

## Study Guide

# SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER

**Code 9170**

**Units 1-9**

**Credit Hours: 3**



**Department of Gender & Women Studies  
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities  
Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad**

# **Study Guide**

## **SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER (03 Credit Hours)**

**Code No. 9170**

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**DEPARTMENT OF GENDER & WOMEN STUDIES  
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES & HUMANITIES  
ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY  
ISLAMABAD**

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## **COURSE TEAM**

<b>Dean:</b>	Prof Dr Syed Hassan Raza Faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities
<b>Course Development Coordinator:</b>	Atifa Nasir Assistant Professor
<b>Writers:</b>	1. Atifa Nasir 2. Sadia Zaman
<b>Reviewers:</b>	1. Aqleem Fatimah 2. Atifa Nasir 3. Sadia Zaman
<b>Editor:</b>	Ms. Humera Ejaz
<b>Layout/Typeset by:</b>	Mr. Muhammad Hameed

## **FOREWORD**

Allama Iqbal Open University is one of the pioneers among the universities of Pakistan to introduce the discipline of Gender and Women's Studies at the University level. This program draws on the strengths of many disciplines and has been instrumental in creating awareness about women's critical issues and their changing status.

Being a distance learning institution, the university is serving the society by creating consciousness and providing sensitive study regarding women and gender issues through its Gender and Women's Studies program. This course "Social Construction of Gender" (9170) illuminates how gender is constructed in social and cultural matrix. The course provides in-depth analysis regarding how discourse of gender in various societies is not only different but also portray women, men and transgender corresponding to society they live in. It also discusses that how women and men as category / group are represented in an international and regional context through gender perspectives in their respective societies. It is an attempt to introduce the critical theories and approached used in the study of gender and sociology globally.

The course is focused on recent scholarship that examines basic terms of gender, theoretical perceptive, creation of body images in media, social life and social identity of women, men and transgender. The course will also be beneficial in providing the students with understanding and analytical thinking required to develop a culture of critical thinking through gender lenses by becoming a more informed and enlightened person.

**Prof Dr Syed Hassan Raza**

Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The Gender and Women Studies with its interdisciplinary approach offers the students of Gender and Women Studies Department, Allama Iqbal Open University an opportunity to explore a variety of important topics by studying various courses. We would like to acknowledge the inputs of the members the committee of courses, unit writers, unit reviewers, and the writers who worked with me and their worked is cited in the study guide.

**Atifa Nasir**  
Incharge/Assistant Professor  
Department of Gender & Women Studies

## **INTRODUCTION OF THE COURSE**

Dear Students,

Welcome to the course social construction of Gender (9170). This 3 credit hour course comprises of nine units. This study guide introduces and familiarizes you to the core concepts of the course as it is designed to raise the consciousness of students to the nature of gender as a social construct. Rather than understanding gender in terms of fixed dichotomies (e.g., male/female, masculinity/femininity), feminist and social scientist see it as a complex social phenomenon that changes over time and varies across cultures. This means that the course explores the ways in which gender conceptualized as a social construct viewing it not as a fixed or static identity but as a product that is constructed and performed in interaction. Course focuses on sociological theories related to gender construction in sociocultural context to show how gender arises out of our everyday interactions and is shaped by different domains of social life.

These units begin by introducing some conceptual and theoretical tools for understanding gender issues and critically examine the idea that sex and gender are fixed biological realities and discuss gender as a major organizing aspect of society. In addition, the course will present certain discourses and institutions like language, gender roles, patriarchy, gendered division of work, body image and media play its parts in social construction of gender.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE**

After going through this course, you will be able:

1. To develop a cognizance about the social construction of gender.
2. To examine various approaches and background theoretical framework which support social and gender roles in most of the patriarchal societies.
3. To examine the concept of socially constructed gender roles in the cross cultural /national/local context.

## **How to Study:**

For studying material, you need to follow the given instructions

- This study guide presents an overview. You are encouraged to study at your own by studying the suggested readings given under each topic for preparation of assignments / exams. Since, BS Gender & Women Studies aims to prepare a lot of social scientists and researchers in gender and women issues. Thereby, being a researcher, the more you will equip yourself by studying available online materials, the more you will be aptly fulfilling the role of a social scientist and researcher and will successfully complete your degree.
- If you spend one hour daily to study your course, you will be able to complete your course in eighteen, 18 weeks.
- As soon as you are assigned tutors, you start working on your assignments. Try to contact your tutors if you need to understand any topic or call to GWS Faculty members (phone numbers are in your prospectus/on AIOU web) for guidance. Assignments are your personal notes, so always keep a copy with you before sending it to your tutor.
- In the mid/quarter of your study period, a workshop will be arranged for you, which is a compulsory component of your study. This workshop gives you more clarity about topics. You interact with your peers, internal and external resource persons in the workshop. Therefore, avail the best of information at the workshop and take notes of the lectures as well.
- Extensively use internet and Library for better understanding of the topics.

## **Tutors Guidance:**

In distance learning system basically, the students have to study on their own. However, the university appoints tutors for the guidance of students. Part time tutors hold scheduled tutorial meetings online or in study centers established by the university. The students are required to regularly attend these scheduled meetings. Most probably in this course you will be assigned a correspondence tutor who not only checks your assignments, but you are also encouraged to be in contact with the tutors for guidance regarding the course as it is convenient for both of you. The regional office as well as your tutor will inform you about the appointment of the tutor.

**Assessment and Evaluation:**

According to university system your performance in the course will be evaluated through two modes that are:

- Home Assignments
  - Final Examination
- 
- You will be required to prepare two assignments for this course. The assignments are spread over course units and according to the schedule provided in your student kit and also on aiou.edu.pk Allama Iqbal Open University website. Each assignment is to be submitted through post and as well as / uploading online through AGAHI portal for checking.
  - The main objective of the assignments is to encourage you to study and appraise your performance. The tutor's assessment will guide you for the preparation of your next assignment.
  - The marks obtained in assignments add up to the final examination. The papers for final examinations are prepared, based on the complete course. The final examinations are held in specified examination centers<sup>1</sup>. For passing a course, one has to pass both the components of assessment and final examination.

Best wishes for your studies

**Atifa Nasir**  
Course Development Coordinator/  
Course Coordinator

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<sup>1</sup> Can be arranged online as per AIOU policy

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**Unit-1**

# **SOCIAL CONSTRUCT OF GENDER AND SEX**

**Written by: Atifa Nasir**

**Reviewed by: Sadia Zaman**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Why should we study “gender”? The valid reason for studying gender is because many elements of our social identity and memberships in social groups, gender often operates as a background to what we do in our daily lives. And it is this significance that it covers everybody life while living in various social groups. In this course thus we will focus on theoretical accounts that approach gender as a social construct as a practice, process, ideology, and discourse. But gender does not exist in a vacuum and gender becomes important as it is a way of looking at how social norms and power structures impact on the lives and opportunities available to different groups of men and women. This unit looks upon very basic definition of gender and ex, its theoretical accounts and the terminology which is used through the discipline.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The aim of this unit is to;

1. Introduce the basic concepts related to gender
2. Familiarize theories of gender and its impact on gender relations
3. Explain the elementary terms related to gender studies

### **Learning Outcomes**

After studying the unit, you will be able to

1. Enumerate the difference between sex and gender
2. Discuss the meaning and purpose of social construct of gender
3. Identify the primary arguments of Butler, Zimmerman, and West on gender theory
4. Recognize basic terminology of gender
5. Discuss theoretical perspectives on gender

## 1.1 A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

A social construct is something that exists not in objective reality, but as a result of human interaction. It exists because humans agree that it exists. Every society has a gender structure, a means by which bodies are assigned a sex category from which gender as inequality is built. A gender structure has implications for individuals themselves, their identities, personalities, and therefore the choices they make. The major components of social structure include culture, social class, social status, roles, groups, and social institutions.

The social construction of gender is demonstrated by the fact that individuals, groups, and societies ascribe particular traits, statuses, or values to individuals purely because of their sex, yet these ascriptions differ across societies and cultures, and over time within the same society. Gender, like all social identities, is socially constructed. Social constructionism is one of the key theories sociologists use to put gender into historical and cultural focus. Social constructionism is a social theory about how meaning is created through social interaction – through the things we do and say with other people. This theory shows that gender it is not a fixed or innate fact, but instead it varies across time and place.

The social construction of gender comes out of the general school of thought entitled social constructionism. Social constructionism proposes that everything people “know” or see as “reality” is partially, if not entirely, socially situated. To say that something is socially constructed does not mitigate the power of the concept. Take, for example, money. Money is a socially constructed reality. Paper bills are worth nothing independent of the value individuals ascribe to them. The dollar is only worth as much as value as Americans are willing to ascribe to it. Note that the dollar only works in its own currency market; it holds no value in areas that don’t use the dollar. Nevertheless, the dollar is extremely powerful within its own domain.

These basic theories of social constructionism can be applied to any issue of study pertaining to human life, including gender. Is gender an essential category or a social construct? If it is a social construct, how does it function? Who benefits from the way that gender is constructed? A social constructionist view of gender looks beyond categories and examines the intersections of multiple identities and the blurring of the boundaries between essentialist categories. This is especially true with regards to categories of male and female, which are viewed typically as binary and opposite. Social constructionism seeks to blur the binary and muddle these two categories, which are so frequently presumed to be essential<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Boundless. “The Social Construction of Gender.” *Sociology – Cochise College* Boundless, 26 May. 2016. Retrieved 27 Feb. 2017 from <https://www.boundless.com/users/493555/textbooks/>

## 1.2 SEX AND GENDER



*Figure 1 Basic concepts (google image)*

Historically, the terms “sex” and “gender” have been used interchangeably, but their uses are becoming increasingly distinct, and it is important to understand the differences between the two.

Sex refers to the anatomical and other biological differences between females and males that are determined at the moment of conception and develop in the womb and throughout childhood and adolescence. Females, of course, have two X chromosomes, while males have one X chromosome and one Y chromosome. From this basic genetic difference spring other biological differences.

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Gender is used to describe the characteristics of women and men that are socially constructed, while sex refers to those that are biologically determined. People are born female or male but learn to be girls and boys who grow into women and men. 'Gender' refers to the socially constructed roles of and relationships between men and women. Gender concerns men and women, including conceptions of both femininity and masculinity. The difference between 'gender' and 'sex' is that the latter refers only to biological differences. Gender, like all social identities, is socially constructed. Social constructionism is one of the key theories sociologists use to put gender into historical and cultural focus. Social constructionism is a social theory about how meaning is created through social interaction – through the things we do and say with other people. This theory shows that gender it is not a fixed or innate fact, but instead it varies across time and place.

WHO defines gender as the characteristics of women, men, girls, and boys that are socially constructed and this includes norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl, or boy, as well as relationships with each other? As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time.

The phrase “boys will be boys” is often used to justify behavior such as pushing, shoving, or other forms of aggression from young boys. The phrase implies that such behavior is unchangeable and something that is part of a boy’s nature. Aggressive behavior, when it does not inflict significant harm, is often accepted from boys and men because it is congruent with the cultural script for masculinity. The “script” written by society is in some ways similar to a script written by a playwright. Just as a playwright expects actors to adhere to a prescribed script, society expects women and men to behave according to the expectations of their respective gender roles. Scripts are generally learned through a process known as socialization, which teaches people to behave according to social norms. Children learn at a young age that there are distinct expectations for boys and girls. Cross-cultural studies reveal that children are aware of gender roles by age two or three. At four or five, most children are firmly entrenched in culturally appropriate gender roles (Kane 1996). Children acquire these roles through socialization, a process in which people learn to behave in a particular way as dictated by societal values, beliefs, and attitudes. For example, society often views riding a motorcycle as a masculine activity and, therefore, considers it to be part of the male gender role. Attitudes such as this are typically based on stereotypes, oversimplified notions about members of a group.

In sociology, when people talk about the differences between men and women, they are often drawing on sex – on rigid ideas of biology – rather than gender, which is an understanding of how society shapes our understanding of those biological categories.

**Gender** is more fluid – it may or may not depend upon biological traits. More specifically, it is a concept that describes how societies determine and manage sex categories; the cultural meanings attached to men and women’s roles; and how individuals understand their identities including, but not limited to, being a man, woman, transgender, intersex, gender queer and other gender positions. Gender involves social norms, attitudes, and activities that society deems more appropriate for one sex over another. Gender is also determined by what an individual feels and does.

Gender experiences will evolve over a person’s lifetime. Gender is therefore in change. We see this through generational and intergenerational changes within families, as social, legal, and technological changes influence social values on gender. Connell (2005) describes gender as a social structure that in a higher order category that society uses to organize itself:

*Gender is the structure of social relations that centers on the reproductive arena, and the set of practices (governed by this structure) that bring reproductive distinctions between bodies into social processes. To put it informally, gender concerns the way human society deals with human bodies, and the many consequences of that “deal” in our personal lives and our collective fate.*

Sociological definition of gender refers to social or cultural distinctions associated with being male or female. In the 1950s Functionalist sociologist, Parsons argued that these biological differences meant there were ‘natural’ social roles that men and women should fulfill in society

- women should perform the expressive role or caring and nurturing role.
- men should perform the instrumental role, or the ‘breadwinner’ role – going out and earning money.

Such ideas formed part of the common sense’ way of viewing relations through much of the 20th century, with most people seeing maleness and masculinity and femaleness and femininity as a binary relationship – with men being seen as the opposite of women. The male-female divide has been criticized by feminists and through the feminist movements have spearheaded criticisms of traditional gender roles in society, arguing that stereotypical ideas about the roles men and women should occupy, and the norms they should subscribe to, have systematically disadvantaged women. One of the key Feminist ideas is that gender is socially constructed, that gender roles and norms are not determined by biology, but are shaped by society, and some of the best evidence of this fact lies in the enormous variation in gender roles between different cultures, simply put, if you can find just a handful of examples of men and women occupying different roles, having

different amounts of power, and acting differently in different cultures, then this disproves the theory that there.

### **1.3 GENDER AS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT**

People do not merely internalize gender roles as they grow up, but they respond to the norms prevalent in the society. Children learn to categorize themselves by gender from infancy. A part of this is learning how to display and perform gendered identities as masculine or feminine. Children observe and gradually internalize the gendered behaviour around them through different medium and sources. Gender-differentiated children's activities gradually cement the gender difference in behaviour that later reflect in the nature of adult male and female behaviour. Gender refers to culturally constructed roles that are played by women and men in society. Further, gender is used as a concept to analyse the shaping of women's and men's behaviour according to the normative order of a society. Gender as a conceptual tool is used to analyse the structural relationships of inequality existing between women and men, as reflected in various aspects of life such as the household, the labour market, education, and political institutions. Sex, on the other hand, refers to the biological differences between female and male which are seen as uniform across time and space. Gender can therefore be defined as a notion through which the social and ideological construction and representation of differences between the sexes can be understood. Gender is a complex phenomenon which is socially and culturally constructed. An individual acquires gender through a process of socialization, i.e., the person acquires the gendered body - feminine or masculine - in the course of social development. The construction of femininity and masculinity plays an important role in shaping various institutions like the family. Understanding of gender in relation to society leads to a reflection on the existing power relations between women and men. Children are socialized into performing the gender roles required of them. For example, young girls may be encouraged to play with dolls, and when they are slightly older, may be expected to participate in housework. It is in these ways that they come to learn what codes of behaviour are considered appropriate for them, which norms they have to conform to.

#### **Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)**

1. Define social construct?
2. What is the difference between sex and gender?

## 1.4 BINARY SYSTEM SEX/GENDER

Binaries or binary system are social constructs composed of two parts that are framed as absolute and unchanging opposites. Binary systems reflect the integration of these oppositional ideas into our culture. This results in an exaggeration of differences between social groups until they seem to have nothing in common. An example of this is the phrase “men are from Mars; women are from Venus.” Ideas of men and women being complete opposites invite simplistic comparisons that rely on stereotypes: men are practical, women are emotional; men are strong, women are weak; men lead, women support.

They also erase the existence of individuals, such as multiracial or mixed-race people and people with non-binary gender identities, who may identify with neither of the assumed categories or with multiple categories. We know very well that men have emotions and that women have physical strength, but a binary perspective of gender prefigures men and women to have nothing in common. They are defined against each other; men are defined, in part, as “not women” and women as “not men.” Thus, our understandings of men are influenced by our understandings of women. Rather than seeing aspects of identity like race, gender, class, ability, and sexuality as containing only two dichotomous, opposing categories, conceptualizing multiple various identities allows us to examine how men and women, Black and white, etc., may not be so completely different after all, and how varied and complex identities and lives can be.

The phrase “sex/gender system,” or “sex/gender/sexuality system” was coined by Gayle Rubin (1984) to describe, “the set of arrangements by which a society transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity.” That is, Rubin proposed that the links between biological sex, social gender, and sexual attraction are products of culture. Gender is, in this case, “the social product” that we attach to notions of biological sex. In our heteronormative culture, everyone is assumed to be heterosexual (attracted to men if you are a woman; attracted to women if you are a man) until stated otherwise. People make assumptions about how others should act in social life, and to whom they should be attracted, based on their perceptions of outward bodily appearance, which is assumed to represent biological sex characteristics (chromosomes, hormones, secondary sex characteristics and genitalia). Rubin questioned the biological determinist argument that suggested all people assigned female at birth will identify as women and be attracted to men. According to a biological determinist view, where “biology is destiny,” this is the way nature intended. However, this view fails to account for human intervention. As human beings, we have an impact on the social arrangements of society.

Social constructionists believe that many things we typically leave unquestioned as conventional ways of life actually reflect historically- and culturally-rooted power relationships between groups of people, which are reproduced in part through socialization processes, where we learn conventional ways of thinking and behaving from our families and communities. Just because female-assigned people bear children does not necessarily mean that they are always by definition the best caretakers of those children or that they have “natural instincts” that male-assigned people lack.

#### **1.4.1 Life in a Gendered World**

People may advise a young person on which subjects to take in school or college by saying, “you should study this, it is a good subject for a girl” or “that is not the right subject for a boy”. In this way, education is also gendered, as is the job market, different opportunities are considered to be appropriate for girls and boys. Certain careers are gendered, nursing, for example, is a profession that has more women than men and which is not deemed appropriate for men. Physical spaces may be gendered. Think of the roads of a city, can anyone be out on the street at any time? There are no rules prohibiting anyone from going out onto the street. Yet it is found that women do not stay out on the streets as late as men do. Women also do not spend time hanging around on the streets, at a teashop, for instance, alone or chatting with friends. Men and women thus have different kinds of access to streets and have different experiences of being out on the streets.

In these ways, physical spaces are also gendered. Thus various aspects of living world are gendered. They differ for different genders, the experiences of them differ in ways that depending upon the gender. The study of the gendered nature of the social and physical world is an important part of gender studies. The perspective of gender studies can be applied to a variety of situations, examples of which have been given. These examples were all from different academic disciplines – sociology, political science, biology, law, and economics. Thus, gender studies encompass many disciplines. It is multidisciplinary. This is an important dimension of gender studies because it has also pointed out certain gaps in various disciplines. Gender has been defined by any theorist; however, Butler, Zimmerman and West are the among the best who explained gender as a theory that influenced most of the gender definition, standpoints, and concepts within feminist philosophy. Some main points of their argument are summarized as under. Candace West and Don Zimmerman introduced the concept “doing gender” in an article of the same title in 1987. They were the first to articulate an ethnomethodological perspective on the creation and affirmation of gender inequality between males and females in western society. The purview of ethnomethodology includes the study of the socially managed accomplishments of all aspects of life that are treated as objective,

unchanging, and trans situational. West and Zimmerman's treatment of gender began by making problematic the prevailing cultural perspective.

