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Transformation of Women Aggression to Women Empowerment: A Grounded Theory Approach

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Abstract

Aggression is a prevalent malady afflicting society and it can be experienced by any individual in any forming his life time. If we talk about women aggression, it has been taken as negative trait socially. Studies by Jack (1999) have revealed that women aggression is a form of interaction, forcefully bringing ones will desires and voices into a relationship for either destructive or constructive purposes. Women aggression is characterized by subjugation and oppression but at the same time women empowerment also results from this aggression. Transformation of women aggression to women empowerment has various aspects and angles hidden in it. How does this transformation can take place? What are the causes of aggression in women? Which are the different factors responsible for it? How do women see their aggressiveness? How do they express it? Study of these dimensions requires Qualitative methods to explore the intricacies and unearth the hidden aspects. This study uses Grounded Theory methodology to uncover the realities.

Key Words: Aggression, Women Aggression, Qualitative Methods, Grounded Theory Methods.

Neera Chopra, mother of Pooja Chopra, Miss India 2009 walked out of her marital house and her husband, who wanted sons, to raise her daughters with dignity. She lived a life full of difficulties but emerged as winner. Sabrina Lall, sister of Jessica Lall, who was murdered in Delhi, fought for her sister and got her justice. On June 16th 2007, 25 years old lieutenant Sushmita Chakrabarty committed suicide in J& K, on account of harassment in army.

All these above instances have suffering and aggression in common, these women went through their share of injustice and pain and had aggression in them but what separates them from each other is their way of expression of their

aggression, which decided whether they succumbed to pressures leading to destruction or they used their aggression constructively leading to empowerment.

Aggression is a prevalent malady afflicting society and it can be experienced by any individual in any forming his life time. Mostly Men are considered to be aggressive and their aggression is taken as "Masculine Trait" and Women are at the receiving end of this aggression. Women aggression is characterized by submission and subjugation.

If we trace the roots of aggression, it has been explained as an "Instinct" (Psychoanalytical Theory, Freud), as life

instinct or Eros. It can be further explained as a drive energy to achieve goals. This aggression energy if used constructively can lead to accomplishment of goals.

If we talk about women aggression, it has been taken as negative trait socially (social conditioning theory, Bandura, 1964) in women to express their aggression and they have always internalize this and shown their aggression by submitting themselves to authority. Studies by Jack (1999) have revealed that women aggression is a form of interaction, forcefully bringing ones will desires and voices into a relationship for either destructive or constructive purposes. Cross and Madson (1997) and Baumeister and Sommer (1997) have already expanded that women aggression is driven by need to achieve higher level of attention and emotional support.

This highlights the fact that years of subjugation and oppression has aroused the need and drive in women to achieve independence and to live her life in her own way. If this is not fulfilled it leads to frustration and eventually aggression (Frustration –Aggression Theory, Berkowitz, 1962). If this desire to achieve status gets fulfilled, it leads to empowerment which shows that if this pent up aggression is used constructively it can lead to empowerment of women, this drive energy has the power to lift the status of women in society & lease her from clutches of dominance, oppression and exploitation.

Transformation of women aggression to women empowerment has various

aspects and angles hidden in it. How does this transformation can take place? What are the causes of aggression in women? Which are the different factors responsible for it? How do women see their aggressiveness? How do they express it?

The list of Questions is endless because here we are dealing with complex nature of women, her social & personal experiences, her life and to study this transformation, we need to study such women very closely, we have to delve into their lives, share their experiences, their agonies and moments of pain and achievement.

Such study cannot be done by scratching the surface and collecting the material, this requires breaking the shell, to reach the interior of women's heart and emotions, their will & to know their weakness and strength and to empathize with them (social learning theory).

