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RESEARCH ARTICLE

TOWARDS A PRO-GENDER SENSITIVITY IN SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

India is a country which reveres the country as 'Motherland' and 'Bharatha Matha'. It names its rivers with women names: 'Ganga', 'Cauvery', 'Godavari' 'Narmadha' and 'Tungabadra'. There are many Goddesses who are worshipped for their valour, courage and strength. The culture, though seemingly patriarchal is bound to be maternal in all aspects. It pays the highest regard to the mother in the family. Gender sensitivity is the awareness and acceptance of the 'ignored sex' – the female gender. It lies in the affirmation of any role and responsibility to the female gender without rejecting them on the basis of their sexuality. Pro-gender sensitivity deals with the acceptance of all people about their identity in society. It initiates a dynamic change in the perception of the people. They should be taught to perceive 'the ignored sex' – women equally as counterparts of the society. This paper tries to discuss some strategies to initiate Pro-Gender sensitivity among students.

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INTRODUCTION

India is a country which reveres the country as 'Motherland' and 'Bharatha Matha'. It names its rivers with women names: 'Ganga', 'Cauvery', 'Godavari' 'Narmadha' and 'Tungabadra'. There are many Goddesses who are worshipped for their valour, courage and strength. The culture, though seemingly patriarchal is bound to be maternal in all aspects. It pays the highest regard to the mother in the family. She is venerated for her love and sacrifice. Rakshabandhan is celebrated to exemplify the bond between the sister and the brother. India, is the only country which granted women the right to vote without any struggle or fight. Indian people accepted the identity and the place of women in society. There are yet a few who conform to the orthodox and traditional norm. Gender sensitivity is the awareness and acceptance of the 'ignored sex' – the female gender. It lies in the affirmation of any role and responsibility to the female gender without rejecting them on the basis of their sexuality. Pro-gender sensitivity deals with the acceptance of all people about their identity in society.

Gender sensitivity: Gender sensitivity is the awareness and acceptance of the 'ignored sex' – the female gender. It lies in the affirmation of any role and responsibility to the female gender without rejecting them on the basis of their sexuality. Gender inequality is common in all classes and communities irrespective of nationalities.

Despite efforts and policies, it is very difficult to change the gender identities of people. A Pro-active approach, which involves serious inquiry, critical thinking and the modification in behavior.

Pro-gender sensitivity: Pro-gender sensitivity deals with the acceptance of all people about their identity in society. It initiates a dynamic change in the perception of the people. They should be taught to perceive 'the ignored sex' – women equally as counterparts of the society. They should be treated well as they also are half of the society. They should be given a chance to voice out their thoughts. They should be applauded for their success in careers and power positions. They should be allowed to assert their rights and fight for them. It is imperative to address gender concerns, gender based violence and create awareness among children.

Strategies to incorporate Pro-gender sensitivity of Girls

Accessibility of Education: Education should be made accessible to all girl children in the country. High schools should be constructed every 5 km and higher secondary schools should be constructed every 7kms. The provisions for education at early childhood and adolescence should be made accessible. It provides the opportunity to gain understanding and knowledge. It gives them a place to open discussions and involve in brainstorming sessions. They question and develop the power of inquisition. They learn to make decisions and solve problems.

Retention and Quality of Girl's Education: The infrastructure has to be ensured to maintain the quality of

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Education. It helps in retaining girl students in school. Quality Education pertains to the decrease in the ratio of drop-outs among girls. Girl children who are provided with quality education pursue their higher education and professional education. Proper sanitation and toilet facilities should be made available for the girl children. Sanitation and hygiene facilities are the main reasons of drop-out among girl children.

Gender – A People’s Issue: An awakening on the role of Gender identities among people is the need of the hour. There is a dire need for the common people to assume roles as the ‘Crusaders’ for the marginalized and oppressed. People are expected to look beyond their gender roles and welcome the transformation of minds. It should confront the bonds of Patriarchy and break the barriers of gender inequality. It should enable change in the mindsets of people with relation to domestic and professional life.

Equality and Empowerment of Girls: Though the Equality and Empowerment of Girls have been the objectives of the Educational policies, a consensus to promote it should be the agenda. Education tries to create an identity for the girl children. It instills the capacity to think critically and interrogate the hierarchy of subjugation. It stimulates them to question power relations and assert their rights as human beings. Women do not want to be treated specially. They want to be treated with respect. They want to take active participation in social life and take responsibility for their actions.

Women’s Research in Textbooks, Curriculum and Training: Women are always the ‘ignored sex’. They are always projected as personifications of beauty, virtues or vices. They are always portrayed stereotypically. The textbooks often show pictures of men working in the field, men flying the aeroplanes. It silently imposes that the place of women is the

kitchen and her role is nurturing the family. The textbook should bring in representations of women achievement and empowerment. Mathematics and Scientific research should be encouraged among girls as possibilities of human excellence.

Conclusion

“Education is a powerful tool which can change the world” – Nelson Mandela. The whole world is in a constant flux. It is in a constant change and development. Education brings down the uneven stratifications in society. It has shaped the process of thinking across generations. It will modify proper behavior. If Pro-gender sensitivity was inculcated amongst children, then the thought processes of the future children will be modern. Teachers are the agents of social change and bring about real transformation in the communities.

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