According to them "doing" gender is defined as involving the everyday performance of "a complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional, and micropolitical activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine 'natures. Our use of language reflects and influences perceptions of gender roles. But a body of evidence suggests that how people use gendered words, including personal pronouns, not only expresses their beliefs around gender but also shapes the way they see the social world and their place in it as a woman or a man. Gender roles in society means how we're expected to act, speak, dress, groom, and conduct ourselves based upon our assigned sex. For example, girls and women are generally expected to dress in typically feminine ways and be polite, accommodating, and nurturing. Gender-neutral language or gender-inclusive language is language that avoids bias towards a particular sex or social gender. For example, the words policeman and stewardess are gender-specific job titles; the corresponding gender-neutral terms are police officer and flight attendant. This concept challenged the current thinking about gender as an attribute, an individual set of performative displays (largely separate from the ongoing affairs of social life), or a response to vaguely defined role expectations. West and Zimmerman (1987)<sup>2</sup> argued that gender is something that humans created. As humans, we have categorized and defined many aspects of life. If someone was not in favor of their gender role or did something that was not deemed "correct" for that gender this person would be committing an act of social deviance. Gender, according to Butler (1991) is by no means tied to material bodily facts but is solely and completely a social construction, a fiction, and is open to change and contestation.

According to Butler's theory, gender is essentially a performative repetition of acts associated with male or female. Currently, the actions appropriate for men and women have been transmitted to reproduce a social atmosphere that both maintains and legitimizes a seemingly natural gender binary. Performativity of gender is a stylized repetition of acts, an imitation or miming of the dominant conventions of gender. Performativity is the concept that language can function as a form of social action and have the effect of change. Performativity as a concept is first described by philosopher of language John L. Austin when he referred to a specific capacity: the capacity of speech and communication to act or to consummate an action. Gender performativity is a term first used by the feminist philosopher Judith

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<sup>2</sup> Doing Gender Candace West; Don H. Zimmerman *Gender and Society*, Vol. 1, No. 2. (Jun., 1987), pp. 125-151. Stable URL: <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0891-2432%28198706%291%3A2%3C125%3ADG%3E2.0.CO%3B2-W>

Butler in her 1990 book Gender Trouble. Butler (1991) argues that “the act that one does, the act that one performs is, in a sense, an act that's been going on before one arrived on the scene” (Gender Trouble). She argues that being born male or female does not determine behavior. Instead, people learn to behave in particular ways to fit into society. Gender performance is the idea that gender is something inscribed in daily practices, learned, and performed based on cultural norms of femininity and masculinity.

#### **Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)**

1. Define Butler' gender performativity theory
2. Explain West and Zimmerman (1987) argument about gender.
3. What is the difference between sex and gender?

## **1.5 BASIC CONCEPTS/TERMINOLOGIES RELATED TO GENDER**

Feminists have effectively spearheaded campaigns for greater gender equality and diversity of gender roles, and the last century has seen a blurring of boundaries between male and female roles and norms surrounding masculinity and femininity. The fact that gender roles and norms have changed so much so rapidly adds further weight to the fact that gender is socially constructed rather than biologically determined. The informal rules and shared social expectations that distinguish expected behaviour on the basis of gender.

### **1.5.1 Gender Roles**



Figure 2 Gender Roles (google Image)

Gender roles are based on the different expectations that individuals, groups, and societies have of individuals based on their sex and based on each society's values and beliefs about gender. Gender roles are the product of the interactions between individuals and their environments, and they give individuals cues about what sort of behavior is believed to be appropriate for what sex. Appropriate gender roles are defined according to a society's beliefs about differences between the sexes. Gender roles are the roles that men and women are expected to occupy based on their sex. Traditionally, many Western societies have believed that women are more nurturing than men. Therefore, the traditional view of the feminine gender role prescribes that women should behave in ways that are nurturing. One way that a woman might engage in the traditional feminine gender role would be to nurture her family by working full-time within the home rather than taking employment outside of the home. Men, on the other hand, are presumed by traditional views of gender roles to be leaders. The traditional view of the masculine gender role, therefore, suggests that men should be the heads of their households by providing financially for the family and making important family decisions. While these views remain dominant in many spheres of society, alternative perspectives on traditional beliefs about gender roles have gained increasing support in the twenty-first century (Blackstone,2003). Patriarchal values heavily govern the social structure in Pakistani society. Specifically, a woman is expected to take care of the home as wife and mother, whereas the male dominates outside the home as a breadwinner. Men and women are conceptually segregated into two distinct worlds.

### **1.5.2 Gender Norms**

Standards and expectations to which women and men generally conform, within a range that defines a particular society, culture, and community at that point in time. Gender norms are a subset of social norms that relate specifically to gender differences<sup>3</sup>. They are informal, deeply entrenched and widely held beliefs about gender roles, power relations, standards or expectations that govern human behaviours and practices in a particular social context and at a particular time. They are ideas or 'rules' about how girls and boys and women and men are expected to be and to act. People internalize and learn these 'rules' early in life.<sup>4</sup> "Gender norms sustain a hierarchy of power and privilege that typically favors what is considered male or masculine over that which is female or feminine, reinforcing a systemic inequality that undermines the rights of women and girls and restricts opportunity for women, men, and gender minorities to express their authentic selves." Norms are learned and reinforced from childhood to adulthood through observation, instruction, positive and negative sanctioning, the media, religion, and other social

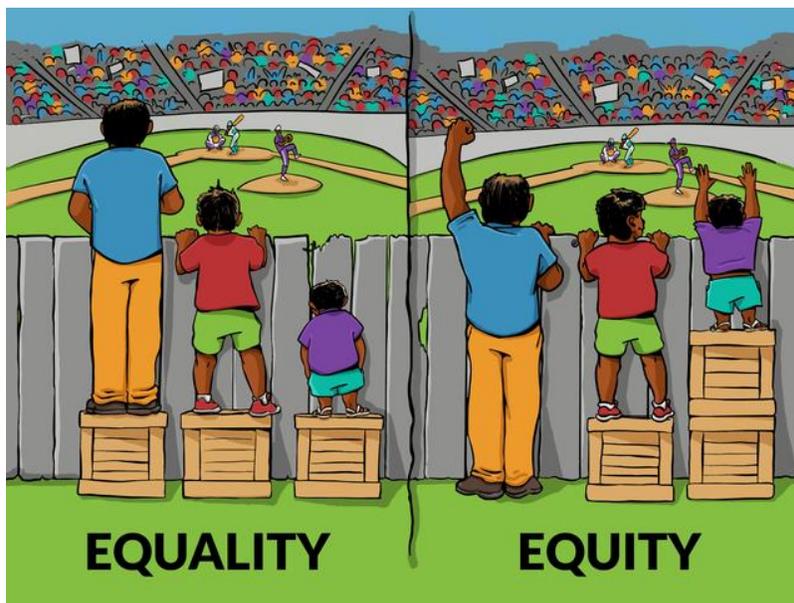
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<sup>3</sup> UNICEF, 'Technical Note on Definitions for Gender Norms, Gender Socialization and Social and Behavioral Change', UNICEF, New York, unpublished.

<sup>4</sup> UN Women Training Centre, 'Gender Equality Glossary'.

institutions. At times, norms can be so pervasive that individuals mistakenly assume that they are “natural” or “ordained” and thus immutable. Restrictive gender norms are those that permit only a narrow range of gender expressions and/or behaviours as acceptable. Individuals who do not conform to prevailing gender norms may experience sanctions.

### 1.5.3 Gender Equity

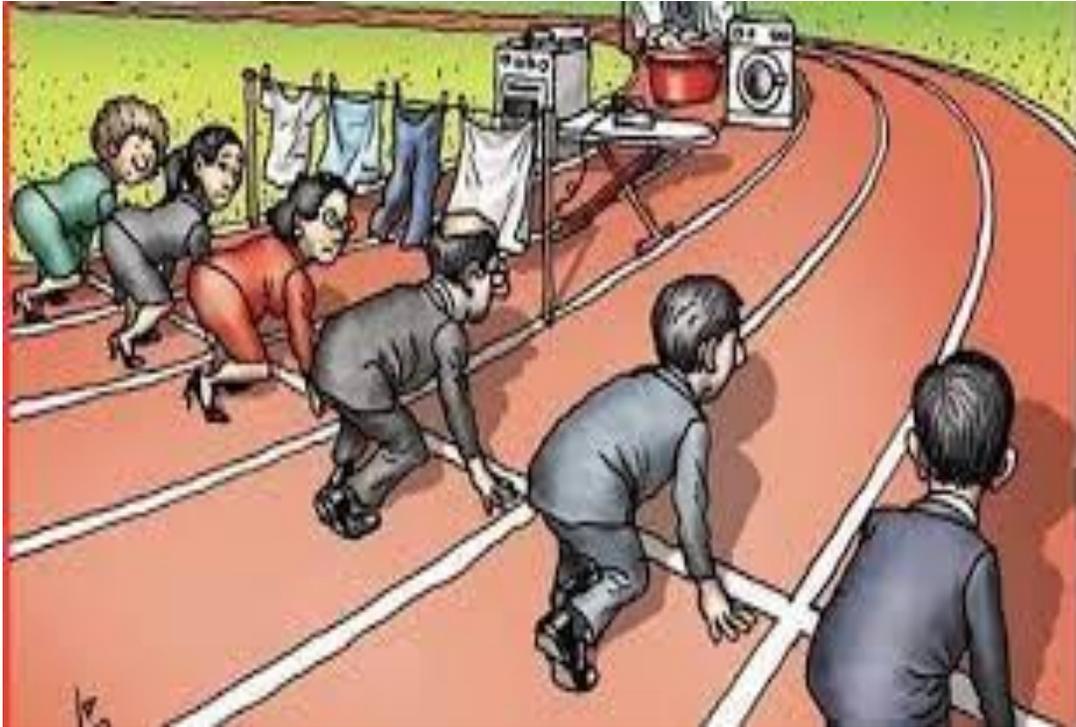


*Figure 3 Gender Equity (google image)*

This is the process of being fair to someone regardless of their sex or gender. To ensure fairness, measures must be taken to compensate for cumulative economic, social, and political disadvantages based on sex or gender that prevent someone from operating on a level playing field.

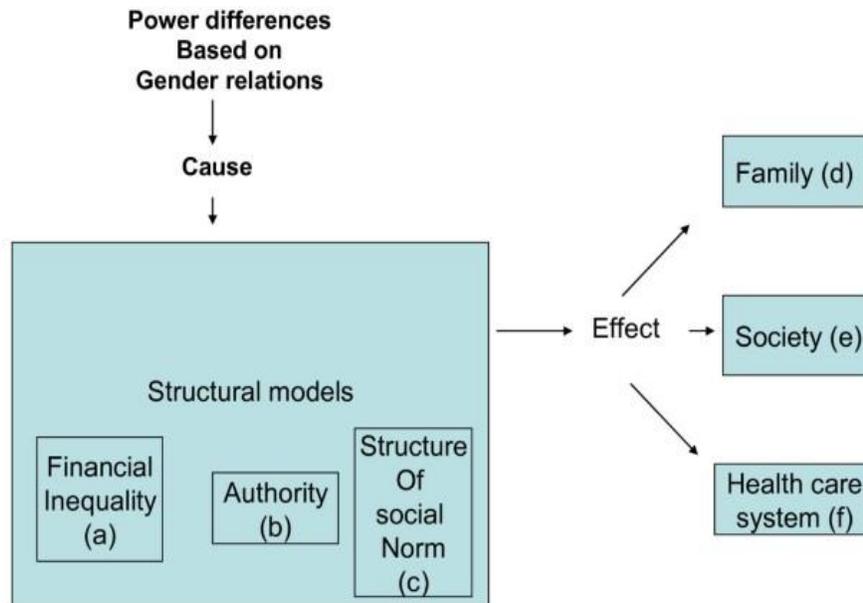
Gender equality is the concept that all human beings, irrespective of their sex or gender identity, are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles, or discrimination. The concept of gender equity refers to “fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different, but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities” (ILO,2000).

### 1.5.4 Gender Equality



*Figure 4 Gender Equality (google image)*

Means that the different behaviour, aspirations, and needs of men, women, and people of other gender identities are considered, valued, and favored equally. It does not mean that all people become “the same”, but that the rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of individuals will not depend on their sex assigned at birth. Gender is an important consideration in development. It is a way of looking at how social norms and power structures impact on the lives and opportunities available to different groups of men and women. Globally, more women than men live in poverty. Gender inequality affects everyone, including men. Stereotypes or 'rules' about how women and men, girls and boys should begin in childhood and follow us through to adulthood. Not everyone experiences inequality the same way. Promising equal pay, equal opportunity, as well as freedom from discrimination and harassment in the workplace to all persons, whether they are men, women, married, single or pregnant, gender equality in essence promotes the equitable and respectable advancement of men and women together.



(Figure 5 Gender Relations (google Image))

### 1.5.5 Gender Identity

Gender identity is defined as a personal conception of oneself as male or female (or rarely, both, and neither). This concept is intimately related to the concept of gender role, which is defined as the outward manifestations of personality that reflect the gender identity. is the extent to which one identifies as being either masculine or feminine (Diamond 2002) Gender Identity is an individual's own sense of their own gender? Their private sense of whether they feel masculine, feminine, both or neither, irrespective of their biological sex. It includes physical expressions such as person's clothing, hairstyle, makeup, and social expressions such as name and pronoun choice. Some examples of gender expression are masculine, feminine, and androgynous<sup>5</sup>. Gender identity typically develops in stages: Around age two: Children become conscious of the physical differences between boys and girls. Before their third birthday: Most children can easily label themselves as either a boy or a girl. By age four: Most children have a stable sense of their gender identity. Gender identity is not confined to a binary (girl/woman, boy/man) nor is it static; it exists along a continuum and can change over time. There is considerable diversity in how individuals and groups understand, experience and express gender through the roles they take on, the expectations placed on them, relations with others and the complex ways that gender is institutionalized in society.

<sup>5</sup> Androgynous means neither clearly masculine nor clearly feminine in appearance:

### **1.5.6 Gender Expression**

Is how a person publicly expresses or presents their gender. This can include behaviour and outward appearance such as dress, hair, make-up, body language and voice. A person's chosen name and pronoun are also common ways of expressing gender. It includes physical expressions such as person's clothing, hairstyle, makeup, and social expressions such as name and pronoun choice. Some examples of gender expression are masculine, feminine, and androgynous. The expression of your gender through the way you behave, and dress is an important part of your self-identity, and is central to your mental health and wellbeing. Many transgender people hide their gender expression in public for fear of negative reactions, violence or discrimination.

### **1.5.7 Gender Stereotypes**

are ideas that people have on masculinity and femininity: what men and women of all generations should be like and are capable of doing. (e.g., girls should be obedient and cute, are allowed to cry, and boys are expected to be brave and not cry, women are better housekeepers and men are better with machines, or boys are better at mathematics and girls more suited to nursing). In other words, Gender stereotypes are generalizations about what men and women are like, and there typically is a great deal of consensus about them. According to social role theory, gender stereotypes derive from the discrepant distribution of men and women into social roles both in the home and at work (Koenig and Eagly, 2014). There has long been a gendered division of labor, and it has existed both in foraging societies and in more socioeconomically complex societies (Wood and Eagly, 2012). In the domestic sphere women have performed the majority of routine domestic work and played the major caretaker role. In the workplace, women have tended to be employed in people-oriented, service occupations rather than things-oriented, competitive occupations, which have traditionally been occupied by men contrasting distribution of men and women into social roles, and the inferences it prompts about what women and men are like, give rise to gender stereotypical conceptions (Koenig and Eagly, 2012).

### **1.5.8 Gender Socialization**

This is the process through which children learn about the social expectations, attitudes and behaviours typically associated with boys and girls. This topic looks at this socialization process and the factors that influence gender development in children. Gender socialization is the process by which individuals are taught how to socially behave in accordance with their assigned gender, which is assigned at birth based on their sex phenotype<sup>6</sup>. Children and adults who do not conform to gender stereotypes are often ostracized by peers for being different. Gender socialization occurs through four major agents: family, education, peer groups, and mass media. Television commercials and other forms of advertising reinforce inequality and gender-based stereotypes.

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<sup>6</sup> the set of observable characteristics of an individual resulting from the interaction of its genotype with the environment.

### **1.5.9 Gender Barriers**

The obstacles to equality that may exist in the laws, norms, and practices of a society and can be identified and removed.

### **1.5.10 Gender Bias**

The bias is a disproportionate weight in favor of or against an idea or thing, usually in a way that is closed-minded, prejudicial, or unfair. Biases can be innate or learned. People may develop biases for or against an individual, a group, or a belief. In science and engineering, a bias is a systematic error. *Therefore, Gender bias* is the tendency to make decisions or take actions based on preconceived notions of capability according to gender.

### **1.5.11 Gender Stratification**

It refers to the social ranking, where men typically inhabit higher statuses than women. Often the terms gender inequality and gender stratification are used interchangeably. Most of the research in this area focuses on differences between men's and women's life circumstances, broadly defined. *It* occurs when *gender* differences give men greater privilege and power over women, transgender, and *gender*-non-conforming people. for example, Gender stratification is the unequal distribution of wealth, power, and privilege between men and women. Literally men have more power because more senators, congressmen, governors, and mayors are me

### **1.5.12 Gender Gap**

This is a measure of gender inequality. It is a useful social development indicator. For example, one can measure the gender gap between boys and girls in terms of health outcomes, as well as educational levels achieved and labor income.

### **1.5.13 Gender Integration**

Strategies applied in programmatic design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation to take gender considerations into account and compensate for gender-based inequalities. Gender integration supports the development and implementation of gender-transformative health programs, policies, and services. Gender transformative approaches seek to change gender norms that restrict women and men's access to health services and realization of good health. They question and challenge the unequal distribution of power, lack of resources, limited opportunities and benefits, and restrictions on human rights<sup>7</sup>.

### **1.5.14 Sexual Orientation**

It refers to one's sexual or romantic attractions, and includes sexual identity, sexual behaviors, and sexual desires.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://gender.jhpiego.org/analysistoolkit/gender-integration/>

### **1.5.15 Transgender**

It is an umbrella term referring to individuals who do not identify with the sex category assigned to them at birth or whose identity or behavior falls outside of stereotypical gender norms. The term “transgender” encompasses a diverse array of gender identities and expressions, including identities that fit within a female/male classification and those that do not. Transgender is not the same as intersex, which refers to biological variation in sex characteristics, including chromosomes, gonads and/or genitals that do not allow an individual to be distinctly identified as female/ male at birth. Being transgender does not imply identify as any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual etc.

### **1.5.16 Gender Blindness**

This is failure to recognize that the roles and responsibilities of women/girls and men/boys are ascribed to, or imposed upon, them in specific social, cultural, economic, and political contexts<sup>8</sup>. Gender blindness is an ideology where a person chooses not to see differences between genders. Gender blindness can be harmful. It can further gender inequalities because it ignores historical differences between people of different genders. The causes of this are rooted, to a great extent, in: gender-blind development policies and research; discriminatory legislation, traditions and attitudes; and women's lack of access to decision-making.

