

## **Development of distance mode learning material to give Gender Education to tackle discrimination for social transformation and justice.**

**By**  
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(This paper is based on the research work carried out by second author.)

Conference Theme: **Governance, conflict and social justice.**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Discrimination is a global phenomenon. Each and every individual of commonwealth experiences gender discrimination since the same is prevalent in every nook and corner of the developing world. In most of the third world countries, women suffer from discrimination, injustice and violence, physically and mentally.

India has almost equal number of men and women in its democracy. However, even after 60 years of independence the status of both differs a great deal, owing to the gender discrimination ubiquitous in our country. Even today, girls and woman are considered second-class citizens. Violence against women is on a rise. Women are very vulnerable to exploitation and injustice from the society. Unmarried, widowed, separated and divorced women across classes and communities suffer from dependency and are considered burden to the family and the society. Remarriage is more difficult for women than men. The indications of the secondary position and oppression of women are the obvious forms of violence like Rape, Abduction, Molestation; along with hidden forms of violence like feticide, discrimination in education and nutritional intakes, malpractices of dowry, early marriages, wife battering, male polygamy, eve-teasing, unfair wages, sexual exploitation and harassment etc. Gender discrimination pervades Indian society. The government is however attempting to improve the status of women both by making special provisions in the five year plans and by passing legislation such as the 'Hindu Succession (Amendment) Bill', 2004, giving daughters and sons equal right to property. The 'Domestic Violence Act' passed in 2005 also represents the culmination of years of campaigning by women's groups. However, the horrific inference of infanticide and other forms of violence against women has cultural considerations at its root, coupled with failure to enforce legislation. It was felt that a more direct approach of educating the masses to change their mindsets could help in attempting to tackle the inequalities and injustice in the society.

### **Statistical Substantiation:**

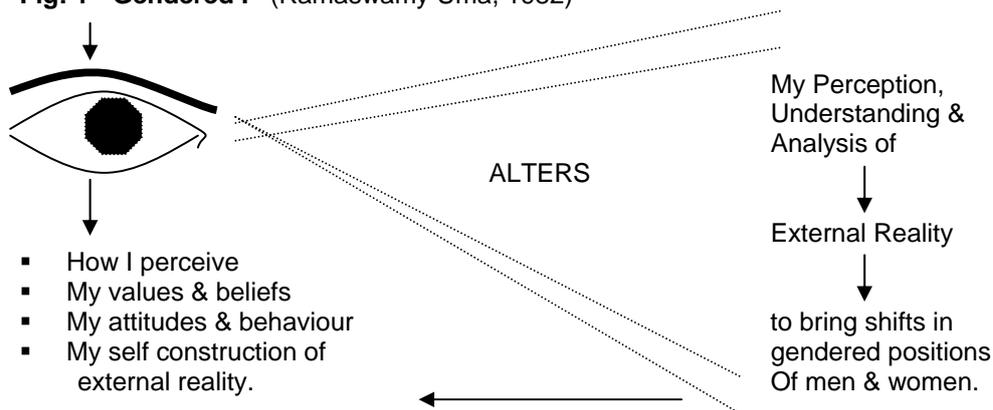
Discrimination is evident and disparity is measurable.

- In the absence of gender discrimination, a population should contain as a norm at least 1,050 women for every 1,000 men, because of the inherent biological superiority of women. However, due to the non-acceptance of a female child in the society; the deficit of women, in absolute terms, has been rising steadily from slightly more than 2,00,000 in 1901 to nearby four million in 2001, jumping by more than a million in the last decade." A deficit of this magnitude is a sure sign of socio-economic conditions that are so punitive

