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Measuring gender role attitude of Indian population

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Abstract

Gender role attitude has gained considerable attention over the past three decades as the concern of the society shifts from male dominance to the liberation of female sex. This attitude of a country's population helps in explaining deep rooted gender sensitivity in its society. Present article throws light on gender role attitude measurement scales used in different countries with an aim to prepare an instrument for developing country like India. This paper discusses the scales from 1972 to 2011 with reference to their heads, items, content, usages and compatibility with Indian population. While reviewing the variety of scales it was found that the relevance of the old scales in today's scenario is questionable as attitudes are changing constantly. Since religion, culture and geography poses a big impact on developing attitude of a person, thus to judge the gender role attitude of any region or country the measuring items of the scale should be selected which are capable enough to draw the true information. A common scale with items addressing to both men and women without predicting their backgrounds would serve the purpose. A common scale for the entire world seems to be a far fetched idea as it is directed by the socio-cultural environment of countries.

Key Words: Gender roles, gender role attitude, measurement scale, domestic work.

Introduction

In general terms Gender roles are inflicted by the roles a man and woman performing. Traditional role attitude when women stay at home and are being responsible for domestic work or modern when man and women both are bread earners and divide domestic tasks equally. In past few years different terms have been used for it i.e. Sex role attitude^[1], gender role attitude^[2], gender role orientation^[3] and gender role ideology^[4]. Gender or sex role orientation refers to the beliefs individuals hold about normal roles of men and women in meeting family and work responsibilities (Bird et al. 1984) or normative conceptions of appropriate behaviour for males and females^[3]. Gender role attitude are people's beliefs about the appropriate roles and obligations of women and men^[2] and Gender role ideology refers to the introduction of value judgments, the roles men and women should occupy, of the traits they should differentially possess^[5].

Gender is the symbolic role definition attributed to members of a sex on the basis of historically constructed interpretations of the nature, disposition, and role of members of that sex^[6]. According to above definition males are supposed to be adventurous, assertive, aggressive, independent and task oriented as a breadwinner, whereas females are seen as more sensitive, gentle, dependent, emotional and people oriented as a care taker.

This gender role attitude is determined by a person's place, religion and culture. Studies have shown that replacement in native places contributes to the shift in average gender-role attitudes in many countries^[7]. On the other hand, there is evidence that

individuals may experience changes in their attitudes later in life if they are exposed to different beliefs^[8]. Women and men who belong to and participate in conservative denominations are typically more traditional in their gender role orientations than are those with weaker religious ties. Studies have also proved that Women who belong to and participate in orthodox Jewish and conservative Christian denominations, where issues regarding the family and gender roles are particularly important, hold more traditional gender role attitudes than women who belong to more moderate denominations of who have no religious affiliation^[9]^[10]. Thus geography, religion and culture do affect gender role attitude of a person so it is very important to keep this in mind while preparing measurement tool for this.

India is a south Asian country and second most populous with 131 million of population in the world. It is the largest country in Indian subcontinent and 7th largest country in the world is evolved from Indus valley Civilization, one of the oldest civilizations of the world. India contains 32 states and 7 union territories with different languages, cuisines and traditions. India is also religiously diverse with Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Islam, Christianity and Jainism. A person's attitude is made up of his surroundings e.g. culture, tradition and religion and scales measuring gender role attitude should be made up according to the target population. It will be very interesting to know how we can measure gender role attitude of Indian population with existing scales.

Scales measuring Gender Role Attitude

To measure the Gender role attitude in men and women lots of scales have been developed with different objectives. This article reviews certain scales like Attitude towards women scale (1972), Osmond martin Sex role attitude scale (1974), Sexist attitudes toward women scale (1980), Attitude towards men scale (1983), ENRICH (1985), Sex role egalitarian scale (1995), Neo sexism scale (1995), The Old fashioned and modern sexism scale (1995), The Ambivalent sexism inventory (1996), Gender role beliefs scale (1996) Gender equitable men scale (2007) and Indian gender role identity scale (2011). The discussion over gender role attitude scales is focused on items, heads and their relevance in Indian context of these scales.