### **1.5.17 Gender Sensitivity**

This is the way service providers treat male or female clients in service delivery facilities and thus affects client willingness to seek services, continue to use services, and carry out the health behaviors advocated by the services is the process by which people are made aware of how gender plays a role in life through their treatment of others. Gender sensitivity helps to generate respect for the individual regardless of sex. Gender sensitivity is not about pitting women against men. On the contrary, education that is gender sensitive benefits members of both sexes.

#### **Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)**

1. What is the difference between gender equality and gender equity?
2. Define gender expression and gender blindness.

## **1.6 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER**

Sociological theories help sociologists and other social scientists to develop questions and interpret data. For example, a sociologist studying why middle-school girls are more likely than their male counterparts to fall behind grade-level expectations in math and science might use a feminist perspective to frame her research. Another scholar might proceed from the conflict perspective to investigate why women are

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<sup>8</sup> <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1157>

underrepresented in political office, and an interactionist might examine how the symbols of femininity interact with symbols of political authority to affect how women in Congress are treated by their male counterparts in meetings.

### **1.6.1 Structural Functionalism**

Structural functionalism has provided one of the most important perspectives of sociological research in the twentieth century and has been a major influence on research in the social sciences, including gender studies. Viewing the family as the most integral component of society, assumptions about gender roles within marriage assume a prominent place in this perspective. Functionalists argue that gender roles were established well before the pre-industrial era when men typically took care of responsibilities outside of the home, such as hunting, and women typically took care of the domestic responsibilities in or around the home. These roles were considered functional because women were often limited by the physical restraints of pregnancy and nursing and unable to leave the home for long periods of time. Once established, these roles were passed on to subsequent generations since they served as an effective means of keeping the family system functioning properly.

The changes occurred in the social and economic situation during World War II, changes in the family structure also occurred. Many women had to assume the role of breadwinner (or modern hunter-gatherer) alongside their domestic role in order to stabilize a rapidly changing society. When the men returned from war and wanted to reclaim their jobs, society fell back into a state of imbalance, as many women did not want to forfeit their wage-earning positions (Hawke 2007).

### **1.6.2 Conflict Theory**

According to conflict theory, society is a struggle for dominance among social groups (like women versus men) that compete for scarce resources. When sociologists examine gender from this perspective, we can view men as the dominant group and women as the subordinate group. According to conflict theory, social problems are created when dominant groups exploit or oppress subordinate groups. Consider the Women's Suffrage Movement or the debate over women's "right to choose" their reproductive futures. It is difficult for women to rise above men, as dominant group members create the rules for success and opportunity in society (Farrington and Chertok 1993). Friedrich Engels, a German sociologist, studied family structure and gender roles. Engels suggested that the same owner-worker relationship seen in the labor force is also seen in the household, with women assuming the role of the common person. This is due to women's dependence on men for the attainment of wages, which is even worse for women who are entirely dependent upon their spouses for economic support. Contemporary conflict theorists suggest that when women become wage earners, they can gain power in the family structure and create more democratic arrangements in the home, although they may still carry the majority of the domestic burden, as noted earlier (Risman and Johnson-Sumerford, 1998).

### **1.6.3. Feminist Theory**

According to the feminist theory, "gender may be a factor in how human beings represent reality." Men and women will construct different types of structures about the self, and, consequently, their thought processes may diverge in content and form. Feminist theory is a type of conflict theory that examines inequalities in gender-related issues. It uses the conflict approach to examine the maintenance of gender roles and inequalities. Radical feminism, in particular, considers the role of the family in perpetuating male dominance. In patriarchal societies, men's contributions are seen as more valuable than those of women. Patriarchal perspectives and arrangements are widespread and taken for granted. As a result, women's viewpoints tend to be silenced or marginalized to the point of being discredited or considered invalid.

### **1.6.4. Symbolic Interactionism**

Symbolic interactionism aims to understand human behavior by analyzing the critical role of symbols in human interaction. This is certainly relevant to the discussion of masculinity and femininity. Imagine that you walk into a bank hoping to get a small loan for school, a home, or a small business venture. If you meet with a male loan officer, you may state your case logically by listing all the hard numbers that make you a qualified applicant as a means of appealing to the analytical characteristics associated with masculinity. If you meet with a female officer, you may make an emotional appeal by stating your good intentions as a means of appealing to the caring characteristics associated with femininity. Because the meanings attached to symbols are socially created and not natural, and fluid, not static, we act and react to symbols based on the current assigned meaning. When people perform tasks or possess characteristics based on the gender role assigned to them, they are said to be doing gender. This notion is based on the work of West and Zimmerman (1987). Whether we are expressing our masculinity or femininity, West and Zimmerman argue, we are always "doing gender." Thus, gender is something we do or perform, not something we are. In other words, both gender and sexuality are socially constructed. The social construction of sexuality refers to the way in which socially created definitions about the cultural appropriateness of sex-linked behavior shape the way people see and experience sexuality. This is in marked contrast to theories of sex, gender, and sexuality that link male and female behavior to biological determinism, or the belief that men and women behave differently due to differences in their biology.

### **1.6.5. Biological Determinism**

A view on which it is argued that human social behaviour is the result of factors inherent to the biological makeup of human beings. This is often contrasted with explanations of human behaviour based on social or sociopsychological factors. Feminists are concerned with determinism because it has been used to argue that

political change is futile because sex and gender at the individual and social level are caused by a static, biological human nature.

Feminists have criticized biological or genetic determinism in a number of biological disciplines. A typical example of a biological determinist view is that of Geddes and Thompson who, in 1889, argued that social, psychological, and behavioral traits were caused by metabolic state. Women supposedly conserve energy (being 'anabolic') and this makes them passive, conservative, sluggish, stable, and uninterested in politics. Men expend their surplus energy (being 'katabolic') and this makes them eager, energetic, passionate, variable and, thereby, interested in political and social matters. These biological 'facts' about metabolic states were used not only to explain behavioral differences between women and men but also to justify what our social and political arrangements ought to be. More specifically, they were used to argue for withholding from women political rights accorded to men.

## **1.7 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS**

1. Describe the difference between sex and gender with examples.
2. How Judith Butler defined gender?
3. What is Butler' theory on gender and gender performativity? explain in detail.
4. How Zimmerman and West describe gender?
5. What is the link between Butler, Zimmerman, and West theory on gender?
6. Discuss the theoretical perspectives on gender in detail.
7. How Symbolic Interactionism discuss gender?
8. Identify the basic assumptions of Feminist theory and Structural functionalism on the concept of gender.
9. Discuss in detail the terminology used in gender.
10. Write short notes on the following.

Gender Roles

Gender Norms

Gender Stereotypes

Gender Sensitivity

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**Unit-2**

## **GENDER AND POWER**

**Written by: Atifa Nasir**

**Reviewed by: Aqleem Fatimah**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Gender is an important consideration in development. It is a way of looking at how social norms and power structures impact on the lives and opportunities available to different groups of men and women this unit looks at the linkage of gender and power structures that exist in every society. Moreover, the conceptualization of power from conventional and feminist stances are also significant part of the unit that may provide opportunity to have an insight how these power structure through social fabric of the society work. Michele Foucault theory of knowledge and power have been discussed in detail with its linkage to feminist understanding.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The aim of this unit is to;

1. Introduce the basic concepts of institution of power that exist in every society
2. Familiarize feminist approaches to power and its impact on gender relations
3. Explain the key terms in power related perceptions like patriarchy and glass ceiling and its impact on gender relations

### **Learning Outcomes**

After studying the unit, you will be able to

1. Identify power dynamics within society and its impact
2. Recognize the meaning and purpose of theory of knowledge/power by Foucault and its relativity in societal dynamics
3. Discuss feminist theoretical perspectives on gender and power

## 2.1 SOCIAL STRUCTURE

A social structure is a set of social relationships, practices and institutions that are invisible at work in our daily lives. They are intangible social relations work like structures we can see. Structures limit possibility, but they are not fundamentally unchangeable. For example, our bones may deteriorate over time, suffer acute injuries, or be affected by disease, but they never spontaneously change location or disappear into thin air. Such is the way with social structures. According to the history of social structure there are two view about the development of social structure. Some believe that social structure is naturally developed. It may be caused by larger system needs, such as the need for labor, management, professional and military classes, or by conflicts between groups, such as competition among political parties or among elites and masses.

Others believe that structure is not a result of natural processes but is socially constructed. It may be created by the power of elites who seek to retain their power, or by economic systems that place emphasis upon competition or cooperation. Alexis de Tocqueville<sup>1</sup> was the first to use the term social structure. Tocqueville studied the effects of the rising equality of social conditions on the individual and the state in western societies. And his research has been very influential to the field of sociology. Later, Karl Marx, Herbert Spencer, Max Weber, Ferdinand Tönnies, and Emile Durkheim all contributed to structural concepts in sociology. The major components of social structure are statuses, roles, social networks, groups and organizations, social institutions, and society. According to Kimani (2008) the people in a society considered as a system organized by a characteristic pattern of relationships. In other words, social structure is social organization based on established patterns of social interaction between different relationships. Social structure varies between countries and can play a key role in interaction between countries. Examples of social structure include family, religion, law, economy, and class. It contrasts with "social system", which refers to the parent structure in which these various structures are embedded. Luhmann (1999) considered social systems as belongs to three categories: societal systems, organizations, and interaction systems. Luhmann (1999) considered societal systems, such as religion, law, art, education, science, etc., to be closed systems consisting of different fields of interaction.

The elements of a social structure, the parts of social life that direct possible actions, are the institutions of society. social institutions like the government, work, education, family, law, media, and medicine, among others. These institutions direct, or structure, social action, that means that within the confines of these places there are rules, norms, and procedures that limit what actions are possible. For

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<sup>1</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, (born July 29, 1805, Paris, France—died April 16, 1859, Cannes), political scientist, historian, and politician, best known for *Democracy in America*, 4 vol. (1835–40), a perceptive analysis of the political and social system of the United States in the early 19th century.

instance, family is a concept near and dear to most, but historically and culturally family forms have been highly specified, that is structured. According to Dorothy Smith (1993), a family usually includes two heterosexually married parents and one or more biologically related children. It also includes a division of labor in which the husband/father earns a larger income, and the wife/mother takes responsibility for most of the caretaking and childrearing. Although families vary in all sorts of ways, this is the norm to which they are most often compared. Thus, while we may consider our pets, friends, and lovers as family, the state, the legal system, and the media do not affirm these possibilities in the way they affirm the usual family.

At the higher level of social structure, we can see that some people have greater access to resources and institutionalized power across the board than do others. Sexism is the term we use for discrimination and blocked access women face. Genderism describes discrimination and blocked access that transgender people face. Racism describes discrimination and blocked access on the basis of race, which is based on socially constructed meanings rather than biological differences. Classism describes discrimination on the basis of social class, or blocked access to material wealth and social status. Ableism describes discrimination on the basis of physical, mental, or emotional impairment or blocked access to the fulfillment of needs and in particular, full participation in social life. These “-isms” reflect dominant cultural notions that women, trans people, people of color, poor people, and disabled people are inferior to men, non-trans people, white people, middle- and upper-class people, and non-disabled people.

Overlaying these social structures are structures of power. In simple words, by power we mean two things:

- 1) access to and through the various social institutions mentioned above, and
- 2) processes of privileging, normalizing, and valuing certain identities over others.

Before going into further detail, first we must understand the concept power and its different perspectives that are most relevant to feminist thoughts.

## **2.2 CONCEPTUALIZING POWER**

This definition of power highlights the structural, institutional nature of power, while also highlighting the ways in which culture works in the creation and privileging of certain categories of people. In social and political theory, power is often regarded as an essentially contested concept.

Power in most of the societies, is organized along the axes of gender, race, class, sexuality, ability, age, nation, and religious identities. Some identities are more highly valued, or more normalized, than others typically, because they are contrasted to identities thought to be less valuable or less “normal.” Thus, identities are not only descriptors of individuals, but grant a certain amount of collective

access to the institutions of social life. This is not to say, for instance, that all white people are alike and wield the same amount of power over all people of color. In sociological perspective power refers to the ability to have one's will be carried out despite the resistance of others. For example, in a family system, power within the family is defined according to what members have the power, how they got it, how they maintain it, and at what costs to other members. In most circumstances, family members must cooperate and consider others in order for their needs to be met, even individual needs.

Power is often defined only in negative terms, and as a form of domination, but it can also be a positive force for individual and collective capacity to act for change. Lisa Vene Klasen and Valeries Miller (2002) in *A New Weave of Power* (P: 55) describe four 'expressions of power' as follows<sup>2</sup>.

### **2.2.1. Power Over**

The most commonly recognized form of power, 'power over', has many negative associations for people, such as repression, force, coercion, discrimination, corruption, and abuse. Power is seen as a win-lose kind of relationship. Having power involves taking it from someone else, and then, using it to dominate and prevent others from gaining it. In politics, those who control resources and decision making have power over those without. When people are denied access to important resources like land, healthcare, and jobs 'power over' perpetuates inequality, injustice, and poverty. In the absence of alternative models and relationships, people repeat the 'power over' pattern in their personal relationships, communities, and institutions. This is also true of people who come from a marginalized or 'powerless' group. When they gain power in leadership positions, they sometimes 'imitate the oppressor.' For this reason, advocates cannot expect that the experience of being excluded prepares people to become democratic leaders. New forms of leadership and decision-making must be explicitly defined, taught, and rewarded in order to promote more democratic forms of power. Practitioners and academics have searched for more collaborative ways of exercising and using power. Three alternatives 'power with', 'power to' and 'power within' offer positive ways of expressing power that create the possibility of forming more equitable relationships. By affirming people's capacity to act creatively, they provide some basic principles for constructing empowering strategies.

### **2.2.2. Power With**

'Power with' has to do with finding common ground among different interests and building collective strength. Based on mutual support, solidarity and collaboration, power with multiplies individual talents and knowledge. 'Power with' can help build bridges across different interests to transform or reduce social conflict and

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.powercube.net/other-forms-of-power/expressions-of-power/>

promote equitable relations. Advocacy groups seek allies and build coalitions drawing on the notion of ‘power with’

### 2.2.3. Power To

‘Power to’ refers to the unique potential of every person to shape his or her life and world. When based on mutual support, it opens up the possibilities of joint action, or ‘power with’. Citizen education and leadership development for advocacy are based on the belief that each individual has the power to make a difference.

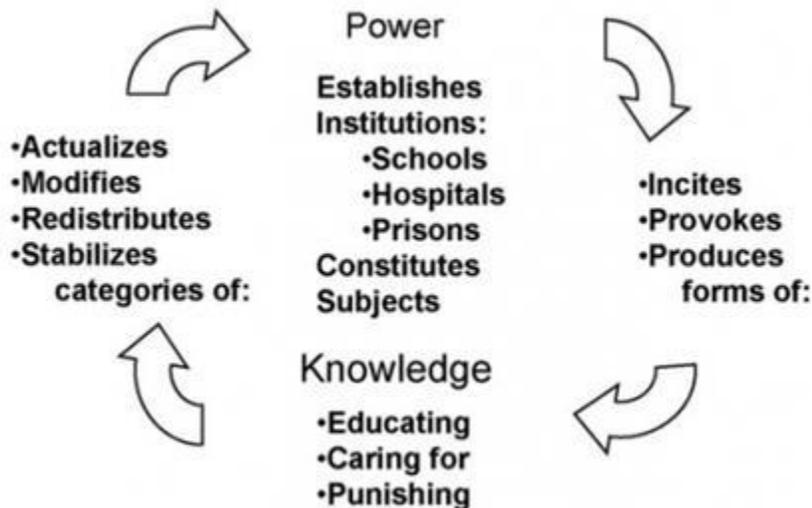
### 2.2.4. Power Within

‘Power within’ has to do with a person’s sense of self-worth and self-knowledge; it includes an ability to recognize individual differences while respecting others. ‘Power within’ is the capacity to imagine and have hope; it affirms the common human search for dignity and fulfilment. Many grassroots efforts use individual storytelling and reflection to help people affirm personal worth and recognize their ‘power to’ and ‘power with’. Both these forms of power are referred to as agency, the ability to act and change the world, by scholars writing about development and social change.

#### Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)

1. Differentiate between power with, power to and power within concepts.
2. Define social structure

## 2.3 FOUCAULT THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE/ POWER



The standard theory is that power is the capacity for influence and that influence is based on the control of resources valued or desired by others. According to Foucault disciplinary power characterizes the way in which the relations of

inequality and oppression in modern western societies are (re)produced through the psychological complex.

Foucault addresses the question of power in his seminal writings. Power is the ability of one entity to influence the action of another entity. Such relationships appear to exist across all scales. Foucault defines power as “the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate, and which constitute their own organization” (1978:92). Even the simplest particles appear as no more than a stable pattern of energy and power. Foucault argues, in medieval society power had been consolidated largely through the existence of a sovereign authority who exercised absolute control over the subjects through the open display of violence. In the modern era, power is exercised in a different way. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there was an invention of a new mechanism of power possessed of highly specific procedural techniques.

This new mechanism of power is more dependent upon bodies. It is a mechanism of power which permits time and labour, rather than wealth and commodities. By means of surveillance power is constantly exercised. The common conception is that power is attributable to and exercised by agents and is exercised on agents. Power is a total structure of action which does not act directly and immediately on others. Foucauldian power is impersonal, purely relational and blind. His kind of power is neither force nor capacity nor domination nor authority. It is not attributable to anyone or anything. Power is impersonal because it is neither possessed nor exerted by individuals, groups, or institutions. Foucault termed power as a complex set of relations. Power is the sum total of influences that actions have on other actions. Foucauldian power is blind and emerges from a strategic situation or web of relations. The magnet model presents a graphic picture of power as relational. It illustrates how power is impersonal; it is not anyone's power, because it is a web of relations among actions rather than among agents. The model also illustrates how power is pervasive. No one can escape from power relations. To act in defiance is to act within power, not against it. In order to escape from power, one would have to be utterly alone and free of all the enculturation that makes social beings.

Foucauldian power is not domination. It is the complex network acts of domination, submission, and resistance. Power constrains actions, not individuals. Power is all about people acting in ways that blindly and impersonally conditions the options and actions of others. The aim of this technology of power is not mere control, which is achievable through imposition or restrictions and prohibitions, but pervasive management. What is new in Foucault's consideration of pervasive management is description of how it is achieved not just through restrictions, but

through enabling conceptions, definitions, and descriptions that generate and support behaviour governing norms.

Power is not just the ruthless domination of the weaker by the strong. The most significant feature of Foucault's thesis is his stress on the modern exercise of the productive nature of power. His main aim is to replace the negative concept and attribute the productive nature to power. It produces reality and truth. Foucault suggests that power is intelligible in terms of the techniques through which it is exercised. Many different forms of power exist in society such as legal, administrative, economic, military, and so forth. What they have in common is a shared reliance on certain techniques or methods of application, and all draw some authority by referring to scientific truths. Power must be analyzed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localized here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization. Individuals not only circulate between its threads, but they are always in the position of undergoing and exercising this power. The most important feature of Foucault's theories on power reveals that power is not a thing or a capacity which can be owned either by State, social class, or particular individuals. Instead, it is a relation between different individuals and groups and only exists when it is being exercised. A king is a king only if he has subjects. Thus, the term power refers to sets of relations that exist between individuals, or that are strategically deployed by groups of individuals. Institutions and governments are simply the conformity of highly complex sets of power relations which exist at every level of the social body.