- to women as to wipe out their biological advantage. (Human Development Report, Maharashtra State - 2002, chapter of 'Gender Issues'.)
- Despite booming growth rates and rising illiteracy, more girl children are being muffled into the silence of death at or before birth. Statistics of 2001 showed that the capital state of Delhi, with all its cosmopolitan pretensions, has registered a 47-point drop from 915 girls to 868 girls per 1000 boys.' (Times of India, 11/12/2006)
  - According to UNICEF, 12 million girls are born in India every year. Out of which 25 % do not survive the 5<sup>th</sup> year.
  - Sterilization accounts for more than 75% of total contraception, with female sterilization accounting for almost 95% of all sterilization. (Office of the UN Resident coordinator in India - 2001)
  - A study of the Post-Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh, India, reveals that between the years 2001-2005, in the renal transplantations 89% recipients were males and only 11% were females. Amazingly in the spousal group, 91% of wives while only 9% of husbands have donated for their spouses.
  - As per 1999 IIPS, National Family Health Survey reveals that 50% women in India marry before the age of 18 years and 47.7% in Maharashtra.
  - Estimated number of female sex workers for India is to be over 0.9 million. 30 % of these comprise of minor girls. An annual increase in child prostitution is of 8 to 10 %.
  - In Maharashtra in year 2002, 56% pregnant women were found suffering from Anaemia. (IIPS-Reproductive and Child Health Services, Mumbai.)
  - As on today in India, the literacy rate of males is 76% and of females is 54 percent. In Nashik district, the picture is grimmer with only 49% females being literate. (District census handbook, 1995)

Social norms that support gender inequality stands one of the major causes of the backward status of women socially, economically, educationally, politically and health wise. Institutions such as religion, family, school, media, and marriage etc. work to propagate and confirm these pre-determined gender ideas and stereotype values in the upcoming generations. The effort to change the 'Gendered I' is composite. Individuals have gendered eyes- the way they perceive and experience the reality. We need to introduce a lens that might help them to look at the hidden aspects of social construction of gender and develop a wider perspective of the reality. Once the understanding of the 'Gendered I' changes, it will be beneficial to bring about a lasting change in the attitudes of men and women.

**Fig: 1- 'Gendered I'** (Ramaswamy Uma, 1982)



## SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY:

- **Mass-Education:** Women are imperative in creating, maintaining and enriching human life. Women bear and mostly rear the next generation and care for the elderly and infirm. They make vital contributions to cultural and community values and activities. Women have an indispensable role in the production of goods and services. Yet, in most societies women play an inferior role in decision making at all levels, including their own personal lives. Given appropriate information to develop understanding, individuals would have broader perspective towards gender realities.
- **Innovative educational resource:** A short documentary film and an interactive C.D. have been designed to discuss concepts related to Gender Equality. The existing means, to bring about gender awareness, like media and literature, are indirect and naïve. They sometimes give a distorted picture. A more direct message, presented in an interesting and interactive manner would work wonders. ODL could be of immense use due to its in-built flexibility and far reaching ability. Gender equality is of wider importance to the Indian community akin to AIDS, Terrorism or Immunization.
- **Re-define Gender Values:** 'The evolution of gender equality is possible only through a realization that change has to come from within. Gender equality education programmes should therefore be based on personalizing aspects of women's rights so as to assist in unlearning inherent prejudices and gender stereotypes.' (Naina Kapur, 1998) Current study has great potential to re-define biased gender values.
- **Accelerate development.** All the underdeveloped countries that suffer discrimination and injustice against women focus on achieving 'Gender Equality' by creating awareness, making supportive laws, curbing crime against women and striving to attain millennium educational goals. Present study can assist the cause.
- **Empowering women:** The present effort would intermingle with many other relevant issues of development like education, infanticide, health, declining sex ratio, AIDS, prostitution, early marriages, unequal wages, etc. to bring due realization and facilitate empowerment of women.
- **Intervention for change:** The specially devised research tool advocates a strong perspective to change wrongful beliefs and age-old malpractices by presenting socially important learning messages in an interesting, vivid and realistic series of experiences to achieve a desired impact.

## GENESIS OF STUDY MATERIAL:

### ➤ **Felt needs:**

Any study material originates out of the need to give specific knowledge to a particular target group. These felt needs emerge out of the situation at the beneficiaries' end. The statistics regarding violence against women does not complement the changing face of modern cities. In spite of increased literacy levels, higher educational accomplishments, modernization of living; evils of feticide, dowry deaths etc. are rampant in Indian metropolis. Technology is utilized to fulfill patriarchal goals. It was felt that if new knowledge about gender equality were introduced in cities, it would have a percolating effect. People in the cities are role models to towns and villages. Hence an urban population was selected for the present study. The initial survey made in the city of Nashik strongly established the need of the present study. With all the cosmopolitan and modern pretensions the people were found to have gender biased ideas and beliefs.