A Comparative Analysis:

Objectives:

All the scales are different from each other on the basis with what intention for they are measuring gender role attitude. According to table no -1 objectives of each scale are different and respondents are also different. AWS only aims to measure attitude towards women of men and women. This scale is used more than 400 times^[11] while AMS is proposed to measure attitude towards men of men and women. While AWS and AMS proposed to measure only attitude toward women or men Osmond Martin Sex Role Attitude scale (1974) proposed to measure gender role attitude of men and women towards both the genders. SRES made to measure sex role egalitarianism while IGRIS is an inventory scale to measure feminism, masculinity and neutral of males and females. The Attitudes toward men scale^[12] was developed to survey women's attitudes about men. Old fashioned and Modern sexism scale^[13] was developed to assess what type of attitude men and women possess according to their sex. Neo Sexism Scale^[14] was developed to assess better subtle sexism. Gender role beliefs scale (GRBS) was developed to measure beliefs of people about their genders. Benson and Vincent developed Sexist attitudes toward women scale (SATWS) in 1980 with objective to measure tendency toward and support for sexist attitudes^[15]. Because other scales do not distinguish between hostile and benevolent forms of sexist beliefs Ambivalent Sexism Inventory was developed by^[16] Glick and Fiske in 1996.^[16] Glick and Fiske (1996), named these two distinct aspects of attitudes toward women as Benevolent Sexism (i.e., the positive side) and Hostile Sexism (i.e., the negative side), which together form Ambivalent Sexism. Equalitarian Roles part of ENRICH scale was developed with the objective to measure attitude of men and women toward their role's equality. Gender Equitable Men (GEM) scale was developed by^[17] Julie Pulerwitz in 2007 with objective to measure attitudes toward gender norms in intimate relationships or differing social expectations for men and women.

Heads and Items:

Heads of each scale are made up according to their objectives normally; they are societal expected roles and responsibilities for men and women. According to table no -1 AWS has a separate head for men and women's roles and responsibilities, similarly AMS has marriage and parenthood domain, SRES has marital and parental roles, Osmond-martin has Familial and extra-familial roles, ASI has domain name power related roles and GEM has a domain name domestic chores. In GRBS there is no domain classification but a statement like "The husband should be regarded as the legal representative of the family in all the matters of law" clearly falls under the category of roles and responsibility. But scales like Neo sexism and Modern and old fashioned sexism scale contain different type of statements that only show attitude of men and women toward men and women. For example in Modern and Old fashioned sexism scale "Women are generally not as smart as men" this item shows the capability of a woman and its responses will show what attitude men and women have about it. Indian Gender Role Identity Scale (IGRI) is an inventory scale which covers masculine and feminine attitude of a person only.

The original AWS contained 55 items, but an abbreviated version contains 15 items. There are three heads of this scale Men and women's rights, roles and responsibilities. For example "There are many jobs in which men should be given preference over women in being hired or promoted" this statement is related to women's rights and equality. If a man select the response "agree" that means he support the biasness happening towards women in job recruitment or vice versa. Attitude towards men scale has four heads- marriage and parenthood, sexuality, work, and physical and personal attributes. Subscales were constructed for each domain. All 32 items are descriptive statements e.g., "Most husbands consider their wives to be weak and witless creatures" prepared with four point Likert type rating scale. The majority of items for marriage, parenthood, and sexuality are made in negative manner e.g., "Men consider marriage a trap". **SRES** items cover five heads marital roles, parental roles, educational roles, employment and social-heterosexual roles of men and women. This scale is bidirectional because it measures attitude of both genders. Heads are believed to be relevant to an adult's life. ^[18]King and King said these content categories may not be exhaustive of all gender related aspects but felt that role statements developed within these categories is broadly shared and meaningful to most adults. For example a statement in employment roles domain i.e. "Women can handle job pressures as well as men can", is a predictor of what men and women think of capability a woman have. So SRES is a scale which covers a wide range of statements regarding roles and responsibilities of men and women. But this scale has a neutral point on the series of responses that is a big limitation because it may be difficult to feel neutral about any statement ^[18]. Having a response like neutral and do not know are the easiest way out of a respondent who do not want to answer of a certain statement. Neo Sexism Scale contains total 11 items with 7 point Likert type rating scale. This scale mainly focussed on support for public policies designed to enhance the status of women. Respondents with higher levels of neo-sexism are less likely to support government policies directed at women ^[19](Campbell et al. 1977). For example "Over the past few years, women have gotten more from the government than they deserve" this statement is a clear predictor of what people think in support of policies made for women in the country. According to ^[20]Swim and Cohen Neo-sexism scale is better able to assess covert and subtle sexism (unequal treatment of men and women in hidden manner). The GRBS includes 20 items with responses measured on a 7-point scale where 1 equals "strongly agree," 4 equals "undecided," and 7 equals "strongly disagree." Six items are reversed scored. Higher scores indicate more feminist gender role beliefs and lower scores more traditional gender role beliefs. There are no heads classified in the scale but all the items are related to societal expectation from men and women, gender equality, decision making and women's rights. For example the item " Women with children should not work outside the home if they don't have to financially" is related to traditional role of women where she stay at home and take care of the children but men with the same circumstances work outside the home and do not support in domestic work or child rearing. ^[21]Thompson, Bryan and Mahaffey (2007), has confirmed the reliability of this scale. The Old fashioned and Modern Sexism Scale's items have two heads traditional and modern attitude. Old fashioned contains 5 and modern sexism scale contains total 8 items with five points Likert type rating scale from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree. Items of this scale measure the