Foucault distinguishes his ideas on power by criticizing power models which see power as being purely located in the State or the administrative and executive bodies which govern the nation State. The very existence of the State in fact depends on the operation of thousands of complex micro-relations of power at every level of the social body. Foucault offers the example of military service which can only be enforced if every individual is tied into a whole network of relations which include family, employers, teachers, and other agents of social education. The grand strategies of State rely on the cooperation of a whole network of local and individualized tactics of power in which everybody is involved. All relations of power at different levels work together and against each other in constantly shifting combinations. The State is merely a configuration of multiple power relation Foucault criticizes traditional power models; power is not about simply saying no and oppressing individuals, social classes, or natural instincts, instead power is productive. It shapes forms of behaviour and events rather than simply curtailing freedom and constraining individuals. Foucault is also of the opinion, that "where there is power there is resistance" (1978: 95). It allows to consider the

relationship between those in struggles over power as not simply reducible to a master–slave relation, or an oppressor–victim relationship. Where power is exercised, there has to be someone who resists. Foucault goes as far as to argue that where there is no resistance it is not, in effect, a power relation. Resistance is written into the exercise of power. In order to analyze a power relation, one must analyze the total relations of power, the hidden transcripts as well as the public performance.

The possibility for resistance is an elementary condition for every conceivable relation of power. Foucault maintains that resistance is a necessary precondition for the operation of relations of power and without such forms of contestation and struggle there would be only complete domination, subservience, and obedience. Power and the potentiality of resistance are hence thought to be coterminous. Power cannot be treated as complete control or absolute subservience. It is only through the articulation of resistance that power can spread through the social field. Resistance is an internal property of power. It is a condition of operation that remains inherent to power itself. Resistance is everywhere and at every level. Foucault uses the term 'power/knowledge' to signify that power is constituted through accepted forms of knowledge, scientific understanding and 'truth': ... 'Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. The discourse of power is used when it comes to differentiating the levels of power due to cultural and social characteristics that come about through societal upbringing. The ways we think and talk about a subject influence and reflect the ways we act in relation to that subject.

Michel Foucault, the French postmodernist, has been hugely influential in shaping understandings of power, 'power is everywhere', diffused and embodied in discourse, knowledge and 'regimes of truth' (Foucault 1991; Rabinow 1991). Power for Foucault is what makes us what we are, operating on a quite different level from other theories:

Foucault challenges the idea that power is exercised by people or groups by way of 'episodic<sup>3</sup>' or 'sovereign' acts of domination or coercion, seeing it instead as dispersed and pervasive. 'Power is everywhere' and 'comes from everywhere' so in this sense is neither an agency nor a structure (Foucault 1998: 63). Instead, it is a kind of 'meta power' or 'regime of truth' that pervades society, and which is in constant flux and negotiation. Foucault uses the term 'power/knowledge' to signify that power is constituted through accepted forms of knowledge, scientific understanding and 'truth': Foucault (1998) states that 'truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its "general politics" of truth:

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<sup>3</sup> containing or consisting of a series of separate parts or events.

that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true' (Foucault, in Rabinow 1991). Foucault is one of the few writers on power who recognize that power is not just a negative, coercive, or repressive thing that forces us to do things against our wishes, but can also be a necessary, productive, and positive force in society. As Foucault (1991) says 'We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it 'excludes', it 'represses', it 'censors', it 'abstracts', it 'masks', it 'conceals'. In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production' (Foucault 1991: 194).

Power is also a major source of social discipline and conformity. In shifting attention away from the 'sovereign' and 'episodic' exercise of power, traditionally centered in feudal states to coerce their subjects, Foucault pointed to a new kind of 'disciplinary power' that could be observed in the administrative systems and social services that were created in 18th century Europe, such as prisons, schools, and mental hospitals. Their systems of surveillance and assessment no longer required force or violence, as people learned to discipline themselves and behave in expected ways.

Inequalities between men and women are one of the most persistent patterns in the distribution of power. For example, women's lack of influence marks political decision-making the world over. Gender relations are power relationships and gender roles tend to perpetuate the power inequalities on which they are based on.

## **2.4 GENDER AND POWER: THE LINKAGE**

*Gender shapes power*, from the 'private' relationships of the household to the highest levels of political decision-making. *Gender divides power*. inequalities between men and women are one of the most persistent patterns in the distribution of power. For example, women lack interest in politics makes them less influential in political decision making in the world.

*Gender relation are power relation*. often what it means to be a woman is to be powerless (obedient and accommodating. whereas the 'real man' by contrast is a power full, outspoken, in control, able to impose his will) particularly in relation to women.

*These gender roles tend to perpetuate the power inequalities that they are based on*. For example, the fact that many men and women think it is not;

natural 'for women to speak in public often poses a key barrier to women access to decision making. power equals masculinity 'also helps explain why powerful people demonstrate dominance in gendered ways.

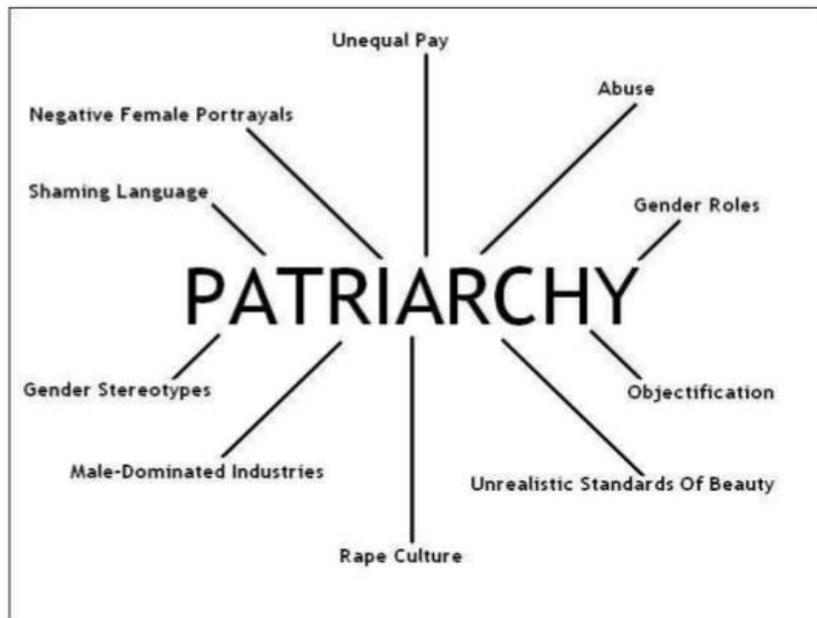
*The family is in arena of power and politics.* power dynamics in power and household interact with those in the public sphere in shaping development outcomes. For example, it may happen Pakistan that women access to employment and resources may challenge the power relations between men and women in households and ends up in the conflicts in families.

*Gender shape institutions and how they affect the distribution of power.* Most of the economic and political institutions are historically dominated by men are specific to elite men. They idealized masculine forms of behaviours and rely on men' power over women. Therefore, these institutions tend to lock in two types of power -men' power over women and men power over men.

*Gender shapes how we understand and what power is in the first place.* The widely accepted definition of power is getting someone else to do what you want them to do. it reflects especially male experience of the world. a place inhabited but hostile others with whom, to survive, you are forced to have social relationship women in this socially assigned roles as wife and mothers may more often understand themselves as being in the continuity with the people around them rather in the opposition. they often as to build capacity in others rather than to dominate. this would suggest an alternative idea of power, the capacity to transform and empower yourself and others.

## **2.5 PATRIARCHY AND SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS**

Patriarchy is about the social relations of power between men and women, women and women, and men and men. In more recent times there have been positive shifts in attitudes, legally and socially, however patriarchy still lives on, in unequal wages between males and females that stop equal access to opportunities, failure to talk about women's achievements, unequal distribution of household tasks, and defined gender roles. Patriarchy is commonly described as a system of social structures and practices, in which men govern, oppress and exploit women". Patriarchal violence is then any kind of violence that creates or maintains men's power and dominance or avenges the loss of their power. Lerner (1986) views the establishment of patriarchy as a historical process that developed from 3100 B.C. to 600 B.C. in the Near East. Patriarchy, she believes, arose partly from the practice of intertribal exchanges of women for marriage 'in which women acquiesced because it was functional for the tribe.

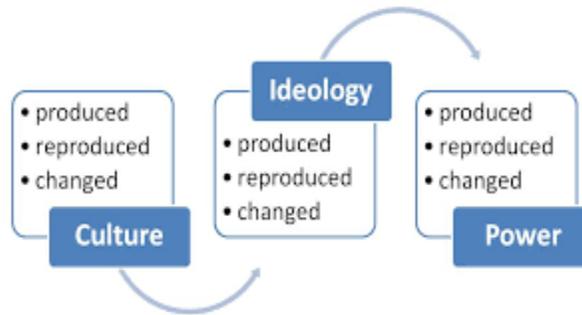


Patriarchy affects social institutions, often with disadvantageous consequences for women. Patriarchy is a hierarchical social system that places men in control of economic, cultural, and political structures. This system creates and supports male dominance because the positions of power are held by or promised mainly to men. In a patriarchy, value is given to all things masculine or exhibiting masculine traits. Men receive the privileges and are the main focus of the social institutions within the society. These institutions include religion, politics, family, education, the media, the job market, and the scientific community. Patriarchy encourages the prevalence of sexism, prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination against women because of their sex. Also called gender discrimination, sexism results in disadvantages for women and girls. The social institutions of a patriarchal society create and reinforce gender inequality in the society. This means that the basic structure of the society functions to keep women in a subordinate position. Disadvantages women experience in a patriarchal society can include many things:

- fewer opportunities to advance their education
- being considered incapable in certain fields
- fewer job opportunities
- lower pay than men in the same position
- less overall wealth accumulated
- greater pressure to do unpaid labor connected to the home and family
- fewer women in high positions of power
- fewer women holding positions in political office

- less media coverage for women, women's concerns, and women's achievements
- unfair judgement and being held to different standards than men
- fewer rights for women and girls

## 2.6 FEMINIST APPROACHES TO CONCEPT OF POWER<sup>4</sup>



Power is clearly a crucial concept for feminist theory. Insofar as feminists are interested in analyzing power, it is because they have an interest in understanding, critiquing, and ultimately challenging the multiple arrays of unjust power relations affecting women in contemporary Western societies, including sexism, racism, heterosexism, and class oppression. Feminists explain power in different contexts which covers its positive and negative connotation. The most prominent contexts as explained by the feminist are as under.

### 2.6.1. Power as Resource

Young (1990) highlights the positive aspect of power and says that those who conceptualize power as a resource understand it as a positive social good that is currently unequally distributed amongst women and men. For feminists who understand power in this way, want to redistribute this resource so that women will also have power equal to men. In this sense they assume that power is “a kind of stuff that can be possessed by individuals in greater or lesser amounts” (Young, 1990, P: 31).

Liberal feminists like Mills (1987) and Okin (1989) support this conception of power as a resource. For instance, Okin (1989) argues that the contemporary gender-structured family unjustly distributes the benefits and burdens of familial life amongst husbands and wives. Okin (1989) calls power as “critical social goods.” As she puts it, “when we look seriously at the distribution between husbands and wives of such critical social goods as work (paid and unpaid) power,

<sup>4</sup><https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminist-power/>

prestige, self-esteem, opportunities for self-development, and both physical and economic security, found socially constructed inequalities between men and women” (Okin, 1989: 136).

However, Young (1990) has some objection on this way of understanding power of distributive model of power.

- First, Young maintains that it is wrong to think of power as a kind of stuff that can be possessed; on her view, power is a relation, not a thing that can be distributed or redistributed.
- Second, as Young (1990) states that the distributive model tends to assume a dyadic<sup>5</sup> understanding of power which fails to highlight the broader social, institutional, and structural contexts that shape individual relations of power. the power distribution model unhelpful for understanding the structural features of domination.
- Third, the distributive model conceives of power statically, as a pattern of distribution, whereas Young, following Foucault (1980), claims that power exists only in action, and thus must be understood dynamically, as existing in ongoing processes or interactions.
- Finally, Young (1990) argues that the distributive model of power tends to view domination as the concentration of power in the hands of a few. This model might be appropriate for some forms of domination, but in contemporary industrial societies, power is “widely dispersed and diffused” and yet it is nonetheless true that “social relations are tightly defined by domination and oppression” (Young 1990a, 32–33).

### **2.6.2. Power as Domination**

Feminist have named many terms for expressing domination like oppression, subjugation patriarchy and so on understanding of power- over relation which may be unjust or illegitimate. Therefore, in this way, power have a negative connotation and used in various contexts of women unjust relation with men.

Power is interpreted as state-centric, masculinized and understood as domination or power over others. According to the feminist perspective, this formulation of power is misleading as it ignores the oppressed other and the power relations required to keep them there and means that traditional theories disregard the many strands of power emerging from shifting gender, class and ethnic relations in the margins of society. The position of feminist phenomenological approaches to theorizing male domination is Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex*. Beauvoir’s

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<sup>5</sup> Dyadic describes the interaction between two things, and may refer to: Dyad (sociology), interaction between a pair of individuals.

text provides a brilliant analysis of the situation of women: the social, cultural, historical, and economic conditions that define their existence.

Beauvoir's basic analysis of women's situation relies on the distinction between being for-itself and being in-itself. Beauvoir argues that whereas men have assumed the status of the superior subject, women have been referred to the status of Other. She puts it in a famous passage from the Introduction to *The Second Sex*: "She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute, she is the Other" (Beauvoir, xxii). This distinction between man as Subject and woman as Other is the key to Beauvoir's understanding of domination or oppression. She writes, "every time transcendence falls back into immanence, stagnation, there is a degradation of existence into the 'envoi' the cruel life of subjection to given conditions and liberty into constraint and contingency. This downfall represents a moral fault if the subject consents to it; if it is inflicted upon him, it spells frustration and oppression. In both cases it is an absolute evil" (Beauvoir, xxxv). She maintains that women are oppressed because they are compelled to assume the status of the Other, doomed to exist (xxxv). Women's situation is thus marked by a basic tension between wholeness and her existence; as self-conscious human beings, they are capable of perfection, but they are compelled into immanency by cultural and social conditions that deny them that wholeness (Beauvoir, chapter 21). Young (1990) critique of the distributive model leads toward an alternative way of conceptualizing power, which does not consider power as a resource or critical social good, but instead views it as a relation of domination.

Radical feminists understand power as domination tend to understand power in terms of dyadic relations of dominance/subordination, often understood on analogy with the relationship between master and slave. Catharine MacKinnon, feminist legal theorist defines domination as it is closely wrapped up with understanding of gender difference. According to MacKinnon (1989) gender difference is simply the recognized effect of domination because as she describes that "difference is the velvet glove on the iron fist of domination. The problem is not that differences are not valued; the problem is that they are defined by power" (MacKinnon 1989: 219). Further, MacKinnon elaborates that "women/men is a distinction not just of difference, but of power and powerlessness.... power/powerlessness is the sex difference" (MacKinnon 1987:123).

### **2.6.3. Power as Empowerment**

Many feminists from a variety of theoretical backgrounds have argued for a reconceptualization of power as a capacity or ability, specifically, the capacity to

empower or transform oneself and others. Thus, these feminists have tended to understand power not as power-over but as power-to.

Wartenberg (1990) argues that this feminist understanding of power, which he calls transformative power, is actually a type of power-over, although one that is distinct from domination because it aims at empowering those over whom it is exercised. However, most of the feminists who embrace this transformative or empowerment-based conception of power explicitly define it as an ability or capacity and present it as an alternative to common masculine notions of power-over.

Miller (1992) claims that “women’s examination of power...can bring new understanding to the whole concept of power” (P: 241) and rejects the definition of power as domination; instead, she defines it as “the capacity to produce a change which moves anything from point A or state A to point B or state B” (Miller 1992: 241).

Miller suggests that power understood as domination is particularly masculine; from women’s perspective, power is understood differently, “there is enormous validity in women’s not wanting to use power as it is presently conceived and used. Rather, women may want to be powerful in ways that simultaneously enhance, rather than diminish, the power of others” (Miller, 1992: 247–248). In a similar way, Held (1993) argues against the masculinist conception of power as “the power to cause others to submit to one’s will, the power that led men to seek hierarchical control and...contractual constraints” (Held 1993: 136).

Held (1993) views women’s unique experiences as mothers and caregivers as the basis for new insights into power; as she puts it, “the capacity to give birth and to nurture and empower could be the basis for new and more humanly promising conceptions than the ones that now prevail of power, empowerment, and growth” (Held 1993: 137). According to Held (1993) “the power of a mothering person to empower others, to foster transformative growth, is a different sort of power from that of a stronger sword or a dominant will” (Held 1993: 209). Held (1993) is of the view, a feminist analysis of society and politics leads to an understanding of power as the capacity to transform and empower oneself and others.

Hartsock (1983) refers to the understanding of power “as energy and competence rather than dominance” as “the feminist theory of power” (Hartsock 1983:224). Hartsock (1983) is concerned with how relations of domination along lines of gender are constructed and maintained and whether social understandings of domination itself have been distorted by men’s domination of women” (Hartsock 1983: 1). Following Marx’s conception of ideology, Hartsock maintains that the

prevailing ideas and theories of a time period are rooted in the material, economic relations of that society. This applies, in her view, to theories of power as well.

She argues that power and domination have consistently been associated with masculinity. Because power has been understood from the position of the socially dominant and the ruling class and men. According to Hartsock (1983) is to reconceptualize power from a specifically feminist standpoint, one that is rooted in women's life experience, specifically, their role in reproduction. Conceptualizing power from this standpoint can, according to Hartsock (1983) "point beyond understandings of power as power over others" (Hartsock 1983: 12). Hartsock (1983) argues that precursors of this theory can be found in the work of some women who did not consider themselves to be feminists like Hannah Arendt, whose rejection of the command-obedience model of power and definition of 'power' as "the human ability not just to act but to act in concert" overlaps significantly with the feminist conception of power as empowerment (1970: 44). Arendt's definition of 'power' brings out another aspect of the definition of 'power' as empowerment because of her focus on community or collective empowerment.

## **2.7 GENDERED POWER STRUCTURES**

Every society has a gender structure, a means by which bodies are assigned a sex category from which gender as inequality is built. A gender structure has implications for individuals themselves, their identities, personalities, and therefore the choices they make. The culture is gendered means that it embodies and represents ideas, beliefs and practices about women's and men's roles, work and leisure, and sexuality. Gender (like race or ethnicity) functions as an organizing principle for society because of the cultural meanings given to being male or female. In other words, gender are shaped by culture. Inequalities between men and women are one of the most persistent patterns in the distribution of power. Power relations are relationships in which one person has social-formative power over another and is able to get the other person to do what they wish. Power is understood in feminist theories not only as power between institutions and governments but also, importantly, in terms of power between the people, power that has consequences for the equality of different groups of people. gender is not only an individual attribute but also a major organizing system that structures patterns of interactions and expectations across other major social institutions (Lorber 1994). Thus, gender fundamentally structures family and kinship, the economy, language, education, culture, interpersonal relationships, sexuality, ideology, and personality. Conceiving institutions as genderless, separate entities is problematic because this obscure the fundamental processes of creating and maintaining power inequities between men and women.

