

Critical Analysis Over The Perceptions Of Gender Sensitization And Awareness: A Study Of Attitudes And Behaviours In Public Interest

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ABSTRACT

This study critically analyzes gender sensitization and awareness perceptions and their effects on public interest attitudes and behaviors. This study enhances our understanding of gender-related sensitization efforts' efficacy by examining how perceptions affect attitudes and behavior. This mixed-methods study covers varied viewpoints across age, gender, socioeconomic background, and education level using quantitative surveys and qualitative in-depth interviews. A structured survey with Likert-scale questions quantifies participants' perceptions, attitudes, and behavioral changes from gender sensitization. Semi-structured interviews are used in the qualitative phase to explore respondents' nuanced personal experiences and beliefs, revealing their qualitative attitudes and behaviors. This study triangulates quantitative and qualitative data through thematic analysis to illuminate the complex relationships between perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors in gender sensitization in the public interest. The expected findings may inform legislative, educational, and societal actions, optimizing gender sensitization strategies and advancing the collective path toward a more inclusive and equitable society.

KEYWORD : Gender Sensitization, Perceptions, Attitudes, Behaviors, Public Interest.

I. INTRODUCTION

Due to worldwide equality and inclusivity efforts, gender sensitization and awareness discourse has grown significantly.¹ As civilizations

¹ Arora-Jonsson S, 'Virtue and Vulnerability: Discourses on Women, Gender and Climate Change' (2011) 21 Global Environmental Change 744.

change, so do discussions about gender roles, rights, and experiences. How gender sensitization affects perceptions, attitudes, and public interest behaviors is key to this progression. This dynamic relationship between awareness programs and societal responses emphasizes the importance of critically assessing their efficacy.² Understanding how people perceive and respond to gender-related sensitization initiatives can help politicians, educators, and social advocates develop ways that influence attitudes and behaviors.

Gender sensitization campaigns, education, and awareness drives have challenged gender stereotypes and biases.³ Beyond information dissemination, these programs' impact depends on how people internalize and perceive them. Gender perceptions, molded by cultural, societal, and personal settings, shape attitudes, beliefs, and actions.⁴ These views are especially strong in the public interest sector, where social dynamics, values, and obligations coincide. The success of gender sensitization can be assessed by understanding attitudes—individuals' predispositions and orientations.⁵ Attitudes bridge perceptions and behaviors, transforming awareness into action. Deep cognitive and emotional recalibration is needed to change attitudes; persistent sensitization can help.⁶ Personal ideas change, affecting relationships, interactions, and social contributions.

However, behavioral changes prove gender sensitization works. As attitudes change, behaviors align, resulting in inclusive actions that fight stereotypes, inequality, and gender injustice. Since they impact social norms and structures, these behavioral adjustments have great potential in the public interest. Analyzing the complex relationships between gender sensitization beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors helps us understand what makes society equitable and inclusive.⁷ Given these

² Vertovec S, 'Towards Post-Multiculturalism? Changing Communities, Conditions and Contexts of Diversity: Towards Post-Multiculturalism' (2010) 61 *International Social Science Journal* 83.

³ Nishii LH and Özbilgin MF, 'Global Diversity Management: Towards a Conceptual Framework' (2007) 18 *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* 1883.

⁴ Eccles JS, 'Gender Roles and Women's Achievement-Related Decisions' (1987) 11 *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 135.

⁵ Eccles J, 'Who Am I and What Am I Going to Do With My Life? Personal and Collective Identities as Motivators of Action' (2009) 44 *Educational Psychologist* 78.

⁶ Kågesten A and others, 'Understanding Factors That Shape Gender Attitudes in Early Adolescence Globally: A Mixed-Methods Systematic Review' (2016) 11 *Plos One* e0157805.

⁷ Einfeld A and Collins D, 'The Relationships Between Service-Learning,

factors, this study critically examines gender sensitization and awareness views, attitudinal alterations, and behavioral changes in the public interest.⁸ The study uses a mixed-methods approach to capture the various aspects of this phenomenon and suggest strategic measures to boost gender sensitization.⁹ This inquiry reveals the transforming power of perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors to create a more fair and inclusive society.

