lesbian and gay community in the campus. These

students even claim that the “sexually liberated cannot be sexually harassed!” Such students also hold contempt for feminists and are very old-school in their approach to social structure. This section of the student community still needs enlightenment! Students need to understand that sexual morality is a personal choice in life and one cannot judge people on the basis of that very personal parameter.

- The students can talk about the issue and take a pro-active stand against sexual harassment. It is important to talk about this subject which still many consider a taboo and the role of students here is enormous. One SMS message from one girl to another about a bad boy or a bad professor will have many times more impact than any educational poster and pamphlets
- Students should discourage and ridicule complainants who bring fake complaints for personal motives. It is not very uncommon to find students talking about one/more members of the campus community who have been allegedly used by one/more political parties to frame political rivals! Awareness against abuse of protective mechanisms by their community members is indeed necessary for more effective machinery and other such bodies dealing with sexual harassment.

Conclusion:

Teachers and students can together team up to uproot these problems of sexual harassment by means of setting up good role models. Role of teachers and students in creating gender awareness and augmenting enforcement is huge. They can together make a desired difference.

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