Understanding organizational practices and processes is central to explaining gender inequality. While women remain clustered in secondary labor markets marked by lower wages, uncertainty, short career ladders, and few if any benefits, most men find employment in primary labor markets characterized by greater economic rewards. Occupational and job segregation continue to be an enduring feature within most firms. Additionally, gender differences in income, power, authority, autonomy, and status translate into men, particularly white men, enjoying systematic advantages over women. Despite changing social and economic conditions and legislation prohibiting sex discrimination, these inequalities persist and subsequently inform an impressive body of labor market and workplace analyses in most parts of the world.

The study of “gendered organization” as a distinct area of scholarly inquiry has developed over the last 20 years in an effort to explain such inequality. The concept, coined by Joan Acker as gendered institutions create an image of “the universal worker” represented in jobs and organizational hierarchy within the institutions, assuming that anyone can fit the position. Nonetheless, this organizational structure is made to represent man's body, sexuality, relationship to procreation and paid work (Acker, 2012). According to Acker (1990), most feminists assume that institutional structures are gender-neutral, whereas to the contrary, every contract or document produced within an institution is based on gender assumptions and have a significant and distinctive impact on women and men. Institutional structures in most societies are organized through gender (Risman, 2004).

Although relatively new, this field has roots in second wave and radical feminist scholarship dating back at least to the 1960s. Scholars began integrating gender studies with organizational literature in an effort to render visible women’s experiences, place men’s experiences in a gendered context and identify the ways in which gender inequality is (re)created and maintained over time.

Early work by Heidi Hartmann, Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Catharine MacKinnon, and Kathy Ferguson revealed organizational dynamics that produce gender specific outcomes, which disadvantage women and advantage men. For example, Kanter’s classic study, *Men and Women of the Corporation* (1977), demonstrates how one’s structural position within a firm (e.g., the job one holds in the hierarchy) determines one’s “success,” defined in terms of career mobility, authority, and power. One’s job also affects one’s personality, behavior, and aspirations, such as women acting timid. Thus, women’s disadvantaged location stems from being disproportionately concentrated and “stuck” in positions with limited power and short to nonexistent career ladders. One of the primary strengths of Kanter’s work lies in the shift from

individual level behavior of men and women to a structural explanation of gender inequality. Although Kanter provides mechanisms for how, once in place, gender inequality is maintained through occupational sex segregation, she neglects to explain the origins of segregation that leads to an array of unequal work rewards.

Heidi Hartmann (1980) helps find an explication of the origins of gender segregation and its consequences. According to Hartmann, capitalism and patriarchy are separate but interlocking systems that work in concert to structure social organization. (Hartmann defines patriarchy as a set of social relations with a material base, where hierarchical relations between men and solidarity among them enable men to control women.) Specifically, she contends that capitalism and patriarchy operate to subordinate women as individuals and as a collective group through various modes of production, the gendered division of labor, and subsequent sex segregation. Therefore, according to this perspective, patriarchy proceeds yet interacts with capitalism so that women enter the wage labor market at a disadvantage, and men's actions maintain women's subordinate position while protecting their own privileges. Hartmann's theory acknowledges the interconnections between gender and other institutions. She also shows that men's actions matter in maintaining gender inequality in addition to men and women's structural positions, thereby making the link between structure and agency explicit. Since Hartmann's account, feminist scholars have demonstrated the ways in which gender infuses our lives through all institutions. Because institutions are intertwined and interdependent, we can use gender as a lens through which to describe and understand people's experiences within them.

Connell (2006) informs that gendered institutions have historically developed by men, currently controlled by men, and symbolically represented from the viewpoint of men in directing positions, both in the present and historically. Gendered organizations are workplaces where "advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine" (Acker, 1992: 146). Research has shown that despite the composition of the workforce, a gendered institution will reproduce norms and practices based on a stereotyped perception of males and females. Moreover, gendered Institutions' tend to maintain the gendered processes of work divisions despite the increase in the number of women joining the workforce (Mastracci and Arreola, 2016).

According to Vivien Lowndes (2019), gendered institutions help to constitute the role, relations, and identities of women and men in the political arena. For example, in her research, Lowndes introduces an idea to analyze gendered institutions based on the micro-foundations of the political institutions rather than treating institutions as organizational systems or broad policy regimes. Lowndes points out that in order to

understand how gendered institutions reinforce and maintain their structure, it is crucial to focus on how actors interact with rules given by these institutions in a specific political setting. Besides, the rules are not necessarily formal written laws set by political institutions. They might be informal as well as set and influenced by institutions outside the political arena. The theory of gendered organization communicates that the stereotypical norms and practices that go on in organization between male and female workers will persist no matter the composition of the workforce (Acker, 2012). Therefore, whether there are more women and less men, the men will still dominate the highly ranked positions and that the human resource management practices will make it hard for women to achieve the work and life balance by reproducing the same old stereotypical gender norms, thus making them less likely to be considered for significant positions in the organization (Mastracci and Arreola, 2016). In a pathbreaking article, Acker (1990) uses complex, bureaucratic organizations as an example to detail how organizations reflect specific gendered expectations and relations. More specifically, she shows that jobs, work rules, contracts, evaluation systems, and firm cultures (e.g., organizational logics) are not gender neutral. Rather, she draws on feminists such as Dorothy Smith, Joan Scott, and Sandra Hardin, who advocate that gender constitutes a meaningful analytic category to argue that a gendered substructure undergirds the entire bureaucratic organizational system. Notably, this substructure is gendered masculine, with the interests of men at its center. Therefore, gender inequality stems from the very organization of bureaucracies rather than being produced solely by the actions of particular gendered individuals enacting gendered scripts for behavior within them. Connell (2006) and Acker (1990) studied the creation and recreation of the gender understructure, looking at organizational practices, and concrete institutional settings. Acker argues that although most of the gendered processes within institutions are inseparably connected with societal elements, it is possible to analyze and distinguish them. Some are clear and open; others are profoundly rooted and invisible (Acker, 1992).

Based on Connell and Acker's work, there are four observable dimensions in a gendered institution.

*Division of labor:* The gender division of labor is the way production and consumption are arranged according to gender, including the gender of employment and the division between paid work and domestic work (Connell, 2006).

*Gender relations of power:* How control, authority, and force are employed along gender lines, including organizational hierarchy, legal power, and collective and individual violence (Connell, 2006). Among gender, Acker (2009) also includes class and race processes that create decisions and procedures to control, segregate,

exclude, and construct hierarchies. Sometimes, these are deliberate practices that dismiss women or minorities to incorporate them into segregated functions.

*Emotions and human relations:* The interaction between individuals and groups is the mechanism of institutional functioning, decision-making, and image production (Acker, 2009). People "do gender" according to the institution's specific expectations as they do everyday work (West and Zimmerman 1987). Connell (2006) also suggests that human relations in institutions tell us how fondness and hostility among people and groups are also organized along gender lines, including feelings of solidarity, hatred, and sexual attraction and repulsion.

*Gender culture and symbolism:* This dimension relates to how gender identities are defined in society, the language and symbols of gender difference, and shared beliefs and attitudes about gender (Connell, 2006). Acker complements and quotes Connell's work saying that hegemonic masculinity permeates most institutions, including the political arena (Acker, 2009).

## **2.8 GLASS CEILING**

Women face several obstacles and barriers in order to attain high managerial positions as compared to men. They struggle to get fair representation in corporate boards and higher management levels. This is known as '*glass ceiling*'. Glass ceiling is a metaphor for the invisible hierarchical impediment that prevents minorities and women from achieving elevated professional success.

The glass ceiling is a colloquial term for the social barrier preventing women from being promoted to top jobs in management. The term was popularized in a 1986 Wall Street Journal article about the corporate hierarchy. In recent years, the term has been broadened to include discrimination against minorities as well.

## **2.9 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS**

1. How would you explain the concept of power? What is meant by power to, power within, power over and power with.
2. How gender is linked with power? Support your answer with arguments from Pakistani society
3. Explain in detail the theory of knowledge/ power by Michèle Foucault. How this theory is related to gender power structures? Discuss.

4. Discuss in detail the feminist perspective of power. Write down the observable dimensions of power in gendered institutions as suggested by Connell and Acker (1992) research work.

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**Unit-3**

## **UNDERSTANDING GENDER**

**Written by: Sadia Zaman**

**Reviewed by: Atifa Nasir**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Gender can be understood in many ways. As you already know the difference between gender and sex, now there are more ways in which gender can be defined and expressed. Some of them are given here for more understanding of the concepts. Gender is not just the binary system that one is a boy and girl or man or woman. Gender can be explained in many other concepts too. All of these concepts influence and challenge the already existing power structures present in the social order. These concepts may be conceptualized as process, stratification, and social structure within a society. These concepts related to gender roles in the society which ultimately effects the society at a large. Moreover, we can further expand the concept of gender beyond binary classification, there are the certain dimensions of gender that explain gender in a different way.

This unit will briefly explain the dimension of gender which includes body, expression, and identity. In the last part of the unit, you will get familiarized with the terms in which gender is explained.

## **OBJECTIVES**

After studying the unit, you will be able to understand and

1. Describe various concepts associated with gender and their role in any patriarchal society
2. Distinguish between different forms of gender dimensions
3. Explain the different terms in which gender is identified

### **Learning Outcomes**

After studying the unit, you will be able to

1. Identify various concepts related to gender
2. Recognize the different form of gender dimensions prevalent in societal dynamics
3. Converse about various terms used in gender studies discourses

### **3.1 GENDER – A TERM**

“Gender” is taken as a term from linguistics, and it refers not simply to women or men, but to the relationship between them, and the way it is socially constructed. Gender is also relational term like the concepts of class, race and ethnicity and also is an analytical tool for understanding social processes.

Purpose of gender studies as a discipline in this way is to identify the variety of differences such as biological, physical, social, psychological between men and women, the basic two categories. Gender is very socially centered term, hence sees the men and women in socio-cultural context. It is very robust in determining the ratio of men and women and their contributions in domains of life such as education, work, possessions, income, health, rights and many more.

From clothing to major life choices, men and women and their opinions and attitudes and actions are part of gender studies. Our understanding of self is governed by the very gender identity we have as we label our self as boy or girl, male or female, men or woman, and this identity directs our entire life. Mover, it also helps us in understanding same-gender and opposite gender individuals.

Women and gender studies is a combination of different disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, psychology, literature, political sciences, history and even the basic biology and differences of our bodily functions. Here in this chapter, we’ll begin with the basic concept of gender such as follows:

### **3.2 DIMENSIONS OF GENDER**

Our body, expression, and identity are three distinct, but interrelated components that comprise a person's gender. People tend to use the terms “sex” and “gender” interchangeably. But while connected, the two terms are not equivalent. Sex is the biological/at the time of birth given status to a newborn baby on the basis of genitals that either he is a baby boy or a baby girl. Our chromosomes and reproductive organs are the key markers of sex. Now coming to what is gender then, it is rather complicated, gender is the social identity we take as a boy or a girl. Now you must be thinking of what the difference is then. Let’s, view it in a little different way, we have seen the third-gender in Pakistan commonly known as transgender. Biologically they are either a boy or a girl most of the time, but when it comes to their gender, a male person claims that in fact his gender is of female or a woman. So, gender is different than sex, it is a social label. If, being a male biologically, I perform all the male responsibilities of the society than my assumed gender is also male, similar goes for a female.

In short, sex of a person being male, or female is natural, biological, and universal, whereas gender is given by society and people change them when they see that their socio-cultural responsibilities are different than their biological sex. Nevertheless, while gender may begin with the assignment of our sex, it doesn't end there. A person's gender is the complex interrelationship between three dimensions:

1. **Body** - Our body, our experience of our own body, how society genders bodies, and how others interact with us based on our body, for example having a male or female body organs.
2. **Identity** - Our deeply held, internal sense of self as masculine, feminine, a blend of both, neither, nor something else. Identity also includes the name we use to convey our gender. Gender identity can correspond to or differ from the sex we are assigned at birth for example considered as male in society, or female in society or transgender.
3. **Expression** - How we present our gender in the world and how society, culture, community, and family perceive, interact with, and try to shape our gender. Gender expression is also related to gender roles and how society uses those roles to try to enforce conformity to current gender norms like how women are doing jobs like men and male members are nurturing and taking care of children at household and etc.

Each of these dimensions can vary greatly across a range of possibilities and is distinct from, but interrelated with, the others. A person's comfort in their gender is related to the degree to which these three dimensions feel in harmony. Let's explore each of these dimensions in a little more detail.

### 3.2.1 Body

Most societies view sex as a binary concept, with two rigidly fixed options: male or female, based on a person's reproductive anatomy and functions. But a binary view of sex fails to capture even the biological aspect of gender. While we are often taught that bodies have one of two forms of genitalia, which are classified as "female" or "male," there are naturally occurring Intersex conditions (associated with genitals, sex chromosomes, gonads, hormones, reproductive structures) that demonstrate that sex exists across a continuum of possibilities. This biological spectrum by itself should be enough to dispel the simplistic notion that there are just two sexes. The relationship between a person's gender and their body goes beyond one's reproductive functions. Research in neurology, endocrinology, and cellular biology points to a broader biological basis for an individual's experience of gender. In fact, research increasingly points to our brains as playing a key role in how we each experience our gender.

Bodies themselves are also gendered in the context of cultural expectations. Masculinity and femininity are equated with certain physical attributes, labeling us

as more or less a man/woman based on the degree to which those attributes are present. This gendering of our bodies affects how we feel about ourselves and how others perceive and interact with us.

### **3.2.2 Identity**

Your gender identity is how you feel inside and how you express those feelings. Clothing, appearance, and behaviors can all be ways to express your gender identity. Gender is defined as a personal conception of oneself as male or female (or rarely, both or neither). This concept is intimately related to the concept of gender role, which is defined as the outward manifestations of personality that reflect the gender identity.

In more detailed account, gender identity is defined as a personal conception of oneself as male or female (or rarely, both or neither). This concept is intimately related to the concept of gender role, which is defined as the outward manifestations of personality that reflect the gender identity. Gender identity, in nearly all instances, is self-identified, as a result of a combination of inherent and extrinsic or environmental factors; gender role, on the other hand, is manifested within society by observable factors such as behavior and appearance. For example, if a person considers himself a male and is most comfortable referring to his personal gender in masculine terms, then his gender identity is male. However, his gender role is male only if he demonstrates typically male characteristics in behavior, dress, and/or mannerisms. Most people feel that they're either male or female. Some people feel like a masculine female, or a feminine male. Some people feel neither male nor female. These people may choose labels such as "gender queer," "gender variant," or "gender fluid." Your feelings about your gender identity begin as early as age 2 or 3.

Some people's assigned sex and gender identity are pretty much the same, or in line with each other. These people are called cisgender. Other people feel that their assigned sex is of the other gender from their gender identity (i.e., assigned sex is female, but gender identity is male). These people are called transgender or trans. Not all transgender people share the same exact identity. Intersex people are born with some biological characteristics that are considered "female" and others that are considered "male."

The intersex definition is a person is born with a combination of male and female biological characteristics, such as chromosomes or genitals, which can make doctors unable to assign their sex as distinctly male or female. Being intersex is a naturally occurring variation in humans and isn't a medical problem. There are many different intersex variations. Some intersex people have ambiguous genitalia or internal sex organs, such as a person with both ovarian and testicular tissues. Other intersex people have a combination of chromosomes that is different

than XY (male) and XX (female), like XXY. And some people are born with what looks like totally male or totally female genitals, but their internal organs or hormones released during puberty don't match.

If a person is born with intersex genitalia, they might be identified as intersex at birth. For people born with more clearly male or female external genitals, they might not know they're intersex until later in life, like when they go through puberty. Sometimes a person can live their whole life without ever discovering that they're intersex.

Gender identity is our internal experience and our naming of our gender. Gender identity can correspond to or differ from norms associated with the sex we are assigned at birth. Understanding of our gender comes to most of us fairly early in life. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, "By age four, most children have a stable sense of their gender identity." This core aspect of one's identity comes from within each of us. Gender identity is an inherent aspect of a person's make-up. Individuals do not choose their gender, nor can they be made to change it. However, the words someone uses to communicate their gender identity may change over time; naming one's gender can be a complex and evolving matter. Because we are provided with limited language for gender, it may take a person quite some time to discover or create the language that best communicates their internal experience. Likewise, as language evolves, a person's name for their gender may also evolve. This does not mean their gender has changed, but rather that the words for it are shifting.

The two gender identities most people are familiar with are boy and girl (or man and woman), and often people think that these are the only two gender identities. This idea that there are only two genders and that each individual must be either one or the other is called the "Gender binary." However, throughout human history we know that many societies have seen, and continue to see, gender as a spectrum, and not limited to just two possibilities. In addition to these two identities, other identities are now commonplace. Youth and young adults today no longer feel bound by the gender binary, instead establishing a growing vocabulary for gender. More than just a series of new words, however, this shift in language represents a far more nuanced understanding of the experience of gender itself. Terms that communicate the broad range of experiences of Non-binary people are particularly growing in number. Gender queer, a term that is used both as an identity and as an umbrella term for non-binary identities, is one example of a term for those who do not identify as exclusively masculine or feminine. This evolution of language is exciting but can also be confusing as new terms are created regularly, and since what a term means can vary from person to person.

In the 1950s when Dr. John Money coined the term “gender identity. Money borrowed the term “gender” from linguistics, where it described masculine, neuter, or feminine parts of speech. He believed “gender” was socially determined and learned by people. He thought children were blank slates and could be brought up to be either gender, regardless of bodily sex. The term “gender” also came to describe the *roles* men and women take and the ways they *express* their gender through language, dress, and behavior. Their belief includes the idea that there are no real differences between men and women (*except, perhaps for a few reproductive hormones and organs*). He used the term to differentiate between sex (*being male or female, a biological reality*) and gender (*a psychological or spiritual condition, including a person’s thoughts, beliefs, and feelings about being male or female*).

Some ideas developed by John Money include:

- “Gender” is different from biological “sex”;
- Gender is learned; it is a social construct; and, therefore, it can be assigned and taught;
- “Gender Identity” is what people think, believe, and feel about themselves; and
- “Gender Roles” are those prescribed by society.

### **3.2.3 Expression**

The third dimension of gender is expression, which is the way we show our gender to the world, through such things as clothing, hairstyles, and mannerisms. Practically everything is assigned gender, toys, colors and clothes are some of the more obvious examples. Given the prevalence of the gender binary, children face great pressure to express their gender within narrow, stereotypical definitions of “boy” or “girl.” Expectations around gender expression are taught to us from the moment we are born, and communicated through every aspect of our lives, including family, culture, peers, schools, community, media, and religion. Gender roles and expectations are so entrenched in our culture that it’s difficult to imagine things any other way.

Through a combination of social conditioning and personal preference, by age three most children prefer activities and exhibit behaviors typically associated with their assigned gender. For individuals who fit fairly neatly into expected gender roles and expression, there may be little cause to think about, or question, their gender. However, children who express gender outside of these social norms often have a very different experience. Girls thought to be too masculine, and boys seen as feminine face a variety of challenges. Pressures to conform at home, mistreatment by peers in school, and condemnation by the broader society are just some of the difficulties facing a child whose expression does not fall in line with the binary gender system. Because expectations around gender expression are so rigid, we frequently assume that what someone wears, or how they move, talk, or express themselves, tells us something about their gender identity. But expression is distinct from identity we can’t assume a person’s gender identity based on their gender

expression. For example, a boy may like to wear skirts or dresses. His choice in clothing doesn't change his gender identity; it simply means that he prefers (at least some of the time) to wear clothes that society has typically associated with girls.