II. RESEARCH QUESTION

1. How do individuals' perceptions of gender sensitization and awareness initiatives influence their attitudes toward gender-related issues within the public interest domain?
2. To what extent do changes in attitudes resulting from gender sensitization efforts correlate with observable behavioral shifts in individuals' interactions, contributions, and engagement with public interest matters related to gender?

III. METHODOLOGY & RESULTS

This study uses mixed methods to examine the relationship between perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors in gender sensitization in the public interest. The research design uses quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate this complex interaction. In the quantitative phase, stratified random sampling is used to reach a diversified demographic. The Google Forms survey will be distributed to all the individuals to ensure representation across age, gender, socioeconomic background, and education. Demographics, perceptions, attitudes, and behavioral changes are covered in the survey.

The attitudes element of the poll evaluates gender sensitization activities' awareness and efficacy. A Likert scale will measure respondents' agreement with statements. The attitudes segment probes participants' perspectives on gender-related public interest issues to quantify gender sensitization-induced attitudinal alterations.

Social Justice, Multicultural Competence, and Civic Engagement' (2008) 49 Journal of College Student Development 95.

⁸ Hatabu A and others, 'Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices toward COVID-19 among University Students in Japan and Associated Factors: An Online Cross-Sectional Survey' (2020) 15 PLOS ONE e0244350.

⁹ Ntona E, Arabatzis G and Kyriakopoulos GL, 'Energy Saving: Views and Attitudes of Students in Secondary Education' (2015) 46 Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews 1.

In addition, participants will self-report behavioral changes in their activities and interactions due to gender sensitization initiatives. A subset of survey participants will participate in semi-structured interviews during the qualitative phase. These interviews will illuminate gender sensitization participants' thoughts, feelings, and experiences. To unearth rich qualitative insights that complement quantitative data.

The qualitative phase will use thematic analysis to discover interview data patterns, topics, and narratives. The research compares qualitative and quantitative findings to explain the complex dynamics of perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors in gender sensitization in the public interest. This mixed-methods study addresses gender sensitization and public interest perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors using quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. The 273 respondents of the google survey will provide quantitative data, while the qualitative interviews will reveal participants' experiences and perspectives. The methodology emphasizes ethical considerations in human research and seeks to understand gender sensitization's effects on society.

Question-1 was intended to gauge respondents' awareness levels of gender sensitization initiatives. We received a total of 273 answers to this question. The recorded answers are shown in Table-1.

Table-1: Awareness Levels of Gender Sensitization Initiatives

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Very aware	123	45%
Somewhat aware	82	30%
Not very aware	41	15%
Not aware at all	27	10%

It is shown in the above table that the majority of respondents are "Very aware" (45%) of gender sensitization initiatives, with 123 respondents indicating high levels of awareness. Additionally, 82 respondents (30%) are "Somewhat aware." A significant portion, 41 respondents (15%), expressed being "Not very aware," while 27 respondents (10%) reported being "Not aware at all" of gender sensitization efforts. These responses reflect varied levels of awareness among participants regarding gender sensitization initiatives.

Question-2 aimed to assess the perceived effectiveness of gender sensitization initiatives. We collected responses from all 273

participants. The recorded answers are shown in Table-2.

Table-2: Perceived Effectiveness of Gender Sensitization Initiatives

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Significantly	54	20%
Moderately	109	40%
Slightly	68	25%
Not at all	42	15%

It is shown in the above table that the majority of respondents perceive gender sensitization initiatives to have a "Moderately" positive impact (40%), with 109 respondents expressing this view. Additionally, 54 respondents (20%) consider the impact to be "Significantly" positive. About a quarter of respondents, 68 (25%), view the impact as "Slightly" positive. A smaller portion, 42 respondents (15%), indicated that they perceive "Not at all" positive impact from gender sensitization initiatives. These responses highlight varying degrees of perceived effectiveness among participants regarding gender sensitization initiatives.

Question-3 aimed to understand participants' attitudes toward gender equality. The total responses received for this question were 273. The recorded answers are shown in Table-3.