### ➤ **Formulating body of subject matter:**

An in-depth study of the concepts and postulates along with various social theories was done. Researches done in the field were reviewed to develop understanding about the subject of 'Gender Education.' Different attempts made by various NGOs to bring about gender awareness were examined in order to create a well-balanced reference material. Discussions were held with subject experts. Interactions with people working for the cause of women empowerment were interviewed who suggested the interventions needed.

➤ **Selection of the target audience:**

It is mandatory to identify the target group to devise a tailor-made learning material. Such customized learning objects prove to be an effective vehicle to convey desired messages. Such a tool would bring about a change in the knowledge and attitudes of target audience. Adult men and women of 18 years and above with working knowledge of computer operation were selected as target persons for the present study.

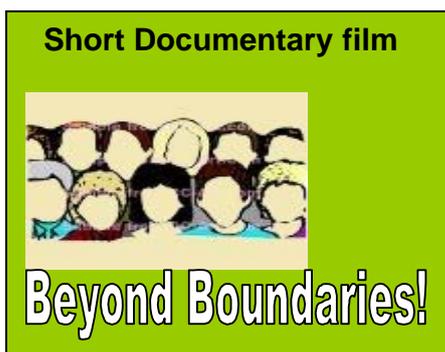
➤ **Selection of the tool:**

Multimedia is multi-sensory; it engages the senses of the learners. The topic was of mass-education. Hence a popular Indian mass medium called 'film' was incorporated in the tool to inform the users in an interesting way. A self-learning package of audio-visual presentation was considered best to give knowledge about 'Gender Education'. It made learning appealing and facilitated comprehension to create a lasting impact on the minds of the learners.

➤ **Conceptual mapping of the tool:**

**(A) Documentary film:**

Film is a mass medium. Its inclusion in self-learning package enhanced the scope. It proved extremely effective in driving the concepts across. Most of the viewers preferred to see the 'film' first and then were inspired to go through the interactive part. Since the subject was attention grabbing audience gave in total involvement.



Conceptual mapping of the documentary film involved narrowing down the approach and focusing on key points to be presented. It also called for working out the details and conceiving the storyline. Audio script was written and refined several times to make it a palatable and appealing acoustic material.

**(B) Self-Learning Interactive Multimedia Package:**

A wonderful blend of texts, graphics, still images, animation, video, and audio was used. It combined the storage and retrieval capabilities of computer database technology with advanced tools for viewing and manipulating the materials.



Assuming very basic skills in computer usage the operation was restricted to minimum keys using very sophisticated computer programmes. Instructions were given clearly. Special options were provided for less computer friendly learners. Documentary film familiarized viewers to the contents and generated interest while the Interactive part further informed the learner by discussing the subject from all angles.

#### **Features of the Self-Learning Interactive multimedia:**

- ✓ Easy language,
- ✓ Pin-pointed and essential tips,
- ✓ Appropriate examples and illustrations,
- ✓ Supportive pictures,
- ✓ Simple and user friendly design,
- ✓ Addition of a film to involve appeal of story-telling,
- ✓ *Relevance of the subject to people's lives.*

#### **Conceptual Mapping of interactive Multimedia and Film On Gender Education:**

- What is Gender?
- Areas of patriarchal control
  - Woman's Productive and labour power
  - Woman's Reproductive power
  - Sexuality of a woman
  - Woman's Mobility
  - Property and other economic resources
- Institutions supporting gender Biases:
  - 1) The family.
  - 2) Religion.
  - 3) The Legal System.
  - 4) Media.
  - 5) Politics.**
  - 6) Education and knowledge.
- Effects of Gender discrimination
- Types Of Violence Against Women