What's more, norms around gender expression change across societies and over time. One need only consider men wearing earrings or women having tattoos to see the flexibility of social expectations about gender. Even the seemingly intractable notion that "pink is for girls; blue is for boys" is relatively new. Prior to the mid-twentieth century, pink was associated with boys' clothing and blue with girls' clothing (still due to the gendering of colors, but with a different rationale associating each color with particular gendered characteristics).

#### **Self-Assessment Questions (SAQS)**

1. Explain dimension of gender
2. What is meant by gender as a term?

Explain the dimension of gender in detail. How doctor John Money coined the term gender?

### **3.3 FUNCTIONAL TERMS USED TO DEFINE GENDER AND SEX IN VARIETY OF FORMS**

Now that you are a student of gender studies, you may come across the following terms very frequently, let us recap once again of these to understand gender in detail. These terms are defined here in line with our discussion of what biological sex is and what gender is.

- **Masculinity/Masculine:** Masculinity stands for a society in which social gender roles are clearly distinct: Men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success; women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life. Masculinity (also called manhood or manliness) is a set of attributes, behaviors, and roles associated with boys and men.
- **Femininity/Feminine:** Femininity (also called womanliness or girlishness) is a set of attributes, behaviors, and roles generally associated with women and girls. Femininity stands for a society in which social gender roles overlap: Both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life.
- **Sexual Orientation:** A component of identity that includes a person's sexual and emotional attraction to another person and the behavior and/or social affiliation that may result from this attraction. A person may be attracted to men, women, both, neither, or to people who are genderqueer, androgynous,

or have other gender identities. Individuals may identify as heterosexual, bisexual, queer, pansexual, or asexual, among others.

- **Gender Orientation / Gender Identity:** Gender Identity: A person's deeply-felt, inherent sense of being a boy, a man, or male; a girl, a woman, or female; or an alternative gender (e.g., genderqueer, gender nonconforming, gender neutral) that may or may not correspond to a person's sex assigned at birth or to a person's primary or secondary sex characteristics. Since gender identity is internal, a person's gender identity is not necessarily visible to others.
- **Gender Conformity:** When your gender identity and sex "match" (i.e., fit social norms). For example, a male who is masculine and identifies as a man.
- **Gender Expression/Gender Image:** The way one presents oneself to the world, as either masculine or feminine, or both or neither. This can include dress, posture, vocal inflection, and other behavior.
- **Gender Assignment:** Classification of an infant at birth as either male or female.
- **Binary/Binarism:** The genders at each end of the gender spectrum (male and female). Putting gender strictly into two categories (male and female) and refusing to acknowledge genders outside of male and female. Such as any individual as either male or female, as rigid as either yes or no, and black or white.
- **Bigender / Bigeneric:** Identifying as two genders, commonly (but not exclusively) male and female. Sometimes you feel like both genders at the same time. Also refers to those who feel they have both a male and a female side to their personalities. Some "bigendered" people cross-dress; others may eventually have a sex-change operation, others may do neither.
- **Polygender-** When you identify with multiple genders at once. Sometimes referred to as *multi-gender*.
- **Cisgender:** When someone identifies with the gender, he/she were assigned at birth. Born with female sex so identify myself as female or born as boy considering my gender as male is called Cisgender.
- **Agender/Neutrois:** Not identifying with any gender. Sometimes referred to as being *genderless* or *gender void*.
- **Androgynous:** Someone who reflects an appearance that is both masculine and feminine, or who appears to be neither or both a boy and a girl. The mixing of masculine and feminine gender expression or the lack of gender identification. The terms androgyne, agender, and neutrois are sometimes used by people who identify as genderless, non-gendered, beyond or between genders, or some combination thereof.
- **Transgender:** someone identify with a gender different than that he/she were assigned at birth. Born as boy but feel more relatable as female or born as female but feel more relatable as male gender.
- **Transsexual** - we know that sex is our biological label as boy or girl. But transgender is that someone doesn't feel like part of that biological sex and feel opposite gender. In transsexual, people have had Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS) to change the sexual organs they, he or she is were born with

to that of an opposite gender. Such as male (biologically) is going through GRS and becoming a female is later on known as transsexual.

- **Non-Binary / Gender Fluid / Gender Queer** - An umbrella term for genders that fall somewhere in the middle of the gender spectrum and are neither strictly male nor female. This can be used as a gender identification without further explanation. Sometimes the term, *gender queer*, is used. For example, now we see mostly questionnaires and forms in which there is an option given as male, female or “not prefer to mention” in the gender section. Moving between genders or having a fluctuating gender identity. A person who redefines or plays with gender, or who refuses gender altogether. A label for people who bend/break the rules of gender and blur the boundaries.
- **Intersex**- A biological difference in sex that is when people are born with genitals, gonads, and/or chromosomes that do not match up exactly with male or female. These are biologically rare cases as babies and usually they are left on parents decisions to choose that whether they want to raise the baby as boy or a girl.
- **Dyadic**- Someone who is not intersex and when their genitals, gonads, and chromosomes can all match into either a male or female category.
- **Pansexual**: A person who is fluid in sexual orientation and/or gender or sex identity.
- **Asexual**: Having no evident sex or sex organs. In usage, may refer to a person who is not sexually active, or not sexually attracted to other people.
- **Heterosexuality**: Sexual, emotional, and/or romantic attraction to a biological sex which is opposite to one’s own biological sex, such as male to female preference.
- **Homosexuality**: Sexual, emotional, and/or romantic attraction to the same biological sex such as male to male or female to female sexual preference.
- **Homophobia**: The fear and intolerance of people who are homosexual or of homosexual feelings within oneself.
- **In the closet**: Keeping one’s sexual orientation and/or gender or sex identity a secret especially when that is different from the society’s given gender title.
- **Transvestite/Cross Dresser**: Individuals who regularly or occasionally wear the clothing socially assigned to a gender not their own but are usually comfortable with their anatomy and do not wish to change it (i.e., they are not transsexuals).
- **Cross Living**: Living full-time in the preferred gender image, opposite to one’s assigned sex at birth, generally in preparation for a sex change operation.
- **Sexism**: Discrimination against women on the basis that they are from the female biological sex and are inferior to men that results from the male supremacy system of oppression.
- **Gender-neutral**: Nondiscriminatory language to describe relationships e.g., “spouse” and “partner” are gender-neutral alternatives to the gender-specific words “husband,” “wife,”.

### **3.4 UNIVERSALITY OF GENDER**

Defining gender is more than just the above terms, Gender is a universal entity and that is further taken in three major extents as follows:

1. Gender as process
2. Gender as stratification
3. Gender as social structure

Gender helps in assisting the differences between roles and responsibilities as a social institution. It is a major building block.

#### **3.4.1 Gender as Process**

As a process, gender creates the social differences that define "woman" and "man." In social interaction throughout their lives, individuals learn what is expected, see what is expected, act and react in expected ways, and thus simultaneously construct and maintain the gender order: "The very injunction to be a given gender takes place through discursive routes: to be a good mother, to be a heterosexually desirable object, to be a fit worker, in sum, to signify a multiplicity of guarantees in response to a variety of different demands all at once" (Butler 1990: 145). Members of a social group neither make up gender as they go along nor exactly replicate in rote fashion what was done before. In almost every encounter, human beings produce gender, behaving in the ways they learned were appropriate for their status, or resisting or rebelling against these norms, Resistance and rebellion have altered gender norms, but so far, they have rarely eroded the statuses.

Gender remains at core of any social process because people use gender as a primary concept in coordinating behavior while interacting with each other. The everyday use of sex/gender acts as a cultural tool for organizing social relations. Gender as process sometimes refers to the biological categories in which an individual is born and then those secondary characteristics define the governing rules in a society. In a sociological view, it is sex and reproduction which encircles all spheres of social life. In Anthropology it talks about the social roles of men and women in a society. Through the definition of sex i.e., one is male and other is female, the social relationships are carried out with gendered meanings which constitutes gender as a distinct and inflexible system of inequality. For example, women's role is restricted to only household activities and men take care of life outside world. In this way roles are defined that who will do what along with the nature of the work.

Gender's role while defining the social relations also creates gender inequality which reinforces economic disparity contributing to the persistence of inequality within society. This disparity in modified form effects the economic and political changes in any society. As a process gender pertains the depth of attitudes, feelings, emotions, and behaviors of any individual.

### **3.4.2 Gender as Stratification**

Classification has always existed in our society. Before gender classification, the economic and caste barrier were considered as major reasons of categorization in the society. Later on, due to the indulgence of female sociologists in the research work, it was revealed that gender inequality plays an important role in classifying our society. It simply means that now we see our world in the mirrors of what are men and women doing and what is their status and role in a society. Social stratification or classification refers to a system by which a society ranks categories of people in a hierarchy. Owing to this, later on, gender stratification considered a separate category in social level stratification. As part of a stratification system, gender ranks men above women of the same race and class. Women and men could be different but equal practice, the process of creating difference depends to a great extent on differential evaluation.

Gender stratification refers to the social ranking, where men typically occupy higher statuses than women. Both terms, gender inequality and gender stratification are usually used interchangeably. Further divisions by race and class crosscut gender stratification. In a gender stratified society, men's work/activities/expressions are valued higher. Men in Pakistani society, for example, can opt out of housework which is less valued and leave it to their wives. The work which brings money is valued and it belongs to men. Throughout most of recorded history and around the globe, women have taken a "back seat" to men. Generally speaking, men have had, and continue to have, more physical and social power and status than women, especially in the public arena. Men are expected to be more aggressive and violent than women as they have to fight wars. Likewise, boys are often required to attain proof of masculinity through energetic effort. This leads to males to choose hard and tough physical jobs, hold public office, create laws and rules, and define society. Some feminists consider men behaviors as controlling of women and call this male dominance in a society as patriarchy.

The stratification between the genders can be seen in different ways. For example, in Pakistan, it is a traditional thinking that mathematics, engineering and certain other subjects are considered as "hard subjects" or "men" subjects, while social sciences and humanities are normally taken up by girls supposedly the 'soft subjects' for girls. Behind much of the inequalities seen in education, the workplace, and politics have sexism, or prejudice and discrimination because of gender. Fundamental to sexism is the assumption that men are superior to women. Sexism has always had negative consequences for women. It has caused some women to avoid pursuing successful careers typically described as "masculine" perhaps to avoid the social impression that they are less desirable as spouses or mothers, or even less "feminine." Sexism has also caused women to feel inferior to

men, or to rate themselves negatively. Sexism produces inequality between the genders particularly in the form of discrimination. In comparable positions in the workplace, for example, women generally receive lower wages than men. But sexism can also encourage inequality in subtler ways. By making women feel inferior to men, society comes to accept this as the truth. When that happens, women enter “the race” with lower self-esteem and fewer expectations, often resulting in lower achievements. Sexism has brought gender inequalities to women in many arenas of life especially in the areas of education, work, and politics. In gender stratification there are major perspectives such as:

1. The functionalist perspective
2. The conflict perspective
3. The interactionist perspective
4. The feminist perspective

### ***The Functionalist Perspective***

The functionalist perspective sees society as a complex system, whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability. This approach looks at society through a macro-level orientation, which is a broad focus on the social structures that shape society as a whole and looks at both social structure and social functions. Functionalism addresses society as a whole in terms of the function of its constituent elements, namely: norms, customs, traditions, and institutions. A common analogy, popularized by Herbert Spencer, presents these parts of society as “organs” that work toward the proper functioning of the “body” as a whole.

The functionalist perspective was articulated in the 1940s and 1950s, and largely developed by Talcott Parsons’ model of the nuclear family. This theory suggests that gender inequalities exist as an efficient way to create a division of labor, or as a social system in which particular segments are clearly responsible for certain, respective acts of labor. The division of labor works to maximize resources and efficiency.

### ***The Conflict Perspective***

In the context of gender, conflict theory argues that gender is best understood as men attempting to maintain power and privilege to the disadvantage of women. Therefore, men can be seen as the dominant group and women as the subordinate group. While certain gender roles may have been appropriate in a hunter-gatherer society, conflict theorists argue that the only reason these roles persist is because the dominant group naturally works to maintain their power and status. According to conflict theory, social problems are created when dominant groups exploit or oppress subordinate groups. Therefore, their approach is normative in that it prescribes changes to the power structure, advocating a balance of power between genders.

In most cultures, men have historically held most of the world's resources. Until relatively recently, women in Western cultures could not vote or hold property, making them entirely dependent on men. Men, like any other group with a power or wealth advantage, fought to maintain their control over resources (in this case, political and economic power). Conflict between the two groups caused things like the Women's Suffrage Movement and was responsible for social change. Contemporary conflict theorists suggest that when women become wage earners, they gain power in the family structure and create more democratic arrangements in the home, although they may still carry the majority of the domestic burden.

#### **Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)**

1. Describe the of gender from stratification dimension.
2. What is functionalist perspective that defines gender dimension

#### ***The Interactionist Perspective***

From a symbolic interactionist perspective, gender is produced and reinforced through daily interactions and the use of symbols. Social interaction is a face-to-face process that consists of actions, reactions, and mutual adaptation between two or more individuals. The goal of social interaction is to communicate with others. Social interaction includes all language, including body language and mannerisms. Erving Goffman, one of the forefathers of this theoretical perspective, emphasized the importance of *control* in social interactions. According to Goffman, during an interaction, individuals will attempt to control the behavior of the other participants, in order to attain needed information, and in order to control the perception of one's own image. If the interaction is in danger of ending before an individual wants it to, it can be conserved through several steps. One conversational partner can conform to the expectations of the other, he or she can ignore certain incidents, or he or she can solve apparent problems.

Symbolic interactionism aims to understand human behavior by analyzing the critical role of symbols in human interaction. This is certainly relevant to the discussion of masculinity and femininity because the characteristics and practices of both are socially constructed, reproduced, and reinforced through daily interactions. Imagine, for example, that you walk into a bank, hoping to get a small loan for school, a home, or a small business venture. If you meet with a male loan officer, you might state your case logically, listing all of the hard numbers that make you a qualified applicant for the loan. This type of approach would appeal to the analytical characteristics typically associated with masculinity. If you meet with a female loan officer, on the other hand, you might make an emotional appeal, by

stating your positive social intentions. This type of approach would appeal to the sensitive and relational characteristics typically associated with femininity.

The meanings attached to symbols are socially created and fluid, instead of natural and static. Because of this, we act and react to symbols based on their current assigned meanings. Both masculinity and femininity are performed gender identities, in the sense that gender is something we do or perform, not something we are. In response to this phenomenon, the sociologist Charles H. Cooley's developed the theory of the "looking-glass self" (1902). In this theory, Cooley argued that an individual's perception of himself or herself is based primarily how society views him or her. In the context of gender, if society perceives a man as masculine, that man will consider himself as masculine. Thus, when people perform tasks or possess characteristics based on the gender role assigned to them, they are said to be *doing gender* (rather than "being" gender), a notion first coined by West and Zimmerman (1987). West & Zimmerman emphasized that gender is maintained through accountability. Men and women are expected to perform their gender to the point that it is naturalized, and thus, their status depends on their performance.

### ***The Feminist Perspective***

Feminist theory analyzes gender stratification through the intersection of gender, race, and class. Feminist theory is the extension of feminism into theoretical or philosophical discourse. It aims to understand the nature of gender inequality, and examines women's social roles, experiences, and interests. While generally providing a critique of social relations, much of feminist theory also focuses on analyzing gender inequality and the promotion of women's interests.

Feminist theory uses the conflict approach to examine the reinforcement of gender roles and inequalities. Conflict theory posits that stratification is dysfunctional and harmful in society, with inequality perpetuated because it benefits the rich and powerful at the expense of the poor. Radical feminism, in particular, evaluates the role of the patriarchy in perpetuating male dominance. In patriarchal societies, the male's perspective and contributions are considered more valuable, resulting in the silencing and marginalization of the woman. Feminism focuses on the theory of patriarchy as a system of power that organizes society into a complex of relationships based on the assertion of male supremacy.

The feminist perspective of gender stratification more recently considers intersectionality, a feminist sociological theory first highlighted by feminist-sociologist Kimberli Crenshaw. Intersectionality suggests that various biological, social and cultural categories, including gender, race, class and ethnicity, interact and contribute towards systematic social inequality. Therefore, various forms of oppression, such as racism or sexism, do not act independently of one another;

instead, these forms of oppression are interrelated, forming a system of oppression that reflects the “intersection” of multiple forms of discrimination. In light of this theory, the oppression and marginalization of women is thus shaped not only by gender, but by other factors such as race and class.

### **3.4.3 Gender as A Social Structure**

A social structure is a set of long-lasting social relationships, practices and institutions that can be difficult to see at work in our daily lives. They are intangible social relations but work much in the same way as structures we can see buildings and skeletal systems are two examples. The human body is structured by bones; that is to say that the rest of our bodies’ organs and vessels are where they are because bones provide the structure upon which these other things can reside. It is obvious that structures also boundary possibility of actions, but they are not fundamentally unchangeable. For instance, our bones may deteriorate over time, suffer acute injuries, or be affected by disease, but they never spontaneously change location or disappear into thin air. Such is the way with social structures.

The elements of a social structure, the parts of social life that direct possible actions, are the institutions of society. These will be addressed in more detail later, but for now social institutions may be understood to include: the government, work, education, family, law, media, and medicine, among others. To say these institutions direct, or structure, possible social action, means that within the confines of these spaces there are rules, norms, and procedures that limit what actions are possible. For instance, family is a concept near and dear to most, but historically and culturally family forms have been highly specified, that is structured. At the higher level of social structure, we can see that some people have greater access to resources and institutionalized power across the board than do others.

- Sexism is the term we use for discrimination and blocked access women face.
- Genderism describes discrimination and blocked access that transgender people face.
- Racism describes discrimination and blocked access on the basis of race, which is based on socially-constructed meanings rather than biological differences.
- Classism describes discrimination on the basis of social class, or blocked access to material wealth and social status.
- Ableism describes discrimination on the basis of physical, mental, or emotional impairment or blocked access to the fulfillment of needs and in particular, full participation in social life.

These “-isms” reflect dominant cultural notions that women, trans people, people of color, poor people, and disabled people are inferior to men, non-trans people,

white people, middle- and upper-class people, and non-disabled people. Yet, the “-isms” are greater than individuals’ prejudice against women, trans people, people of color, the poor, and disabled people. Overlaying these social structures are structures of power. By power we mean two things:

1. Access to and through the various social institutions mentioned above, and
2. Processes of privileging, normalizing, and valuing certain identities (such as man) over woman.

This definition of power highlights the structural, institutional nature of power, while also highlighting the ways in which culture works in the creation and privileging of certain categories of people. Gender structure can be defined as divides work in home and in economic production, legitimates those in authority and organizes sexuality and emotional life. For example, apprenticeship, mechanisms for high skill blue collar jobs are generally reserved and preserved for men.

All over the world, women as a group have less power and resources in comparison to men as a group. This structural dimension of gender inequality has a tremendous impact on both women’s and men’s health and longevity.