actual condition with the help of contradictory items. For example in one item “Discrimination against women is no longer a problem in our country” response “Agree” will show equality in the country of the respondent. Another item “It is easy to understand the anger of women’s group in the country” with again a response “Agree” will indicate the actual condition that in this country women are still fighting for gender equality.^[20]Swim and Cohen (1997), suggested Old fashioned and Modern sexism scale is a better option for those researchers who wish to identify those individuals who tend not to notice gender inequalities in the society. Studies like ^[1]Mchugh and Freize (1997) and ^[19]Campbell et al. (1997) used this scale in their researches.

SATWS scale includes 40 items. Each item is rated on a 7-point scale from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” (high score = high sexism). The items concern 6 content areas: 1) Attitudes that women are genetically inferior (emotionally, biologically, intellectually) to men, 2) Belief for the premise that men are entitled to greater power, prestige, and social advantage, 3) Hostility toward women who engage in traditionally masculine roles and behaviours or who fail to fulfil traditional female roles, 4) Lack of support and empathy for the women’s liberation movement and the issues involved in such a movement 5) Use of derogatory labels and restrictive stereotypes in describing women 6) Evaluation of women on the basis of attractiveness information and willingness to treat women as sexual objects 24 items are sexist remarks and 16 are non-sexist ones (requiring inverse scoring). “I think that men are instinctually more competitive than women” this item is showing inferior attitude of women toward men. SATWS appears to be a better measure for sexism than scales that assess only one or two of the components of sexism. The ambivalent sexism scale has three heads which are dominative and protective paternalism, competitive gender differentiation and hostile and intimate heterosexuality. This scale contains 22 items rated on 6 point Likert type rating scale. One item of hostile sexism is “The world would be a better place if women supported men more and criticized them less” and for benevolent sexism “Every woman should have a man to whom she can turn for help in times of trouble”. These both items are the example of dominative and protective paternalism domain. Osmond Martin Sex Role Attitude scale (1974), has four heads with 32 items and a five point Likert type rating responses. A lower score on the scale indicates “modern” attitude and higher score reflects “traditional” attitude of the respondents. All the four heads and items help in identifying which type of role and responsibilities a person want or should bear either modern in which men and women equally divide their work or traditional where they opt according to their gender. For example if men women tick “agree” response of an item from familial roles domain “Men should take the same amount of responsibility as women in caring for home and children” this will show that men and women possess modern attitude.

Indian gender role Identity Scale has 200 items with seven point Likert type rating. This is actually inspired by Bem’s scale. Items are divided under three heads masculine, feminine and neutral. Few examples of each heads are like under masculine- ambitious, assertive, wise, under feminine- delicate, graceful, quite, under neutral- helpful, tactful and friendly. In ENRICH scale only Equalitarian Roles part is used in this paper which contains total 10 items with no special head. Items are addressed to both husband and wife. Items have covered areas like domestic work, decision making, marriage and child care. For example “The husband should have the final word in most of the important decisions on our family” is covering the area of role of husband and wife regarding decision making process at household level. Gender Equitable Men (GEM) scale has five heads- Violence, Sexual relationships, Homophobia, Domestic chores and daily life and Reproductive health and disease prevention. Scale contains total 24 item statements and two subscales with three point Likert type rating scale. An example from domestic chores domain is “Changing diapers, giving a bath, and feeding kids is the mother's responsibility”. This will easily measure traditional or egalitarian, which one attitude man and woman possess about child care tasks.