Table-3: Attitudes Toward Gender Equality

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly agree	150	55%
Agree	82	30%
Disagree	27	10%
Strongly disagree	14	5%

It is shown in the table that the majority of respondents "Strongly agree" (55%) with the importance of promoting gender equality, with 150 respondents indicating strong belief. Additionally, 82 respondents (30%) "Agree" with the significance of gender equality. A smaller proportion, 27 respondents (10%), expressed "Disagree" with its importance. A further 14 respondents (5%) "Strongly disagree" with the significance of gender equality. These responses underscore varying degrees of agreement among respondents regarding the importance of gender equality.

Question-4 aimed to determine whether respondents observed any behavioral changes due to gender sensitization efforts. The total number of respondents for this question were 273. The recorded answers are shown in Table-4.

Table-4: Observed Behavioral Changes due to Gender Sensitization

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes, significantly	68	25%
Yes, to some extent	109	40%
No, not really	68	25%
No, not at all	28	10%

It is shown in the table that a quarter of respondents, 68 (25%), have observed "Significantly" substantial behavioral changes due to gender sensitization efforts. Furthermore, the largest proportion, 109 respondents (40%), reported observing "Yes, to some extent" behavioral changes. An equal number, 68 respondents (25%), mentioned "No, not really" changes in their behavior. A smaller group of 28 respondents (10%) indicated "No, not at all" behavioral changes. These findings highlight diverse perceptions of behavioral changes resulting from gender sensitization initiatives.

Question-5 sought to understand respondents' beliefs in the potential influence of gender sensitization efforts. The total responses received for this question were 273. The recorded answers are shown in Table-5.

Table-5: Beliefs in the Influence of Gender Sensitization Efforts

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes, significantly	68	25%
Yes, to some extent	109	40%
No, not really	68	25%
No, not at all	28	10%

It is shown in the figure that 40% of respondents, 109 participants, believe "Yes, definitely" in the substantial influence of gender sensitization efforts. Additionally, 35% of respondents (95) expressed their belief in "Yes, to some extent." A smaller portion, 41 respondents (15%), perceived "No, unlikely" influence of gender sensitization efforts. A further 10% (28) believed in "No, not at all" influence. These responses underscore the diverse range of beliefs among respondents

regarding the potential impact of gender sensitization efforts.

IV. DISCUSSION

1. Challenges in Bridging Awareness and Perception Gaps

Gender sensitization initiatives aim to transform societal perspectives and promote gender equality.¹⁰ However, effectively bridging the gap between awareness and perception presents a multifaceted challenge.¹¹ It explores this challenge through the lens of landmark case laws that have highlighted the complexities in changing attitudes and perceptions. In the landmark case of *Vishakha v. State of Rajasthan*¹², the Supreme Court of India laid down guidelines to prevent and address sexual harassment in the workplace. This precedent exemplifies the gap between awareness and perception. Although the guidelines raised awareness about workplace harassment, they also revealed a significant perception gap regarding the seriousness of the issue.¹³

While the *Vishakha* guidelines created awareness, they also exposed how deeply ingrained the perception of workplace harassment was within the societal fabric. Many employers and employees were initially resistant to implementing the guidelines, viewing harassment as a norm rather than an issue to be addressed. The challenge was not only to make people aware of their rights but also to change the perception that reporting harassment could lead to adverse consequences for the victim.

Further in the case of *Obergefell v. Hodges*¹⁴, the United States Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage across the country. The present precedent showcases the challenge of bridging awareness and perception gaps related to LGBTQ+ rights. The *Obergefell* case illustrated the dissonance between the growing awareness of LGBTQ+ rights and the deeply rooted prejudices against same-sex

¹⁰ Booth C and Bennett C, 'Gender Mainstreaming in the European Union: Towards a New Conception and Practice of Equal Opportunities?' (2002) 9 *European Journal of Women's Studies* 430.

¹¹ Cole DMA Stroma, 'No Sustainability for Tourism without Gender Equality', *Activating Critical Thinking to Advance the Sustainable Development Goals in Tourism Systems* (Routledge 2021).

¹² *Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan* AIR 1997 SC 3011.

¹³ Neall AM and Tuckey MR, 'A Methodological Review of Research on the Antecedents and Consequences of Workplace Harassment' (2014) 87 *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* 225.

