



FEMINIST IDENTITY AND SELF-CONCEPT AMONG WORKING WOMEN IN RELATION TO THEIR TYPE OF JOB

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Abstract

Women of sub continent and south East Asia are suppressed by the male dominant society from the centuries. The participation of the women in socio-economic development of country, besides their typical role at home, is gaining attention of policy makers and planers. Females have being struggling for many centuries to sustain their identity as an individual but somehow their efforts fail due to social, personal and other factors. In present time women are more conscious about their rights. Because of professional development they become more identity conscious but still maintenance of identity is difficult for them due to prevailing male dominance in Indian society. In the present study feminist identity test prepared by S.K. Bawa and Neeraz Sharma (2007) and self-concept questionnaire prepared by R.K. Saraswat (1984) were used. Results of the present study revealed that women working as teacher scored higher than self-employed women in feminist identity and self-concept. Significant difference was found in feminist identity and self-concept of women working as teacher and self-employed women. Positively significant relationship was found between feminist identity and self- concept of working women.

Keywords: Feminist identity, Self-concept, Teachers, Self-employed women.

INTRODUCTION

This is the story of man-made civilization wherein lies the tragedy of a woman. The life of average Indian women is still governed by customs, habits, prejudices and unwritten codes of conduct. The Indian society is averse to treating women as a human being. She has to undergo sex determination tests to know the gender of the child. Women also teased on streets but she like to remain mute because of the scare of exclusion. Most crimes against women go unreported. Eve teasing and sexual harassment is bitter reality, but it is true that women are being insulted almost every day, everywhere and every time. Swami Vivekananda had said that country and that nation which does not respect women will never become great. Women have almost

half of the population in the world according to rough idea. But the hegemonic masculine ideology made them suffer a lot as they were denied equal opportunities in different parts of the world.

Gender equality in any society is an important issue of concern. The participation of women in socio-economic development of a country, besides her typical role at home, is gaining attention of policy makers and planners. Women occupy a unique position in the society due to their importance in procreation of the human race. In the Vedic period women had an exalted position and enjoyed fair amount of freedom and equality. However, in the post-Vedic period, the position of women started declining. Manus stated “husband is the lord and master of his wife and he must be obeyed even if devoid of all virtues.” Further, widow-remarriage was also prohibited by Manusamhita. The physiological weakness of women makes her an easy prey to all. Even Tulsidas, in his Ramcharitmanas, had given adverse remarks against the women like “Dhol Gamar Shudra Pashu Nari Sakal Tadna key Adhikari” (drums, uncivilized, illiterates, lower caste, animal, and women are all fit to be punished). Besides, other indicators like pardha-system, tin talaq and the sati-system that was subjected to women only; are reflections of the history of women’s subordinate status. During the medieval period, the situation of women further deteriorated. The husband exercised greater control over wife. The wife, on account of her illiteracy and ignorance, became vulnerable. After independence, efforts had been made to promote women welfare. The constitution of India envisages that all human beings are equal before law, irrespective of their religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. Condition of the women is continuously improving in developing country like India due to uninterrupted efforts by feminist movement activist. Feminism is the belief that women should have economic, political, social equality with men. The term feminism also refers to a socio-political movement that works to get equality in each and every sphere of life.

Identity of one's own self is a personal process as it depicts the set of characteristics by which he is recognizable to others. It includes combination of values, beliefs and roles which makes the worth of an individual. The worth is compared with others and uniqueness is looked into, to name it as identity. People belong to different groups of society yet they have an identity to relate with a particular group to which they belong. Social or cultural identity is developed on the basis of social roles a person plays. According to psychologists, self-psychology in relation to self-esteem, self-concept and self-knowledge are the areas to build up the identity of a self. It is determined by exploration and commitments regarding personal or social traits of an individual. As far feminist identity is concerned, advocacy of equal rights for woman and man and commitment to improve the position of women in society has given a direction to women to determine her identity. Women development can only be achieved if identity is determined. It is as significant as one's personal identity. It includes all the attributes like behavioral, emotional and mental to characterize a woman as a unique individual. Feminist identity is one of major issue in present scenario which requires a thorough research. Feminism has its more