Language:

The main common feature in all the above scales is that they have tilted language. For example in AWS items are included which only show that woman is disadvantaged and man is advantaged. Men can do anything but women should not do. So the

scales which are made to assess attitude of gender role independently is somehow biased. All the items are addressed with “man should” and “Women should” they are all gendered. There is a big lack for common items which are supposed to address no one or may be both man and woman. Some items should be common for men and women so that their independent attitude can come out. For example an item “Women should be cherished and protected by men”^[16] is tilted towards men’s advantaged position in the society. Similarly “A women should obey her husband in all things” (GEM Scale 2011) also showing that the writer of the items has kept the phenomenon of traditional status in our society while formulating these items. In the category of rights of men and women most of the items in all the reported scales contains items for women only. That shows that men has all the rights but women do not. For example “Women should less worry about their rights and more about becoming good wives and mothers”^[22]. There is a huge lack for some common items which will actually show the current status of attitude men and women are having. In the head of decision making at home contains all the items addressing men. Because in traditional gender role attitude men are supposed to be decision maker. For example “A man should have the final word about decisions in his home”^[23](ICRW 2011) this item is clearly showing traditional gender role attitude of our society. But now the time has changed so scales should contain items which should not be addressed to any one in particular. Items of scales should not contain gendered language.

Relevance in Indian Context:

In the Indian context AWS has two items “A woman should be as free as a man to propose marriage” and “Women earning as much as their dates should bear equally the expenses when they go out together” which may be irrelevant because most of the population lives in rural area where phenomena of dating and proposing marriage does not even exist. In most of the studies AWS was used and reframed according to the requirement of the researchers. AWS has been used in last few decades by^[24]Etaugh(1975),^[25]Bankart(1985),^[26]Bailey (1990),^[27]Rice (1995),^[28]Frieze et.al (2003) and by many more researchers. This scale identifies subtle sexist beliefs because these individuals are not likely to indicate openly that they support traditional gender roles. About AMS^[29]Maltby and Day (2001) commented that even decades after the scale’s development, the items remain relevant, psychometrically reliable, and discriminating. It can also be used over Indian population by removing uncommon words like “Witless” and adding more common words like “Foolish”. In Indian scenario the items of SRES are quite clear and relevant but item “A woman should be careful not to appear smarter than the man she is dating” can be changed with any other more relevant item because dating is not common in Indian scenario e.g. “Females should not go out and travel and have friends like males” both are showing socially expected traditional attitude of a woman.

The Old Fashioned and Modern Sexism Scale to use this scale in any other country a researcher has to change the name of the country from two items where author has mentioned the name United States. Few items can also be added which shows sexist attitude related to culture of Indian population to make it more relevant and clear.

Neo sexism scale: The language and content of items of this scale are not limited to a country or a region this scale can be widely used even in today’s scenario. The relevance of few items of GRBS scale in Indian context is questionable because items have been made for western countries. For example “When sitting down at the table, proper respect demands that the gentleman hold the lady’s chair” and “ I see nothing wrong with woman who does not like to wear skirts or dresses” shows cultural background of western countries which is rare in India. So if a researcher wants to use this scale has to make few big changes in the language of the items by using name of actual Indian women feminine outfits like Sarees/Ghaghra/Salwaar-kameez instead of word “skirt”. (SATWS) Despite of a good construct this scale was not widely used and it was constructed for population of USA by keeping in mind their stereotypes of that era so it is difficult to recommend for Indian population or any other developing country. Ambivalent and sexism: All the items of the scale can be used over Indian population by changing little bit of it is language since it is a very old scale. In Osmond martin scale a researcher needs to change few items before using it for Indian population e.g. “I would vote for a woman for President of the United States” to make it more relevant. There

are several terms which are used in this scale i.e. sex appeal, superior species and genetic make-up required to be changed to make it more comprehensive for Indian population. Since the meaning of masculinity and femininity differs widely across cultures Indian Gender Role Identity Scale was developed by Basu in 2010 for Indian citizens only^[30].

ENRICH scale can be used in Indian context as it does not have any cultural influence in its items. Gender Equitable Men (GEM) This scale is used in various countries like Brazil, China, Utopia, India, Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda^[31, 32] so it is suitable for Indian population.

All the scales are use full for any study which is intended to assess gender role attitude of men and women. But since every researcher has his or her own purpose to measure gender role attitude so using the scales as they are may not be possible. Even the relevance of few old constructed scales e.g. AWS and AMS have become questionable.^[33] Gibbons, Hamby and Dannis (1997) said that respondents of the study feel like that the items of scales made in 70s, 80s, 90s are now out dated. Many researchers^[26, 34, 35] had changed the statements and made a self-administered scale according to the purpose of their study.

And if any researcher wants to use any of the above discussed scale in a developing country like India he or she has to make big changes in the content of a scale. Language of the item and content should represent the Indian society. Terms should be familiar to Indian population. A mixture of above scale can also be a good idea to make a scale with covering all the aspects of gender role attitude.