#### **Self-Assessment Questions (SAQS)**

1. How gender can be examined as social structure?
2. What is meant by structural gender inequality?
3. Define conflict view under the theme of gender stratification

### **3.5 STRUCTURAL GENDER INEQUALITY**

The structural dimension of gender inequality refers to the unequal division of power and resources between women and men. These inequalities are assigned through other gendered mechanism which are reproduced and maintained at the individual as well as societal level (Okin, 1989). Norms, values, and practices give rise to clear distinction between the sexes and to allocating Women as subordinated to men in most important sphere of life, for example, type of education. labor market position and unpaid duties (Wamala and Lynch, 2002).

In many parts of the world, men and boys exercise power over women and girls, making decisions on their behalf, constraining their access to resources and personal agency, and policing their behaviour through socially condoned violence or threat of violence. Even in countries where extreme gender inequality is not evident; women continue to have less influence in economic, political, and other influential institutions than men (Schultz and Mullings, 2006).

The male versus female dominance in the structural gender aspects of power and resources is a global fact. Gender Empowerment Measure presented by the United Nations' Development Program is an index measuring differences between women and men in three basic dimensions:

- economic participation and decision-making,
- political participation and decision-making, and
- power over economic resources,

Just like the human body's skeletal structure, social structures are not immutable, or completely resistant to change. Social movements mobilized on the basis of identities have fought for increased equality and changed the structures of society, in the Pakistan and abroad, over time. However, these struggles do not change society overnight; some struggles last decades, centuries, or remain always unfinished. The structures and institutions of social life change slowly, but they can and do change based on the concerted efforts of individuals, social movements and social institutions. There is a need to conceptualize gender as a social structure, and by doing so, we can better analyze the ways in which gender is embedded in the individual, interactional, and institutional dimensions of our society. To conceptualize gender as a structure situates gender at the same level of general social significance as the economy and the polity.

### **3.6 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS**

1. Define and discuss gender as a multidisciplinary term?
2. What are key dimensions to gender?
3. What do you know about the Dr. John Money's coined the term "gender identity"?
4. What are similarities and differences between gender as body, identity and expression?
5. What are most common functional terms used to define gender?
6. Differentiate between masculinity and femininity with your own examples?
7. How gender universality can be discussed?
8. Elaborate the details of perspectives in gender stratification?

9. How do u relate to Gender structural inequality in Pakistani context? What are most common functional terms used to define gender?
10. Differentiate between masculinity and femininity with your own examples?
11. How gender universality can be discussed?
12. Elaborate the details of perspectives in gender stratification?
13. How do u relate to Gender structural inequality in Pakistani context?

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**Unit-4**

## **GENDER ROLES**

**Written by: Sadia Zaman**

**Reviewed by: Atifa Nasir**

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## INTRODUCTION

Gender is defined as process, stratification as well as a structure entity universally. one such crucial marker of identifying, establishing, and promoting the gender driven dynamics is gender roles. Roles in general are a designated and defined format of functioning and operations of anything in world. when it is aligned with the term gender, it denotes that how gender roles are operating in a society or at a global level, or at the level of very existence of the gender.

This unit will explain about the concept of gender role, how it emerged and what the factors behind it are. moreover, there are interesting details for you to see and evaluate in your surroundings about how people opt and preform accordingly or differently about their gender roles. gender roles and stereotyping are also an important debate covered in this unit. lastly, Pakistani society and our own indigenous perceptions of gender roles are also the part the part of this unit.

## OBJECTIVES

After studying the unit, you will be able to;

1. Describe the basic element of gender role and its existence in societies.
2. Distinguish between masculinity and femininity and the ascribed gender roles
3. Discover the role of genetics and environment in nature vs. nurture topic.
4. Orient yourself with classic theories of gender roles.
5. Learn about facts of Pakistani society and its gender role expectations.
6. Define the concept of gender stereotyping and the gender role reversal.

### **Learning Outcomes**

After studying the unit, you will be able to

1. Identify basic elements of gender role
2. Recognize the difference between masculinity and feminity through scribed gender roles
3. Discuss gender role expectation and gender stereotyping existing in Pakistani society from feminist stance

## 4.1 DEFINING GENDER ROLES

As we grow, we learn how to behave from those around us. In this socialization process, children are introduced to certain roles that are typically linked to their biological sex. The term gender role refers to society's concept of how men and women are expected to act and how they should behave. These roles are based on norms, or standards, created by society. Traditionally and globally, masculine roles are usually associated with strength, aggression, and dominance, while feminine roles are usually associated with passivity, nurturing, and subordination. Role learning starts with socialization at birth. Even today, our society is quick to outfit male infants in blue and girls in pink, even applying these color-coded gender labels while a baby is in the womb.

One way children learn gender roles is through play. Parents typically supply boys with trucks, toy guns, and superhero paraphernalia, which are active toys that promote motor skills, aggression, and solitary play. Girls are often given dolls and dress-up apparel that foster nurturing, social proximity, and role play. Studies have shown that children will most likely choose to play with "gender appropriate" toys (or same-gender toys) even when cross-gender toys are available because parents give children positive feedback (in the form of praise, involvement, and physical closeness) for gender-normative behavior (Caldera, Huston, and O'Brien 1998).

Our society has a set of ideas about how we expect men and women to dress, behave, and present themselves. Gender is not based on sex, or the biological differences between men and women. Gender is shaped by culture, social relations, and natural environments. Thus, depending on values, norms, customs, and laws, men and women in different parts of the world have evolved different gender roles. The term gender role is used in sociology and psychology to refer to the prescribed behaviors, attitudes, and characteristics associated with one's gender status as a female or a male. Attributes associated with gender are the result of learning in accordance with cultural standards or prescriptions.

Gender role socialization refers to the processes through which individuals acquire attributes appropriate to males and females. Examination of gender roles indicates differences in the content of roles seen as appropriate for men and women. Men are socialized more often than women to be active and to ignore their feelings of weakness. Men are expected to be more independent, autonomous, and strong. It is more acceptable for women to express a wide range of emotions, to pay attention to their moods, and to seek out others for help. While men may be encouraged to be independent, gender roles in society means how we're expected to act, speak, dress, groom, and conduct ourselves based upon our assigned sex. For example,

girls and women are generally expected to dress in typically feminine ways and be polite, accommodating, and nurturing. Men are generally expected to be strong, aggressive, and bold.

Every society, ethnic group, and culture has gender role expectations, but they can be very different from group to group. They can also change in the same society over time. Women are taught to be more interdependent. The term interdependence refers to the ability to express interpersonal needs, particularly in emotional relationships, and to relate meaningfully to others in relationships (Greenglass, 1995). Gender roles of women and men include different labor responsibilities, decision-making processes, and knowledge. The gendering of local knowledge, including knowledge for managing biological systems has four key characteristics:

1. Women and men have knowledge about different things.
2. Men and women have different knowledge about the same things.
3. Women and men may organize their knowledge in different ways.
4. Men and women may receive and transmit their knowledge by different means.

## **4.2 GENDER ROLES IN THE EYES OF RESEARCHERS**

Gender and gender roles affect the economic, political, social, and ecological opportunities and constraints faced by both men and women. As an aspect of role theory, gender role theory "treats these differing distributions of women and men into roles as the primary origin of sex-differentiated social behavior, their impact on behavior is mediated by psychological and social processes."

- a. According to Gilbert Herdt (1988) gender roles arose from correspondent inference, meaning that general labour division was extended to gender roles. Gender roles are considered by social constructionists to be hierarchical and are characterized as a male-advantaged gender hierarchy.
- a. The term patriarchy, according to researcher Andrew Cherlin, defines "a social order based on the domination of women by men, especially in agricultural societies".
- b. According to Eagly (2009) the consequences of gender roles and stereotypes are sex-typed social behavior because roles and stereotypes are both socially shared descriptive norms and prescriptive norms.
- c. Judith Butler (1990) contends that being female is not "natural" and that it appears natural only through repeated performances of gender; these performances in turn, reproduce and define the traditional categories of sex and/or gender.

### 4.3 MASCULINITY / FEMININITY AND GENDER ROLES

This dimension focuses on how extent to which a society stress achievement or nurture. Masculinity is seen to be the trait which emphasizes ambition, acquisition of wealth, and differentiated gender roles. Femininity is seen to be the trait which stress caring and nurturing behaviors, sexuality equality, environmental awareness, and more fluid gender roles. Hofstede’s definitions:

“Masculinity stands for a society in which social gender roles are clearly distinct: Men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success; women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life.”

“Femininity stands for a society in which social gender roles overlap: Both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life.”

	<b>High Masculine</b>	<b>Low Masculine (Feminine)</b>
	<i>Ego oriented</i>	<i>Relationship oriented</i>
<b>Social norms</b>	Money and things are important	Quality of life and people are important
	<i>Live in order to work</i>	<i>Work in order to live</i>
<b>Politics and economics</b>	Economic growth high priority	Environment protection high priority
	<i>Conflict solved through force</i>	<i>Conflict solved through negotiation</i>
<b>Religion</b>	Most important in life	Less important in life
	<i>Only men can be priests</i>	<i>Both men and women as priests</i>
<b>Work</b>	Larger gender wage gap	Smaller gender wage gap
	<i>Fewer women in management</i>	<i>More women in management</i>
	Preference for higher pay	Preference for fewer working hours
<b>Family and school</b>	<i>Traditional family structure</i>	<i>Flexible family structure</i>
	Girls cry, boys don’t; boys fight, girls don’t	Both boys and girls cry; neither fight
	<i>Failing is a disaster</i>	<i>Failing a minor accident</i>

#### **4.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF MASCULINE AND FEMININE CULTURES**

In Hofstede's view, masculinity and femininity differ in the social roles that are associated with the biological fact of the existence of the two sexes: masculinity and femininity refer to the dominant sex role pattern in the vast majority of both traditional and modern societies, males being more assertive and females more nurturing.

- a) Femininity creates a society of overlapping gender roles, where "both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life."
- b) Masculinity creates a society of clearly distinct gender roles, where men should "be assertive, tough, and focused on material success," while women should "be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life."
- c) Masculine cultures expect men to be assertive, ambitious, and competitive, to strive for material success, and to respect whatever is big, strong, and fast. Masculine cultures expect women to serve and care for the non-material quality of life, for children and for the weak.
- d) Feminine cultures, on the other hand, define relatively overlapping social roles for the sexes, in which, in particular, men need not be ambitious or competitive but may go for a different quality of life than material success; men may respect whatever is small, weak, and slow.
- e) In feminine cultures, modesty and relationships are important characteristics. This differs from in masculine cultures, where self-enhancement leads to self-esteem. Masculine cultures are individualistic, and feminine cultures are more collective because of the significance of personal relationships. 'The dominant values in a masculine society are achievement and success; the dominant values in a feminine society are caring for others and quality of life'.

#### **4.5 ROLE OF NATURE VS. NURTURE**

In the 1940s, Albert Ellis studied eighty-four cases of mixed births and concluded that 'while the power of the human sex drive may possibly be largely dependent on physiological factors. In the development of masculinity, femininity, and inclinations towards homosexuality or heterosexuality, nurture matters a great deal more than nature.

In the 1950s, John Money, along with colleagues took up the study of intersex individuals. They concluded that gonads, hormones, and chromosomes did not automatically determine a child's gender role. Among the many terms he coined

was *gender role* which he defined as "all those things that a person says or does to disclose himself or herself as having the status of boy or man, girl or woman." In recent years, the majority of Money's theories regarding the importance of socialization in the determination of gender have come under intense criticism.

West and Zimmerman developed an interactionist perspective on gender beyond its construction as "roles." For them, gender is "the product of social doings of some sort...undertaken by men and women. They argue that the use of "role" to describe gender expectations conceals the production of gender through everyday activities. Furthermore, roles are situated identities, such as "nurse" and "student," developed as the situation demands while gender is a master identity with no specific site or organizational context. West and Zimmerman consider gender an individual production that reflects and constructs interactional and institutional gender expectations.

## **4.6 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES IN GENDER ROLES**

Gender roles are "socially and culturally defined prescriptions and beliefs about the behavior and emotions of men and women" (Eagly, 2009). Many theorists believe that perceived gender roles form the bases for the development of gender identity. Prominent psychological theories of gender role and gender identity development include the following:

1. Evolutionary theory (Buss 1995; Shields 1975),
2. Object-relations theory (Chodorow 1989)
3. Gender schema theory (Bem 1981, 1993)
4. Social role theory (Eagly 2009)

**4.6.1 Evolutionary Theories** of gender development are grounded in genetic bases for differences between men and women. Functionalists propose that men and women have evolved differently to fulfill their different and complementary functions, which are necessary for survival. Similarly, sociobiologists suggest that behavioral differences between men and women stem from different sexual and reproductive strategies that have evolved to ensure that men and women are able to efficiently reproduce and effectively pass on their genes. These evolutionary-based theories share similarities with the essentialist and maximalist perspectives discussed previously.

**4.6.2 Object-Relations Theorists** focus on the effects of socialization on gender development. For example, Nancy Chodorow (1989) emphasizes the role of women as primary caregivers in the development of sex differences. Chodorow asserts that the early bond between mother and child affects boys and girls differently. Whereas

boys must separate from their mothers to form their identities as males, girls do not have to endure this separation to define their identities as females. Chodorow (1989) explains that the devalued role of women is a product of the painful process men undergo to separate themselves from the female role.

**4.6.3 Gender Schema Theory** (Bem 1981) focuses on the role of cognitive organization in addition to socialization. This theory postulates that children learn how their cultures and/or societies define the roles of men and women and then internalize this knowledge as a gender schema, or unchallenged core belief. The gender schema is then used to organize subsequent experiences (Bem, 1981). Children's perceptions of men and women are thus an interaction between their gender schemas and their experiences. Eventually, children will incorporate their own self-concepts into their gender schema and will assume the traits and behaviors that they deem suitable for their gender.

**4.6.4 Social Role Theory** of Alice Eagly (2009) offers yet another explanation of gender development that is based on socialization. Eagly's suggests that the sexual division of labor and societal expectations based on stereotypes produce gender roles. Eagly (2009) distinguishes between the communal and agentic dimensions of gender-stereotyped characteristics. The communal role is characterized by attributes, such as nurturance and emotional expressiveness, commonly associated with domestic activities, and thus, with women. The agentic role is characterized by attributes such as assertiveness and independence, commonly associated with public activities, and thus, with men. Behavior is strongly influenced by gender roles when cultures endorse gender stereotypes and form firm expectations based on those stereotypes (Eagly 1987).

#### **Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)**

1. Explain theoretical perspectives in gender roles.
2. What is meant by nature vs nurture?

## **4.7 GENDER ROLES AND PAKISTANI SOCIETY**

Here we are going to Gender roles in Pakistani society with the help of different researcher's work. Pakistan is a patriarchal society where men are the primary authority figures and women are subordinate. Gender is one of the organizing principles of Pakistani society. Patriarchal values embedded in local traditions, religion and culture predetermine the social value of gender. Islam heavily influences gender roles in particular. An artificial divide between production and

reproduction, made by the ideology of sexual division of labor, has placed women in reproductive roles as mothers and wives in the private arena of home and men in a productive role as breadwinners in the public arena.

Pakistani women lack social value and status because of negation of their roles as producers and providers in all social roles. The preference for sons due to their productive role often dictates the allocation of household resources in their favor. Traditionally, male members of the family are given better education and are equipped with skills to compete for resources in the public arena, while female members are imparted domestic skills to be good mothers and wives. Lack of skills, limited opportunities in the job market, and social, religious, and cultural restrictions limit women's chances to compete for resources in the public arena. This situation has led to the social and economic dependency of women that becomes the basis for male power over women in all social relationships. However, the spread of patriarchy is not even. The nature and degree of women's subordination vary across classes, regions, and the rural/urban divide. Patriarchal structures are relatively stronger in the rural and tribal setting where local customs establish male authority and power over women's lives. On the other hand, women belonging to the upper and middle classes have increasingly greater access to education and employment opportunities and can assume greater control over their lives.



According to Pakistani standards, 'good women' could be either educated or uneducated and are expected to be unselfish, calm, tolerant, empathetic, reliable, able to organize, compromise, coordinate and maintain hospitality within the house

and in keeping good relationships. They are also expected to do household chores, care for her children, husband, and in-laws and, when needed, provide the home with external income.

In a study carried out by Gallup Pakistan, (Gallup Pakistan Poll Findings on Gender Roles, 2009)<sup>1</sup> the Pakistani affiliate of Gallup International, majority of the Pakistanis believe that both males and females have different roles to play in the society. Although women's role has broadened beyond being a housewife over time, many people still give priority to men in politics, education, employment, and related walks of life. When the respondents were asked to give their opinion on a number of statements about gender roles, their responses were as follows:

- 63% of the respondents agreed with the statement that "Boys' education is more important than girls'"; 37% disagreed with it. The percentage of people agreeing with this statement was higher among rural area (67%) as compared to the urbanites (53%).
- However, more than 90% believe that female children should be educated, nearly half of them believing that, if opportunity is available, they should rise to college education and beyond.
- Fifty-five percent (55%) of the respondents believe that "Both husband and wife should work"; while 45% said it is wrong for both husband and the wife to work. More than 50% of men including those from rural areas agree that both husband and wife should work for a better living.
- When the respondents were asked whether "Men are better politicians as compared to women or not"; 67% agree men are better politicians while 33% think opposite. More women agree with this statement as compared to men.
- In response to "If jobs are in shortage should men be given priority for employment"; 72% of the respondents believe they should be given priority while 28% disagree.
- Eighty-three percent (83%) of the respondents think that "To live a happy life woman need children"; while only 17% think they do not.
- A vast majority of all respondents including 82% of women respondents believe that "prosperous women should raise their voice to support the rights of poor women.

#### **4.8 GENDER ROLES AND STEREOTYPES**

A generalized view or preconception about attributes or characteristics that are or ought to be possessed by members of a particular social group or the roles that are or should be performed by, members of a particular social group. A gender

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<sup>1</sup> [https://gallup.com.pk/bb\\_old\\_site/Polls/27-4-09.pdf](https://gallup.com.pk/bb_old_site/Polls/27-4-09.pdf)

stereotype is a generalized view or preconception about attributes, or characteristics that are or ought to be possessed by women and men or the roles that are or should be performed by men and women. Gender stereotypes can be both positive and negative for example, “women are nurturing” or “women are weak”. Gender stereotyping is the practice of ascribing to an individual woman or man specific attributes, characteristics, or roles by reason only of her or his membership in the social group of women or men. A gender stereotype is, at its core, a belief and that belief may cause its holder to make assumptions about members of the subject group, women and/or men. In contrast, gender stereotyping is the practice of applying that stereotypical belief to a person.

“Gender roles” have been described as society’s shared beliefs that apply to individuals on the basis of their socially identified sex (Eagly, 2009) and are thus closely related to gender stereotypes. Stereotypes can be conceptualized as the descriptive aspects of gender roles, as they depict the attributes that an individual ascribes to a group of people. Stereotypes of men and women commonly reflect. Distinction between two dimensions, often labeled agency, or self-assertion, and communion, or connection with others. Prentice and Carranza (2002) illustrate this claim:

*The stereotypic belief that women are warm, and caring is matched by a societal prescription that they should be warm and caring. Similarly, the stereotypic belief that men are strong and agentic is matched by a societal prescription that they should be strong and agentic. (p. 269)*

- Men are generally thought to be agentic—that is, competent, assertive, independent, masterful, and achievement oriented, while women are perceived as inferior to men in agentic qualities.
- Conversely, women are generally thought to be communal—that is, friendly, warm, unselfish, sociable, interdependent, emotionally expressive and relationship oriented—while men are perceived as inferior in communal qualities.