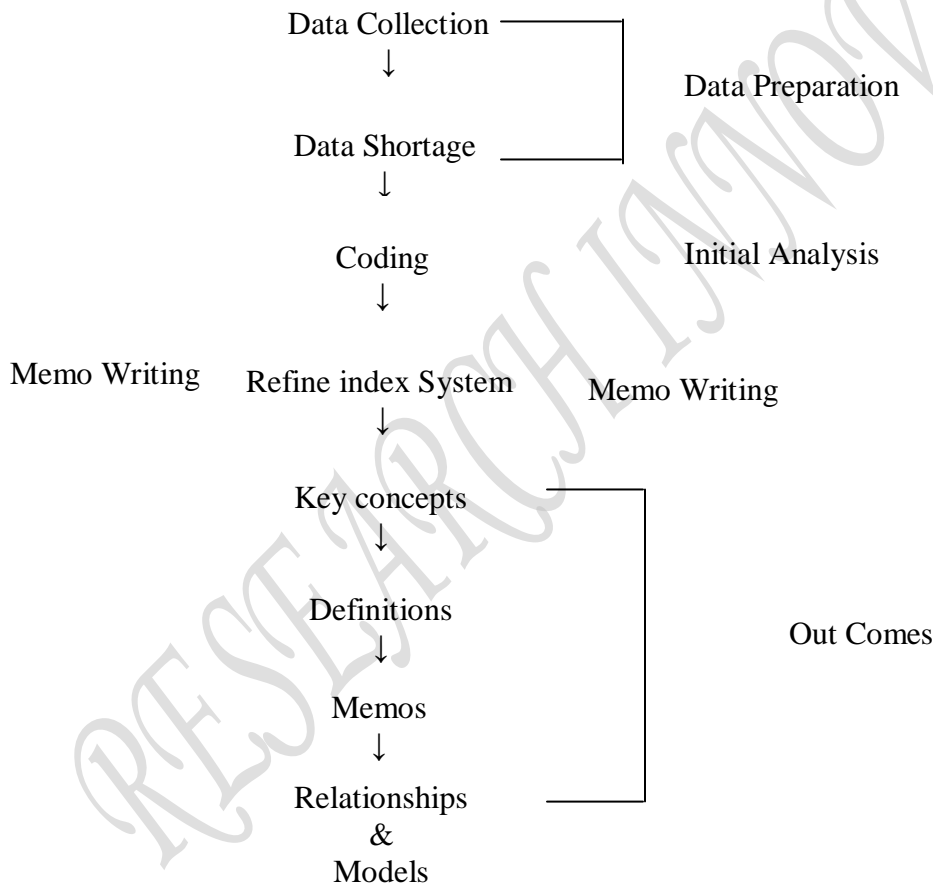
Why Qualitative Probe: Qualitative research methods are most suited for such study which demands a deeper probe into lives of human beings and requires a "humane" mode of inquiry that analyses the flow of experiences in context of everyday life and when the "subject" is viewed in context and in full complexity, then only it reveals the multiple realities and interpretations of human experiences. If we have to understand the world of aggressive women, empowered or disempowered. We will have to engage in close observation, & develop understanding of how they perceive the world, their life from social & phenomenological

perspectives, or can be described as contextual 'insider' knowledge.

Qualitative method is approprent for this study because the researcher & subject are interdependent and are involved in generation of this 'inside' knowledge & both evolve & grow during his research process. By using human instrument i.e. research, & unstructured observation the data is collected and since our aim to generate a theory, since our aim to generate a theory, 'Grounded Theory'

method is the most appropriate method to analyze the data collected and generate a theory.

Grounded Theory Methods: These are a set of logical procedures which facilitate the operation of subjectivity in the process of qualitative data analysis. Generation of theory through grounded theory methods is a creative process requires a balance b/w use of researcher's understandings and the descriptions of data.



Data Generation: This is the first step; data is collected using interviews, participant observation, etc. Aim is to generate a such set of materials like subjects' experiences and answers to questions and then writing or analyzing

it simultaneously Significant "Concepts" which emerge out of the experiences are written there & then like if e.g. while doing this study, correlation with aggressive women, while sharing her experiences, when she was denied her

rights, her moments of suffering. Concepts like “suffering” or “pent up emotions & aggression will emerge out, which are to be written along with experiences, which will help in next step of coding the data.

Coding: After collecting, labeling sufficient quantity of data, next task is to begin to build and indexing system for data, which allows the researcher to reorder the data, develop the concepts, as discussed earlier, like “suffering” “humiliations” might be concepts in this study. Aim here, is not to collect all the instances of “suffering” instead, to seek out diversity, collecting different indicators pointing to multiple & qualitative facets of potentially significant concepts. A key orienting theme in this approach is “Constant Comparative analysis” where researcher has to be constantly alert for the similarities & differences which exist between instances, cases & concepts to ensure that full diversity and complexity of data is explored.

The process of coding is also interrupted by collection of negotiated outcomes, evolve, data like, initial coding of aggressive & empowered women may reveal “expressions” but later on after collecting data it might be split into two, positive & negative expressions. Initially the data might answer only simple questions like feeling after hurt, emotions felt after suffering but later on after probing more, subject might reveal more complicated details like reasons behind pent up aggression, state of hypersensitivity etc. which later on, will help in writing analytic Memos. When

the recollection and coding of additional data no longer contributes in building of “concepts” then at this point category is said to be “saturated” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The researcher then has to make analysis more explicit by summarizing all entries under “concept” by defining “concept” like if “women have perceived it.

Outcomes: Outcomes include full saturated concepts, with definite memos and central relationships like in this particular study of aggressive women, the probe into lives of empowered women might reveal ‘Education’ as the central or core category. “Education” might emerge as the key to all other strengths like financial independence, social status, awareness to one’s rights, which help a women getting empowered.

Role of education is indeed most important in evolving one’s personality, education provides all the skills and knowledge required to live a life and to adjust in a society. Education can change our mindset, out thinking, it has the power to challenge the “drive energy” present in the form of ‘aggression’ in us to achieve goals in life. Thus education has the capacity to mould our thoughts & feelings. It can identify the aggression, reasons behind it, & by connecting it, changed into ‘Instrumental Aggression’ (Berkowitz Geen, 2001)

Through this grounded theory approach, we can evolve an educational aggression theory, which can help mould thoughts of individual and train their reactions in such a manner that they can harness their energy to use it constructively. The aggressive energy present inside, if left

uncontrolled can cause havoc, and disaster like the untamed energy of water, which left uncontrolled can cause flood but when controlled given direction can generate power and bring

prosperity. Education can be used a tool to tame, control and mould aggression to “instrumental” aggression, leading to empowered individuals & eventually an empowered society.

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