Conclusion

All the scales discussed in this paper have different focus areas. As AWS was focused on women's roles in the public sphere including employment, education and politics in both traditional and non-traditional sphere. The sex role egalitarianism scale^[18] addresses both men and women in traditional and non-traditional roles. The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory^[16] includes more interpersonal domains such as heterosexuality. Focus being different, all scales contain items regarding roles and responsibilities of men and women which depend upon culture and country. Due to the differences in the degree of performing role and responsibilities the scales made for a one country cannot be used in another country to draw the Gender Role Attitude of that area. In terms of language, items of the almost all the scales are all tilted in one side; they are addressed to men and women in terms of their status in society. It is concluded that a self-administered scale will only be useful to study gender role attitude in a particular country. Items of scale should not contain gendered language instead they can be gender neutral. Some items should be common for men and women so that their independent attitude can be evaluated. There is a huge lack for some common items which are not actually formulated by keeping gender in mind. Only these types of items will only be able to measure current attitude men and women are having toward each other.

Due to lack of standardized scale specifically made up for Indian population, hence only a self-administered scale is recommended for Indian population. The scale should be made up according to socio-cultural environment of India. First researcher should refer all the available gender role attitude scales and filter items appropriate for Indian population. Second, inclusion of all the heads related to roles of men and women e.g. employment, domestic work and marriage is highly suggested. Third, since the culture has an effect on gender role attitude of people the language of the statements should reflect the Indian culture and tradition. Fourth, few common items addressed to both man and woman should be incorporated. Most of the scales were made up for western countries so content of the items are not suitable for Indian population. There is a huge lack of standardized international scales on such topic, thus a scale with specific objective and cultural relevance should be made up and validated country by country.

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Table no- 1**Gender role attitude measurement scales**

S. no.	Name of scale	Author and Year	Objectives of the scale	Heads of scale	No. of Items
1	The Attitude Toward Women Scale (AWS)	Spence and Helmreich (1972)	To assess people's beliefs about the rights, roles, and responsibilities of women (Versus those of men)	Women and Men's Rights	55
				Roles	brief version 15
				Responsibilities	
2	Attitudes toward men scale (AMS)	Iazzo (1983)	To assess women's attitude toward men.	Marriage and parenthood	32
				Sexuality	
				Work	
				Physical and personal attributes	
3	Sex Egalitarianism Role Scale (SRES)	Beere et. At.(1984)	To assess an attitude that causes one to respond to another individual independently of the individual's sex.	Marital roles	95 (full)
				Parental roles	25 (abbreviated)
				Employment roles	
				Social-heterosexual roles	
				Educational roles	
4	Sexist attitudes toward women scale (SATWS)	Benson and Vincent (1980)	Sexist attitudes of individuals	The attitude that women are inferior	40
				Support for man having greater rights and power	
				Support for sex discrimination in the US	
				Lack of support for women's movement	
				having/using derogatory labels and stereotypes	
				Evaluating women based on physical attractiveness	
5	Old fashioned and Modern sexism scale	Swim et.al (1995)	To assess type of attitude men and women possess according to their sexes.	Traditional	13
				Modern	
6	Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI)	Glick and Fiske (1996)	To measure Hostile sexism and benevolent sexism	Power	22
				Gender Differentiation	
				Heterosexuality	
7	Indian Gender Role Identity Scale (IGRI)	Basu (2011)	To measure gender role identity as Feminine and Masculine	Masculine	200
				Feminine	
				Neutral	
8	Osmond martin Sex	Osmond martin	To measure sex	Familial roles	32

	role attitude scale (SRA)	(1974)	role attitude	Extra familial roles stereotypes of male female Social change	
9	Neo sexism scale	Tougus et. al.(1995)	Sex scale	Not mentioned specifically	11
10	Gender role beliefs scale (GRBS)	Kerr and Holden (1996)	To measure the gender role beliefs of men and women.	Not mentioned specifically	20
11	Enriching and nurturing relationship issues, communication and happiness-Equalitarian Roles Scale-(ENRICH)	Olson, Fournier and Druckman (1985)	To measure gender roles of man and woman.	Not mentioned specifically	10
12	Gender equitable men Scale (GEM)	Julie Pulerwitz(2007)	To measure attitudes toward gender norms in intimate relationships or differing social expectations for men and women	Violence Sexual relationship Homophobia Domestic chores and daily life	24