Social problem

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**Introduction**

Women are considered as half of the total population of the world and they are the ones who perform two-thirds of the work in the world. But unfortunately, they are also the ones who earn merely the one-tenth part of the world's income. For centuries they are treated unfairly and unjustly when it comes to civil rights. Whether it be the voting right or the job opportunity, they were always discriminated on the basis of gender (Ahmed, 2015). Society used to stereotype women in the feminine role and associated her responsibilities to look after the house. Whenever women tried to make a place in the world on their own conditions, society rejected her presence and objectified her appearance. She was always portrayed as a source of entertainment instead of inspiration in the mainstream media due to which her image suffered severe damage. In the world of men dominant society, it became hard for women to earn enough money peacefully as the harassment in the workplace became another dilemma for her. The pressures she used to handle kept on increasing and it took very long for the people to accept her socially accept her independence. After numerous social movements, sacrifices, setting examples and the fight for civil rights, women somehow managed to complete this race of gender and equality but she failed to end sexism. Sexism still exists in the today's world in the form of workplace harassment, sexual harassment, limited job opportunities and pressure of marriage on her etc due to which women alone cannot are unable to fight. *This paper will observe sexism and its prevalence in today's world and will also explore the ways it should be tackled. The aim of the essay is to help highlight sexism as a social issue and to analyze the adverse impact it has made on society.*

**Analysis**

Sexism is the most prevalent yet less talked about the social issue of society at the moment. Without even realizing, women have made sexism a part of their daily lives. It was severely common in the past but as times changed, many things came as a positive influence in the society. Sexism is however not a positive influence to make and made many hurdles on the lives of women in the workplace, in social life, family life etc. For many years’ women used to face sexual harassment in the workplace in the form of occupational sexism and didn't report the cases due to which the morale of guilty men boosted and they increased the practice. Even if some women dared to report the incident, they were either replaced or were tortured to stay quiet and accept the practice. Similarly, in Hollywood, actresses were paid far less than the men and were given side roles. Men were always showed to be a savior and the moral message used to be conveyed in a most sexist way possible. Females were always shown to be in a trouble, waiting for a man to rescue her. This mindset affected the youth's mentality and promoted the message in the society that men are in fact far superior to women.

Objectifying women is another form of sexism that limits the women's capabilities and potential and forces her to fit in the frame in which society wants her to be in. In the 1980s and 1990s, this level of sexism was on peak and more institutionalized than it is today. In this modern era of liberal perspectives, women are still criticized for not opting for a more stereotypic role in society. Society continuously undervalues woman's capabilities for the fields in which they are more capable than men.

Colored skin women face even more problems struggling with their careers than other women. There is a huge gap in earnings for the female members of the minority groups. For years, black women were treated almost invisible and were never given the chance to assist in higher management posts. They were always given the position of laborers due to race and gender discrimination. Glass ceiling effect makes it harder for the women to reach the topmost management posts and in the case of colored skin females, it becomes more like the concrete ceiling. Examples like acid attacks, rape, domestic violence, sexual abuse reflect the influence men have over the society and the control they exert over the other gender of the society i.e. women.

The social problem which society has in the form of sexism has made very adverse mental health effects on the health of women. Working women almost daily face kind of sexual harassment in the world which deteriorate her mental health and makes her quit. There are more cases of mental health issues found in women than in men (Willie, 2016). Due to mental pressure and the torture they face daily at the workplace and in family lives, they start showing the symptoms of different mental disorders most common of which are depression, anxiety, Post trauma Stress Syndrome etc (Willie, 2016). They quit jobs and are forced to be hired on lower paid jobs to ensure their security. In the last two years, there were some social movements organized for the support of women urging to end sexism e.g. #Metoo, #timesup etc. that threw light on the issue of social problem and informed the society about this decades-old issue.