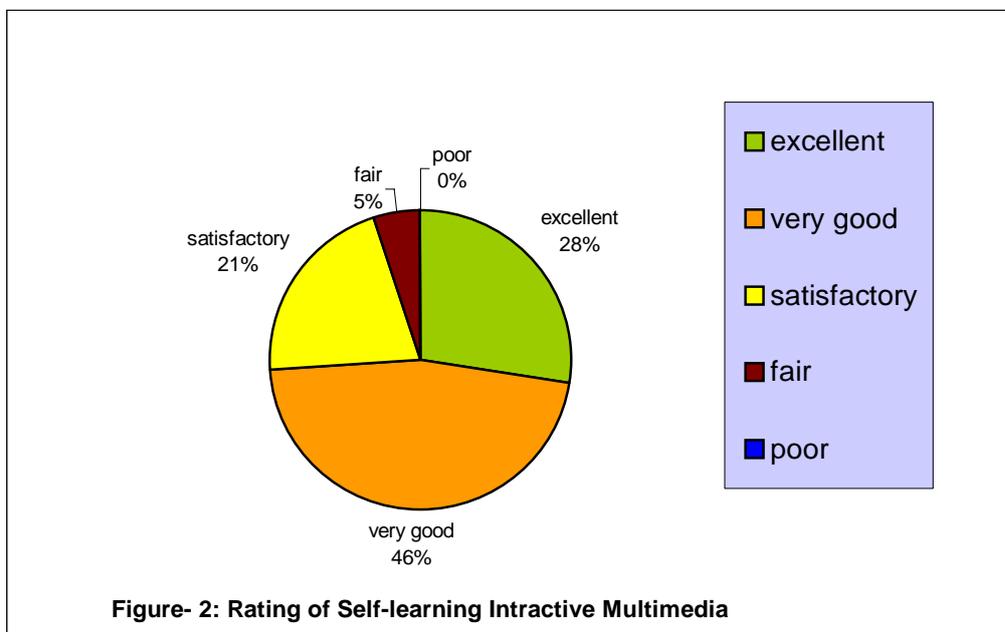
- Striking Statistics in India
- Striking Statistics in World
- Striking Statistics in Maharashtra State
- Women's support to the rule of men
- What do we aim at?
- If we succeed in developing a new attitude of Gender Equality....

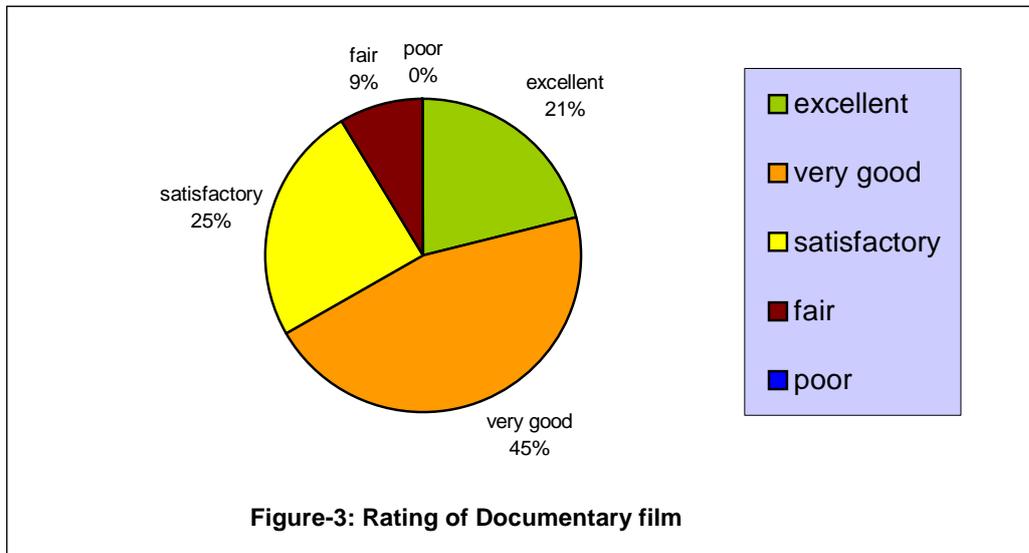
➤ **Validation from experts:**

Experts from various fields related to the development of the learning device did the rating of the tool on a five-point scale. Veteran experts working in the area of women's empowerment and gender equality, experienced professionals working in field of filmmaking and development of educational documentaries, qualified professionals having computer expertise with vast experience in the field of educational and developmental media, authorities in e-convergence technology, constituted the team of experts.

**Criteria for rating:**

- Meaningfulness of the content
- Validity of the Content
- Comprehensiveness
- Sequence of topics
- Presentation
- Language used
- Relevance of pictures
- Time duration





➤ **Qualitative Suggestions:**

Suggestions made by the experts were minor and the same were incorporated to further improve the quality of the tool and thereby to make it a more effective learning device.

➤ **Review and Implementation:**

Some of the experts reviewed the tool to approve the changes. The interactive multimedia as well as the documentary film was then ready to be used by beneficiaries.