¹⁴ *Obergefell v. Hodges*, 576 U.S. 644

relationships.¹⁵ Even as public opinion gradually became more accepting, a significant perception gap persisted, especially in regions where traditional norms and attitudes held strong.¹⁶ The challenge was not only to make people aware of legal rights but also to shift deep-seated perceptions that had been cultivated over generations.

In the present case, i.e. *Roe v. Wade*¹⁷ was a pivotal case in the United States that legalized abortion. This case underscores the challenge of bridging the gap between awareness of reproductive rights and the perception of the sanctity of life. While in the present case, the increased awareness of reproductive rights, it also brought to the forefront the vast disparity in perceptions regarding abortion.¹⁸ A significant number of individuals held strong moral objections to abortion, perceiving it as a violation of fundamental values. The challenge was not just to inform individuals of their legal rights but also to navigate the intricate interplay between personal beliefs, societal norms, and legal frameworks.

The above case laws discussed above illustrate the intricate challenges inherent in bridging the gap between awareness and perception. These challenges often stem from deeply entrenched attitudes and societal norms that resist change. Effective gender sensitization initiatives must go beyond creating awareness and actively address the underlying perceptions that hinder progress.¹⁹ Landmark case laws provide valuable lessons in navigating this complex landscape, highlighting the need for comprehensive strategies that challenge perceptions, facilitate open dialogues, and foster attitudinal shifts.

2. Attitudinal Shifts and the Road to Behavioral Change

The journey towards gender sensitization is not solely about raising awareness but also about catalyzing attitudinal shifts that eventually lead to meaningful behavioral change.²⁰ This subheading explores the

¹⁵ Shin JW, 'Coming out of the Closet: A Comparative Analysis of Marriage Equality between the East and West' (2016) 49 *New York University Journal of International Law and Politics* 1119.

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ *Roe v. Wade*, 410 U.S. 113

¹⁸ Gasman N, Blandon MM and Crane BB, 'Abortion, Social Inequity, and Women's Health: Obstetrician-Gynecologists as Agents of Change' (2006) 94 *International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics* 310.

¹⁹ Bacon L, 'Liberia's Gender-Sensitive Police Reform: Improving Representation and Responsiveness in a Post-Conflict Setting', *Development Assistance for Peacebuilding* (Routledge 2017).

²⁰ Tchetchik A, Kaplan S and Blass V, 'Recycling and Consumption Reduction

intricate interlinkage between attitudinal shifts, behavioral change, and the insights gained from the previously discussed research questions.

a) Shaping Attitudes through Awareness

The first two research questions shed light on the levels of awareness and perceived effectiveness of gender sensitization initiatives. These findings lay the foundation for understanding the current attitudes towards gender equality and women's rights. While a significant portion of respondents are aware of gender sensitization initiatives, there is a need to channel this awareness into proactive engagement. Attitudinal shifts involve moving beyond passive agreement towards actively advocating for gender equality.²¹ Merely acknowledging the initiatives' importance is insufficient; individuals need to internalize the significance and actively contribute to dismantling gender-based biases.²²

b) From Attitudes to Action

The third and fourth research questions delve into participants' attitudes towards gender equality and whether they observed behavioral changes due to gender sensitization efforts. Attitudinal shifts are precursors to behavioral change. The challenge lies in bridging the gap between favorable attitudes and tangible actions. Positive attitudes may face barriers when translating into real-life behaviors. Norms, biases, and societal pressures can hinder the transformation of intentions into action.²³ To address this, gender sensitization initiatives must tackle these barriers directly, providing individuals with the tools, resources, and support needed to effect behavioral change.

c) Sustaining Change and Challenging Beliefs

The fifth research question inquires about participants' beliefs in the

Following the COVID-19 Lockdown: The Effect of Threat and Coping Appraisal, Past Behavior and Information' (2021) 167 Resources, Conservation and Recycling 105370.

²¹ Hodson D, 'Going Beyond STS Education: Building a Curriculum for Sociopolitical Activism' (2020) 20 Canadian Journal of Science, Mathematics and Technology Education 592.