In a society where women are not safe and secure and are always a center of social criticism, it becomes hard to attain a social balance. Sexism stops women from moving forward and provide a better future for their families. In the last few years, many women supported other women to come up and speak so that society receives awareness of the issues women face daily (Powell & Sang, 2015). Due to these efforts, many women revealed the issues of cyberstalking they face and the trauma they go through after experiencing sexual abuse. The real problem here is now that, even if the problems are quite for society to see, people still deny the truth. They still support the culprits and opt for the negative sanctions against the women who are victims. This is because of the fact that one gender is dominated over others in society and has the privilege to get away with all the wrongdoings. The structural sexism should be put to an end and for that, it is very important to change the mindset of the society. There is a need to change and divert the perception men has towards women and this can effectively be done through media. Media is a great source of social interaction and a medium of socialization which can be used positively to bring about improvement in the norms of existing society. Corrective measures in the form of corrective and responsible parenting will also help in removing gender discrimination and sexism from the coming generations.

Sexism is structural and will not be easily solved if steps are not taken in time to keep the social attitudes on the check. If a woman reports such an incident then after systematic investigation, the culprit should be given both formal and informal strong control measures for negativity in the form of law punishments, fines, life sentence etc.

**Sexism in Relation to the Sociology Concepts**

Sexism is often mixed with the various concepts of sociology like *stratification*, but there is a difference. Although sexism is also more or less based on the inequality issues faced in society its main focus is women only. Sexism is solely based on *gender discrimination* whereas stratification divides the people into groups in the society based on their social statuses. Sexism involves all the kinds that are *hostile sexism*, accidental sexism, ambivalent sexism, benevolent sexism etc. Most of the times sexism comes unintentionally in the form of jokes, comments, behavior that can be regarded as accidental sexism. In this kind, men unintentionally make fun of women without realizing the consequences. This type of sexism is treated like a source of fun and entertainment that does not seem to receive a reaction from women by whatever it does. Looking at the theoretical framework sexism has, ambivalent sexism can be used as a theoretical ground to help us understand the dimensions in which sexism works in sociology.

*Ambivalent sexism* comprises of mainly two sub-components which are hostile sexism and benevolent sexism. Hostile sexism deals with all the negative judgments and *stereotyping* woman's role in society. It promotes the idea that women are not competent and are inferior to men in every aspect (Renzetti et al.,2018). This type of sexism clearly rejects the sociology concept of *gender equality* and spreads negativity in the environment by emphasizing on the concepts of *exclusion.* The ambivalent framework has another component as well which is called benevolent sexism. Benevolent sexism concerns and views the women from apparently a more positive way from the eyes of the evaluator i.e. women needs protection and men are there to protect her. This component says that this set is very weak and needs to be protected. The ambivalent framework is also reviewed by many sociologists and they have also agreed for the existence of these two major components in the society. Looking at the concept of *ethnicity* under sexism, it will not be wrong to say that sexism along with ethnicity directly affects the role and responsibilities of the women in the society and disturbs the social balance of the society.

**Sociological Theories in Relation to Sexism**

Sociology has many theories that are implemented in how society really works. These sociological theories include functionalism theory, feminist theory, conflict theory, symbolic interactionism theory and many more. Evaluating sexism on the basis of all these theories, it is seen that sexism relates the most with the conflict theory and have contradictions with the functionalist theory. According to functionalism theory, both the genders exist in the society to maximize the social efficiency from the work assigned to them. They are here to ensure social stability and efficiency. But, sexism follows another spectrum as it does not all the functionalism theory to function properly in society. Sexism negatively affects society and decrease the social efficiency which has to be achieved by both the genders. Society is a complex kind of system which can only be operated if all the parts (genders) work together to promote stability and solidarity in society. Sexism is the total opposite of that approach and this is why is difficult to be related to functionalist theory.

Conflict theory is the one with which sexism works on the same level as this theory suggests men in a more dominant role and women as subordinate to men so that the power and privilege in the society can be maintained. The theory also emphasizes the gender inequality that is needed to run society for the maintenance of power and privilege (Glynn, 2017). Conflict theory says that men are privileged in all the cases and women have to accept the role or subordinates. Sexism also has an almost similar message to give in society.

**Conclusion**

Society has always used to stereotype women in the feminine role and associated her responsibilities under the supervision of men. Women have evolved and seek independence but unfortunately, the society we are living in is still the same. In a society where women are not safe and secure and are always a center of social criticism, it becomes hard to attain a social balance. Sexism stops women from moving forward and provide a better future for their families. The structural and institutional sexism should be put to an end and for that, it is very important to change the mindset of the whole society. There is a need to change and divert the perception men has towards women and this can only be done through media, corrective parenting, social awareness etc.

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