**METHODOLOGY:**

- ◆ Development of the tool: An interactive multimedia package containing a documentary film and a self-learning computer programme was devised with a systematic process.
- ◆ Validation of Tool: 'Experts' from various related fields did critical appraisal of the tool.
- ◆ Target Audience: Adult men and women of 18 yrs and above with basic knowledge of computer usage constituted the target audience.
- ◆ Sample size: A representative sample of **837** individuals was selected with random sampling method.
- ◆ A 'pre-test and post-tests' pattern of research design was adopted for the current study.
- ◆ Pilot Testing: It was planned for 50 individuals. However, the mouth publicity created a ripple effect and ultimately a sample of 200 people requested participation and gave pilot test. Women as well as men falling in the age group of 18 to 52 years were exposed to this tool from city of Nashik near Mumbai.
- ◆ Enquiry technique: Exhaustive questionnaire of 93 items was administered before and after execution of the tool as pre-test and post-test.
- ◆ Pre-testing: To know the existing degree of gender biased viewpoint. Also highlighted the need of the present study.

- ◆ Execution: The tool was administered with target population and observations were made wherever possible.
- ◆ Post testing: Effectiveness and retention value of learnt concepts were determined by way of conducting a post-test.

**IMPORTANT FINDINGS:**

**Observations:**

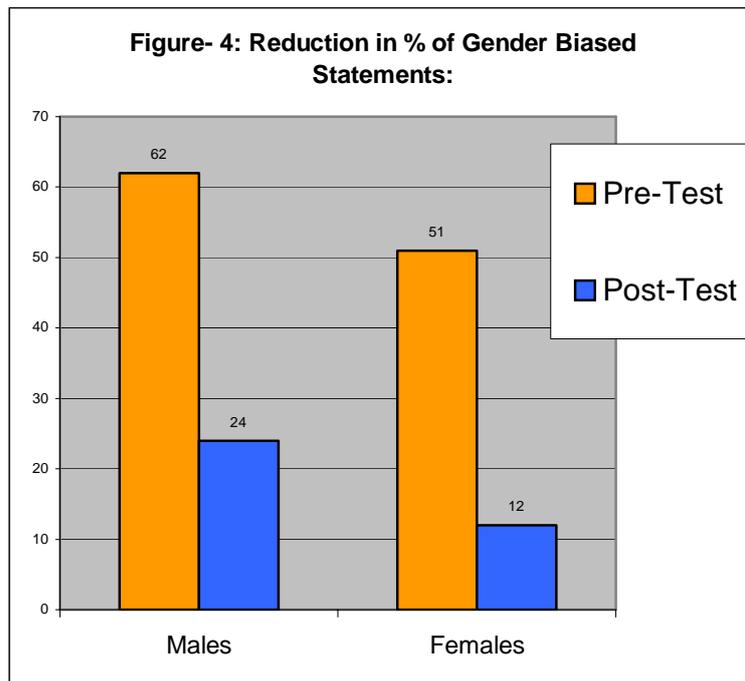
In pilot survey (sample size-200) various learning patterns and interesting learning outcomes, emerged. The younger age group (up to 30 yrs.) took lesser time to go through the entire multimedia package. Older age group (30 plus) took more time as they scrutinized each and every frame and lingered on sensitive issues, sometimes re-reading and repeating those portions. Discussions with the target audience revealed that the impact of the tool on learning was very positive.

**Results:**

Data gathered in pre and post test was concerning the following issues:

1. Adjectives used for Men and Women
2. Human Attributes & Gender
3. Gender Roles and Stereotypes
4. Household Work and Men
5. Outside Work and Females
6. Gender Privileges and Compulsions
7. Social Construction of Gender

Final Analysis	Pre-Test scores				Post-Test scores			
	Gender Biased statements in %		Gender Balanced statements in %		Gender Biased statements in %		Gender Balanced statements in %	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>88</b>



#### CONCLUSION:

In India 'Gender Equality' is a very sensitive and volatile issue. People in India are traditional minded. They adhere to their ethnic values and are proud of their culture and heritage. The effort of disseminating 'Gender Education' was therefore a challenging task. However, it can be said that this attempt was balanced and so has succeeded in changing people's attitudes without offending them. Human nature is not intrinsic; it is dynamic. It is possible for us to reconstruct our gender approaches to stress gender equilibrium. This harmony encompasses a wider experiential and awareness base that produces a complete whole which is necessary for social justice, a discrimination free existence and sustainable human development.

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