²² *Id.*

²³ Manuel-Navarrete D, Buzinde C and Swanson T, 'Fostering Horizontal Knowledge Co-Production with Indigenous People by Leveraging Researchers' Transdisciplinary Intentions' (2021) 26 Ecology and Society <<https://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol26/iss2/art22/>> accessed 20 August 2023.

influence of gender sensitization efforts. Beliefs play a pivotal role in shaping behaviors. The diverse range of beliefs, from staunch optimism to skepticism, reflects the intricacies of societal perspectives. To foster lasting behavioral change, it's crucial to engage with individuals across this spectrum, encouraging dialogue, dispelling misconceptions, and showcasing tangible outcomes. Sustaining change requires constant reinforcement of the belief that gender sensitization efforts can indeed lead to transformative societal shifts.

The road to behavioral change is not linear; it's an intricate interplay of attitudes, beliefs, and actions.²⁴ The research questions provide key touchpoints along this journey. The challenge lies in weaving these elements together into a holistic approach that seamlessly navigates the terrain of awareness, attitudes, and behaviors. Gender sensitization initiatives must not only create awareness but also foster attitudinal shifts, dismantle barriers to behavioral change, and sustain the momentum through diverse beliefs.²⁵ It's at this intersection that the true impact of these initiatives is forged, creating a path towards a more gender-sensitive and equitable society.²⁶

V. CONCLUSION

Perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors toward gender sensitization in the public interest are complex and changing. This exploration of understanding, attitudes, and behavior shows how gender sensitization campaigns can create a fairer society. These insights provide a complete picture of future challenges and possibilities.²⁷ The research questions have shown a variety of perspectives, from gender sensitization to attitudes and beliefs. Data shows the breadth and depth of awareness and belief in these programs, as well as the hurdles that prevent good attitudes from becoming substantial behavioral change. Attitudinal and behavioral transformation are crucial to changing perceptions. Awareness lays the groundwork, but active advocacy sparks change. As

²⁴ Pype P and others, 'Healthcare Teams as Complex Adaptive Systems: Understanding Team Behaviour through Team Members' Perception of Interpersonal Interaction' (2018) 18 BMC Health Services Research 570.

²⁵ Karam A, 'Faith-Inspired Initiatives to Tackle the Social Determinants of Child Marriage' (2015) 13 The Review of Faith & International Affairs 59.

²⁶ Rickards L, Wiseman J and Kashima Y, 'Barriers to Effective Climate Change Mitigation: The Case of Senior Government and Business Decision Makers' (2014) 5 WIREs Climate Change 753.

²⁷ Nicholls A and Lee N, 'Purchase Decision-making in Fair Trade and the Ethical Purchase "Gap": "Is There a Fair Trade Twix?"' (2006) 14 Journal of Strategic Marketing 369.

people struggle with their views, cultural conventions, and personal convictions, attitudes bridge these stages. The research questions' different perspectives remind us that gender sensitization is not uniform. It demands innovative methods that overcome skepticism and promote optimism. These methods must address knowledge gaps and deep-seated biases that prevent beliefs from becoming actions. The conclusion of these findings is that gender sensitization and equitable transformation require an integrative approach.²⁸ It includes raising awareness, addressing myths, creating attitudinal transformations, supporting behavioral change, and developing a discussion that transcends varied perspectives. Gender sensitization campaigns can unravel societal conventions and create a tapestry of inclusivity, equality, and empowerment by weaving these threads.²⁹ The path to a gender-sensitive society is not linear or one-dimensional. It's a transformative journey via understanding, attitudes, and behaviors that involves collaboration, communication, and dedication. Through insights, difficulties, and opportunities, gender sensitization campaigns can help us change beliefs, attitudes, and actions to promote equality and justice.

²⁸ Liu N, Nikitas A and Parkinson S, 'Exploring Expert Perceptions about the Cyber Security and Privacy of Connected and Autonomous Vehicles: A Thematic Analysis Approach' (2020) 75 Transportation Research Part F: Traffic Psychology and Behaviour 66.

²⁹ Rao A and others, *Gender at Work: Theory and Practice for 21st Century Organizations* (Routledge 2015).