



ISSN (E): 2277-7695  
ISSN (P): 2349-8242  
NAAS Rating: 5.23  
TPI 2023; 12(2): 3724-3726  
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[www.thepharmajournal.com](http://www.thepharmajournal.com)

Received: 25-12-2022

Accepted: 30-01-2023

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## Conceptualization of gender development construct by the women students of Navsari Agricultural University

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### Abstract

This study examines the level of awareness about the gender development concept among women students in the Navsari Agricultural University, Gujarat, India. The study population was composed of women students of Agriculture, horticulture, forestry and veterinary science & animal husbandry. Sample size of the study is 140 and data were collected through self-administered surveys. The design for the data collection instrument was based on a literature review and focus group recommendations. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings showed that respondents thought they were having medium level of awareness about the gender development and its component namely gender analysis, gender sensitization, gender discrimination, gender equality, gender equity, gender mainstreaming and gender empowerment. The findings imply that there is a need for improvement in the awareness about the gender development. Extension education curricula need to be reviewed and updated, incorporating the gender development construct highlighted in this study.

**Keywords:** gender development, women students, gender analysis, gender sensitization

### Introduction

Gender is a social construct which is an integral component of every aspect of the social and economic lives of individuals in the society. The gender perspective looks at the impact of gender on people's opportunities, their social roles and interactions. Gender Development Index measures gender gaps in human development achievements by accounting for disparities between women and men through three basic components of human development *viz.*, health, knowledge and living standards. Researchers noted that contextual effects on women development efforts are varying among regions as well in communities. The planners and policy makers of India has precisely emphasized on gender analysis, gender sensitization, gender discrimination, gender equality, gender equity, gender mainstreaming and gender empowerment to form the various programmes regarding gender development.

### Methodology

The study sought to assess the awareness level of women students studying at Navsari Agricultural University about the concept of gender development. The study population comprised of women students of agriculture, horticulture, forestry and veterinary science & animal husbandry. An Ex-post-facto research design was used for the study. It was conducted among the girl students of studying in the faculties. 80 students of bachelor, 40 from masters and 20 from doctoral degree levels were selected randomly to make a total 140 as sample size for study. The data was collected through face-to-face contact (interview) and the collected data were analyzed by using arbitrary method, percentage, mean, standard deviation. A correlation of coefficient ( $r$ ) was also used to test the association between independent and dependent variables.

### Result and Discussion

#### Awareness about the gender development construct

Seven dimensions of gender development namely, gender analysis, gender sensitization, gender discrimination, gender equality, gender equity, gender mainstreaming and gender empowerment were separately measured for each respondent (Table-1)

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### Gender Analysis

Majority (77.14 per cent) of the girl students belonged to medium to higher level of awareness category. This reflects that the women students of Navsari Agricultural University possess inbuilt ability to analyze the situations.

Gender analysis is a type of socio-economic analysis that uncovers how gender relations affect a development problem. The aim may just be to show that gender relations will probably affect the solution, or to show how they will affect the solution and what could be done.

### Gender sensitization

Majority (67.15 per cent) of the girl students possessed medium level of awareness about gender sensitization followed by 20.00 and 12.85 per cent found in lower and higher level of awareness category respectively.

Gender sensitization is the teaching of gender sensitivity and encouragement of behaviour modification through raising awareness of gender equality concerns. The goal of gender sensitization is address issues in gender equality and encourage participants to pursue solutions.

### Gender discrimination

Majority (67.15 per cent) of the girl students belonged to medium level of awareness about gender discrimination category, followed by 24.28 and 8.57 per cent found in lower and higher level of awareness about gender discrimination categories respectively.

Gender discrimination is the unequal or disadvantageous treatment or group of individual based on gender.

### Gender equality

Majority (71.43 per cent) of the girl students belonged to medium level of awareness about gender equality category, followed by 15.00 and 13.57 per cent found in lower and higher level of awareness about gender equality categories respectively.

Gender equality is the state of equal access to resources and opportunities regardless of gender, including economic participation and decision making and the state valuing different behaviors, aspirations and needs equally, regardless of gender.

### Gender equity

Majority (60.00 per cent) of the girl students belonged to medium level of awareness about gender equity category, followed by 24.28 and 15.72 per cent found in lower and higher level of awareness about gender equity categories respectively.

Gender equity is the equal treatment or treatment that might be considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations, and opportunities.

### Gender mainstreaming

Majority (77.86 per cent) of the girl students belonged to medium level of awareness about gender mainstreaming category, followed by 14.28 and 7.86 per cent found in lower and higher level of awareness about gender mainstreaming categories respectively.

Gender mainstreaming is a strategy to improve the quality of public policies, programmes and projects, ensuring a more efficient allocation of resources. Better results mean increased well being for both women and men, and the creation of a

more socially just and sustainable society.

### Gender empowerment

Majority (83.57 per cent) of the women students belonged to medium to higher level of awareness about gender empowerment categories.

Gender empowerment is the empowerment of people of any gender. While conventionally, the aspect of it is mentioned for empowerment of women, the concept stresses the distinction between biological sex and gender as a role, also referring to other marginalized genders in a particular political or social context.

### Gender development

Majority (70.00 per cent) of the girl students belonged to the medium level of awareness about gender development, followed by low (16.42 per cent) and high (13.85 per cent) levels of awareness about gender development.

The result is in line with the findings of Mikkola and Miles (2007)<sup>[4]</sup>, Barodia (2015)<sup>[1]</sup>, Mutanana and Bukaliya (2015)<sup>[5]</sup>.

**Table 1:** Component wise distribution of the women students according to their level of awareness (n= 140)

Sl. No	Awareness about gender analysis	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low	30	22.86
2	Medium	76	54.28
3	High	34	22.86
Sl. No	Awareness about gender sensitization	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low	28	20.00
2	Medium	94	67.15
3	High	18	12.85
Sl. No	Awareness about gender discrimination	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low	12	08.57
2	Medium	94	67.15
3	High	34	24.28
Sl. No	Awareness about gender equality	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low	21	15.00
2	Medium	100	71.43
3	High	19	13.57
Sr.	Awareness about gender equity	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low	22	15.72
2	Medium	84	60.00
3	High	34	24.28
Sr.	Awareness about gender mainstreaming	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low	11	07.86
2	Medium	109	77.86
3	High	20	14.28
Sr.	Awareness about gender empowerment	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low	23	16.43
2	Medium	88	62.85
3	High	29	20.72

**Table 2:** Distribution of the girl students according to their level of awareness about gender development (n= 140)

Sr.	Awareness about gender development	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low	23	16.42
2	Medium	98	70.00
3	High	19	13.58

## Conclusion

The study observed that majority of the women students of Navsari Agricultural University had medium level of awareness about the gender development construct. Further the study also revealed that majority of the women students had medium level of awareness about the seven dimension of gender development namely gender analysis, gender sensitization, gender discrimination, gender equality, gender equity, gender mainstreaming and gender empowerment. Accelerating Gender Equality and investing in empowerment generates large economic gains. No society can develop sustainably without transforming and amplifying the distribution of opportunities, resources, and choices for men and women so that they have equal power to shape their own lives and contribute to their families, communities, and countries.

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