implications on practical side of life instead of theoretical. It is all about social, economic, cultural oppression on woman. Females have been struggling by many centuries to sustain their identity as an individual but somehow their efforts failed due to social, personal and any other factors. At present time women are more conscious about their rights, because of the professional development they become more identity conscious but still maintenance of identity is difficult for them due to the prevailing Indian male dominated society. But the present progressive era demand from the female is to realize herself and her power to change the world. No doubt the living trends and attitudes have changed but still many of the females have to compromise a lot in many situations, which hampers their identity. Females today are under extreme pressure as they have to maintain a balance between family and professional life which is certainly not an easy task. Female plays a significant role in the progress of the country as they serve many of the growing sectors. Education is one of the important sector through which future of our country is to be determine. So, we can say that working women helpful in maintaining social discipline and play their role as agent of change. The aim of present study was to explore feminist identity among working women in relation to their self-concept.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives for the study were:

1. To compare the feminist identity of women working as teacher and self-employed women.
2. To compare the self-concept of women working as teacher and self-employed women
3. To explore the relationship of feminist identity and self-concept of working women.

HYPOTHESES

Based on above mentioned objectives following hypotheses were framed:

1. There is no significant difference in the feminist identity of women working as teacher and self-employed women.
2. There is no significant difference in the self-concept of women working as teacher and self-employed women.
3. There is no significant relationship between feminist identity and self-concept of working women.

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

i. Sample

Employing survey type descriptive research, the present research included 200 working women with more than graduate qualification of Malerkotla tehsil of district Sangrur of Punjab. The sample of the study was further divided to 100 women working as a teacher in private schools and 100 self-employed women. It was also decided by the investigator to take data from the age group of 30-40 years only because feminist identity test was prepared according to different age norms.

ii. Tools

‘Feminist Identity Test’ prepared by S.K. Bawa and Neeraj Sharma in (2007) and ‘Self-Concept Questionnaire’ prepared by Raj Kumar Saraswat in (1984) was used for present study. After distributing the tools, the subject was asked to fill the preliminaries given at the top of the information sheet, name sex, age, name of school etc. After administering the tools the response sheets were scored.

iii. Statistical techniques

Mean, SD, t-test and Correlation were used to analysis of data.

RESULTS

Table 1

Comparison between Feminist Identity of women working as Teacher and Self-Employed Women

Group	df	Mean	SD	t-ratio
Teacher	198	160.7	11.68	5.543
Self employed		142.7	11.61	

Table 1 reveals that the mean scores of women working as teacher and self-employed women on variable feminist identity are 160.7 and 142.7 respectively. It can further observed that the standard deviation of women working as teacher and self-employed for the feminist identity is 11.68 and 11.61 respectively. The calculated t- ratio of feminist identity among women working as teacher and self-employed women is 5.543 which is found to be significant at 0.01 level. Thus, the hypothesis that stated “There is no significant difference in the feminist identity of women working as teacher and self-employed women” was rejected. So we can conclude there is significant difference between women working as teacher and self-employed women on feminist identity.

Table 2

Comparison in Self-Concept of Women Working as Teachers and Self-Employed Women

	df	Mean	SD	Table value		t-ratio
Teacher	198	180.2	14.511	.05 level	1.97	5.28
Self-employed		169.4	10.365	.01 level	2.60	

Table 2 reveals that the mean scores of teacher and self-employed working women on self-concept are 180.2 and 169.4 respectively. It was further observed that the standard deviation of teacher and self-employed on variable self-concept was 14.51 and 10.36 respectively. The calculated t- ratio is 5.282 which is found to be significant at 0.01 level. Thus, the hypothesis that stated “there is no significant difference in self-concept of self-employed women and women working as teacher”

was rejected. Thus it can be concluded that there is significant difference between women working as teacher and self-employed women on the variable self-concept.

Table 3

Correlation of Feminist Identity and Self-Concept of Working Women

Variables	N	r
Feminist Identity	200	r = 0.274
Self-Concept		

Table 3 shows the coefficient correlation between feminist identity and self-concept among working women. The coefficient of correlation between feminist identity and self- concept variable is found to be 0.274 that indicate low positive correlation between feminist identity and self- concept. As the hypothesis states “there is no significant relationship between feminist identity and self- concept of working women” is rejected.

The basis of analysis and interpretation of data, following conclusions can be drawn:

- There is significant difference in feminist identity of women working as teacher and self-employed women in favour of teachers.
- There is significant difference in self-concept of women working as teacher and self-employed women in favour of teachers..
- There is significant and positive relationship between feminist identity and self- concept of working women.

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