Masculine and feminine stereotypes can be seen as complementary in the sense that each gender is seen as possessing a set of strengths that balances out its own weaknesses and supplements the assumed strengths of the other group. Gender roles are descriptive and prescriptive (Eagly, 2009).

- The **descriptive aspect**, or stereotype, tells men and women what is typical for their sex in particular contexts and situations.
- The **prescriptive aspect** tells them what is expected or desirable.

Language is one area where gender roles and expectations can be constructed and reproduced. The notions that through language women exhibit same-sex solidarity

and “support” whereas men harass and “control” or that women talk to encourage or enhance relationships, while men talk to solve problems, are among the most entrenched generalizations found in popular culture and are widely exploited by the advertising industry, among other media (Talbot, 2000). These views, however, have been challenged in recent language and gender literature.

Gender roles are closely linked with gender stereotypes. Stereotypes are overgeneralized beliefs about people based on their membership in one of many social categories. Traditional gender stereotypes are most representative of the dominant (middle-class) culture.

Gender roles and stereotypes affect couple and family interaction. Often, for example, the division of household labor is based on gender. Traditionally, white women remained at home and completed most of the domestic labor, while their male partners worked outside the home to provide the family income. Although women have increasingly joined the workforce over the past thirty years, they continue to do the majority of the household labor. Gender roles often become more differentiated when men and women become parents. Overall, women provide more direct care for and spend more time with children. This care includes taking responsibility for the mental work of gathering and processing information about infant care, delegating the tasks related to infant care, and worrying about infant health and well-being. In sum, the unequal division of both household labor and childcare, with women doing the bulk of the work, is thought to contribute to the reported lower marital satisfaction for women.

Gender roles and stereotypes affect men and women in other ways. Specifically, men and women may be judged by how well they conform to traditional stereotypes. It is examined that boys and men are pressured to fulfill a standard of masculinity. Boys and men, for example, who do not fulfill the standard often suffer from low self-worth. Other lifelong consequences befall men who experience traumatic socialization practices such as rites of passage that entail violence.

Gender stereotypes can also affect men's and women's performance. Stereotype threat is defined as "an individual's awareness that he or she may be judged by or may self-fulfill negative stereo-types about her or his gender or ethnic group" (Lips 2001, P: 33). Research indicates that stereo-type threat can negatively affect performance by increasing anxiety. For example, Spencer, Steele, and Quinn (1999) found that women performed significantly worse than men on a math test when the participants were led to believe that the test would probably produce gender differences. In contrast, women and men performed equally well when the participants were led to believe that the test did not produce gender differences.

These findings suggest that negative stereotypes can and do negatively affect performance even when the stereotype has not been internalized or incorporated into the view of the self. A stereotype is a widely accepted judgment or bias about a person or group — even though it's overly simplified and not always accurate. Stereotypes about gender can cause unequal and unfair treatment because of a person's gender. This is called sexism.

According to Deaux and Lewis, (1984) gender stereotypes vary on four dimensions:

**4.8.1 Personality traits** — for example, women are often expected to be accommodating and emotional, while men are usually expected to be self-confident and aggressive.

**4.8.2 Domestic behaviors** for example, some people expect that women will take care of the children, cook, and clean the home, while men take care of finances, work on the car, and do the home repairs.

**4.8.3 Occupations** some people are quick to assume that teachers and nurses are women, and that pilots, doctors, and engineers are men.

**4.8.4 Physical appearance** -for example, women are expected to be thin and graceful, while men are expected to be tall and muscular. Men and women are also expected to dress and groom in ways that are stereotypical to their gender (men wearing pants and short hairstyles, women wearing dresses and make-up).

**Hyper femininity** is the exaggeration of stereotyped behavior that's believed to be feminine. Hyper feminine folks exaggerate the qualities they believe to be feminine. This may include being passive, naive, sexually inexperienced, soft, flirtatious, graceful, nurturing, and accepting.

**Hyper-masculinity** is the exaggeration of stereotyped behavior that's believed to be masculine. Hyper-masculine folks exaggerate the qualities they believe to be masculine. They believe they're supposed to compete with other men and dominate feminine folks by being aggressive, worldly, sexually experienced, insensitive, physically imposing, ambitious, and demanding.

These exaggerated gender stereotypes can make relationships between people difficult. Hyper-feminine folks are more likely to endure physical and emotional abuse from their partners. Hyper-masculine folks are more likely to be physically and emotionally abusive to their partners. Extreme gender stereotypes are harmful because they don't allow people to fully express themselves and their emotions. For example, it's harmful to masculine folks to feel that they're not

allowed to cry or express sensitive emotions. And it's harmful to feminine folks to feel that they're not allowed to be independent, smart or assertive. Breaking down gender stereotypes allows everyone to be their best selves.

#### **4.9 REVERSAL OF GENDER ROLES**

In the modern times, the old perceptions of a patriarchal society are destabilized that has shifted the earlier unequal power dynamics between males and females and has resulted in the empowerment of women over men. The traditional gender roles have given a way to totally reversed roles to reserve the rights and emancipation of women. Now-a-days, wives are earning as much as 20% more than their husbands in the whole world that dictates the changing power dynamics that shows that women have got the power to harness the economic power upsetting the old traditional patriarchal beliefs. Traditionally, the women used to need physical protection and economic stability provided by men to save their submissiveness. (Kandiyoti, 1988). The traditional patriarchal hierarchy has been shattered and resulted in females patronizing their male counterparts in courtship.

Modern women have become more educated and successful, that education and awareness has empowered women resulting in displacing men from their gendered position in society. The emergent trend of educated women out-earning their partners has led to changes in social perceptions and household roles. It has gradually shifted the institutionalized and privileged status of males in society. If women become the breadwinners, the domestic order shifts automatically to men because there is not any other option, and this can give both men and women a sense of purpose and identity. In a research it was evident that the effects of massive social changes on gender relations have found that men today want babies and commitment, while women are more likely to want independence in their relationships. The study was conducted on over 5,000 American adults and the results revealed that more than half of the single men wanted to have children as compared to just 46 percent of women. The results showed the effects of the growing gender role reversal.

Alongside the empowerment of women, the emasculation of men redefines the masculinity and femininity which has determined the gender activities of society. Men, who have become domestic, have redefined the masculinity by entitling them as "providers" who provides not only economically but also emotionally and logistically. The traditional notion of masculinity of a father has been limited to begetting protecting and providing for children. The difference between what is masculine and what is feminine is what is determined by the gender roles adopted by both the genders. However, by bearing the role of childrearing and household

chores, the masculinity of males comes into question that results in confusion in the individual male's social identity. As a result, unemployed husbands preserve their masculinity by claiming that they are still provider if not economically but emotionally as they spend more time with their children than their own fathers.

#### **4.10 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS**

1. What does it mean by gender roles and how they are developed?
2. What is the impact of masculinity and femininity in gender roles?
3. Are cultures driven by gender roles? If yes, then how?
4. How our genetic composition and our environmental factors affect our gender roles?
5. What are the theoretical perspectives of gender roles by different scholars?
6. What is your knowledge about Pakistani gender roles among men and women and what do we expect from men and women in our society?
7. According to Deaux and Lewis (1984) what is gender stereotyping and its four key features?
8. Do you observe any gender role reversal in societies, if so, how it is related to our own country?

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**Unit-5**

## **THE GENDERED DISCOURSE OF LANGUAGE**

**Written by: Sadia Zaman**

**Reviewed by: Atifa Nasir**

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## INTRODUCTION

Concept of gender and gender roles in unit 3 and unit 4 revealed to us that how wide and holistic this concept is. Gender is revealed in our entire living from birth till the end. One such expression is language. Language is our way of breathing in society and similarly, language shapes our reality of gender. In our language whether writer or communicative, we express our gender roles and expectation. It's not just an informative piece but it is the pattern of functioning in society. How women speak and how men speak, what are differences, how they use the language, how their language specifies their differences and many more. Discourse is the practice through which we explore the language in detail. This unit thus shares that in language how gender discourse is manifested.

You will learn about the concept of discourse, the differences between language in genders, how men and women communicate, what are key theories of gendered language, what causes these differences, and, in the end, we'll review Pakistani context with the help of two research studies and interesting stories for your critical overview.

## OBJECTIVES

After studying the unit, you will be able to:

1. Define the role of language in gender
2. Describe the concept of discourse
3. Differentiate between men and women's communication and language and their causes
4. Learn about theories of gendered language
5. Explore the Pakistani literature and discourse of language for genders

### **Learning Outcomes**

After studying the unit, you will be able to:

1. Identify the link between language and gender
2. Recognize the concept of discourse
3. Discuss theories of gendered languages and its impact on both genders

## **5.1 LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER**

According to Lakoff (1975) Language reflects and contributes to the survival of the stereotype. She mentions the lexical strategies that are adopted by the speakers to assign different identities to different genders. Construction of gender is not a biological phenomenon, like sex may be, but is a socially constructed phenomenon. As such, women are taken as procreative and having nurturing capacity and a potential to be good mother, whereas men are socially aggressive. Leeuwen (2008) calls discourse as resources for representing social practices in text. This means that discourse is a mean through which a society represents itself to the outer world. One's opinion of a community of practice is formed by the ideas and ideologies about ways of living of the people whom their discourse represents. Any literature of a community or society is representative of the discourses that are prevalent and dominant in that society. Literature is a discourse and is an institution, meaning thereby that it is representation of institutionalized practices of a society.

Lloyd (2005) discusses views of power in which he suggests that power is in man's hands because he has a control of all institutions of coercive power such as industry, trade, and police etc. And all this, in his view, is because of the patriarchal system prevalent in society. Lloyd further comments on Patriarchy and defines it as a system of male power that permeates all aspects of life at all times and in all places. This process of construction of social identity in discourse hence assigns specific roles to the members of each gender, which are almost totally distinct and entirely non-overlapping. Language and gender are an interdisciplinary field of research that studies varieties of speech (and, to a lesser extent, writing) in terms of gender, gender relations, gendered practices, and sexuality. Research on language, gender, and sexuality has been advanced by scholars working in a variety of areas in sociocultural linguistics, among them conversation analysis, critical discourse analysis, discursive psychology, linguistic anthropology, socio-phonetics, and variationist sociolinguistics.

## **5.2 WHAT IS A DISCOURSE?**

Discourse is approached as a social practice, as the production of knowledge through language. In this sense the concept is not referring only to linguistics, but it is language and practice. According to Foucault, Discourses denote 'practices that systematically form the object of which they speak' (Foucault, 1972: 49). In this sense, Foucault tends to underline the constitutive, creative process of language. Discourse, is indeed, not made of signs, of simple words and is not a mere connection between reality and language, it is something 'more', that 'more'

that as Foucault himself states, we want to explore. The statement and the text have a particular meaning. Statements are indeed the most basic elements of Discourse and it is through their formation in a single unit that the Discourse itself assumes its status. Statements, furthermore, are everywhere.

Everything we state does always implicitly refers to a certain field of knowledge and in its relation to it assumes a certain meaning. For instance, to state “I am a woman” will always assume a different meaning only according to its function, which will be different if we are applying for a job or we are entering in a reserved dressing room. The example just mentioned highlights the powerful force belonging to every statement we do, we hear, or we read. Whether it is through a text or a conversation, language shows its constitutive power: words are not just spelled, words do; and in their doing, they do construct our reality and our identities. In this process of forming, creating, and doing, Discourse is pervasive of any social dimension, produces our knowledge, and forms ‘the way a topic can be meaningfully talked about and reasoned about. All the forms of knowledge, whether they are assumptions or expectations, rule our social practices, our ways of defining and indicating what is supposed to be acceptable or not. All this is Discourse, in brief, the way we make sense of the world around us. Within linguistics, the predominant definition of *discourse* is a formal one, deriving from the organization of the discipline into levels of linguistic units, such as phonology, morphology, and syntax. According to the formal definition, just as morphology is the level of language in which sounds are combined into words, and syntax is the level in which words are combined into sentences, so discourse is the linguistic level in which sentences are combined into larger units. An alternative definition focuses not on linguistic form but on function. Discourse, in this view, is language in context: that is, language as it is put to use in social situations, not the more idealized and abstracted linguistic forms that are the central concern of much linguistic theory. Given its attention to the broader context of language use, the study of language and gender has overwhelmingly relied on the second definition of discourse.

### **5.3 DO MEN AND WOMEN COMMUNICATE DIFFERENTLY?**

Men are not the only ones who need to master ‘gender-appropriate’ speech; women have traditionally been subject to considerable advice on ways of speaking (Cameron, 1992), but the advice is very different from that given to men. Early twentieth-century advice books on pronunciation for women, for example, suggested that women should avoid gossip, keep their voices low, avoid stating an opinion and pay attention to ‘correct’ pronunciation. In nineteenth-century discourses on the relationship of language to gender in women, states: ‘One of the key attributes of femininity was a woman’s voice, both the sound of it (timbre and

pitch) and the way in which she spoke'. A quote from a magazine article from 1905 by the novelist Henry James: 'A lady should speak like a lady'.

In the succeeding decades of the 1980s and 1990s, however, a new discourse around male–female differences in conversational interaction emerged. This discourse had two aspects: on the one hand, a confirmation of the findings of the earlier period of research that the communication styles of men and women differed; but this time giving a different comparative account of the interactional style of women to suggest not only its legitimacy but indeed its superiority to that of men. A study of the management of conflictual talk by preschool children in which the boys were found to be direct and confrontational, whereas girls were more likely to use their language skills to negotiate and mediate. Coates found that in female conversational groups the goal of women's talk was seen as the establishment and maintenance of good relations, while with men what was valued was the exchange of information. This is no doubt an idealized portrait of women's speech. Cameron (1992) summarized the previous researchers' work as follows:

- Men and women have different goals in communication:
- Men want to 'get things done' in conversation
- Men are motivated by competitiveness and the need to achieve status,
- Women's goals are about relationships with others, and are hence more cooperative;
- For women communication is more important than it is for men,
- Women talk more, and more skillfully; and

Increasingly it was suggested that these differences are biological in origin. This in turn meant that if the differences were hard-wired, it would be difficult to change them, even if this were considered desirable. But Cameron (1992) adds that the idea that men and women differ fundamentally in the way they use language to communicate is a myth in the everyday sense: a widespread but false belief. It was precisely such advice and the discourses generating them that became the target of work by feminist linguists in the early 1970s, as part of second-wave feminism. Lakoff wrote on the speech of women, arguing that women's language is a result of the powerlessness of women within the hierarchical nature of gender relations, and that as a result women's speech style shows uncertainty and powerlessness (in contrast to the confident assertiveness of men). Moreover, for Lakoff, women's speech behavior not only signified but also reproduced the oppression of women: in Lakoff's view 'speaking like a lady keeps a lady in her place'. Lakoff claimed that several features of women's speech indicated the submissive role they adopted in relation to their conversational partners.

# Gender Differences in Language Use

## Women

- Rapport talk – relationships
- Talk about private matters (family relational problems, other women, men, clothing)
- More detailed color terms
- Weaker expletives (oh my)
- More qualifiers, disclaimers, and tag questions
- Polite forms of speech
- Ask more questions
- Minimal responses encourage talk
- Disclose more and receive more disclosure

## Men

- Report talk – content, decision making
- Talk about public matters (e.g., sports, news)
- Use stronger expletives
- Fewer qualifiers disclaimers, and tag questions
- Interrupt more
- Make more statements
- Respond to women using delayed minimal responses that discourage interaction (oh, right)
- Initiate topics more often
- Tell more jokes
- Disclose less

### Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)

1. Why men and women communicate differently?
2. Explain discourse

## 5.4 LANGUAGE AND GENDER: THE THEORISTS

In this section following Gender and Language theorists' viewpoint has been shared as a trend later on followed for this discipline:

1. Deficit Theory - Robin Lakoff, (1975)
2. Dominance Theory - Zimmerman and West (1987) Dale Spender (1980)
3. Difference Theory - Deborah Tannen (1990)
4. Dynamic/Social Constructionist Approach - Deborah Cameron (1992)

The relevance of gender to linguistic analysis was first noted in the early 20th century when descriptive linguists observed differences in female and male vocabularies and patterns of speaking in non-European languages. But it was not until the 1975 publication of Robin Lakoff's *Language and Woman's Place*

(Lakoff, 1975). Fifteen years later, Deborah Tannen (1990) popularized a “two-culture” approach to language and gender which shifted the source of gender differentiation away from patriarchy and onto language socialization in same-sex peer groups. Lakoff’s and Tannen’s models, which came to be called the “dominance” and “difference” models, respectively, set the foundation for contemporary work on language and gender. New theoretical work inspired new involvement by language scholars across the fields of anthropology, communication, education, linguistics, psychology, sociology, and women’s studies. Following are some major theoretical frame works shedding light on the display of gender and language over the period of time:

#### **5.4.1 Deficit Theory**

Lakoff’s (1975) ‘deficit’ theory posited that from an early age, girls are taught how to use a separate ‘woman’s language’: they are socialized to use language in a ‘ladylike’ way. She suggested that women’s subordinate status in American society in the 1970s was reflected and constructed through a basically deficient version of men’s language. This is the idea that there may be something intrinsically wrong with the language of a disadvantaged group (i.e., women). Theories which fall into the deficit model analyze language by seeing men’s language as the norm and women’s language as deviating from that norm in various ways. It is believed that women had limited vocabularies, women are delicate and easily offended, so prefer to avoid ‘coarse and gross expressions’ and use more ‘veiled and indirect expressions. Men invent new terms, while women are naturally conservative.

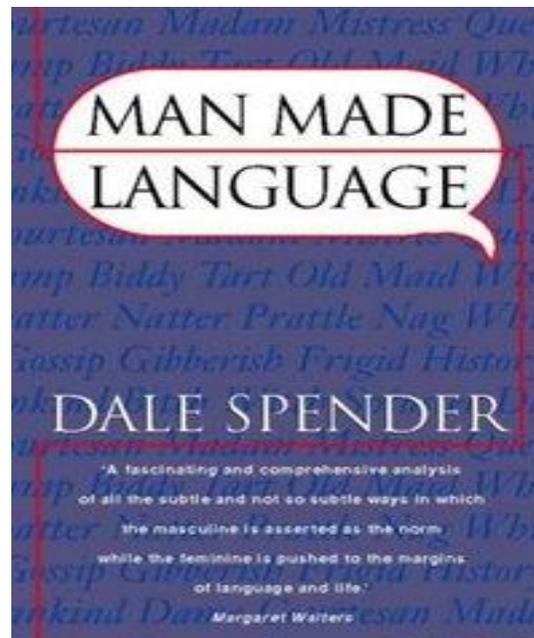
*Deficit* is an approach that defines adult male language as the standard, and women's language as deficient. This approach created a dichotomy between women's language and men's language. This triggered criticism to the approach in that highlighting issues in women's language by using men's as a benchmark. As such, women's language was considered to have something inherently 'wrong' with it.

#### **5.4.2 Dominance Theory**

Lakoff’s (1975) thesis that women constructed their own subordination through their language use was a precursor of ‘dominance’ theory by Zimmerman and West. This had two distinct, parallel branches: language as social interaction, which considered how gender inequalities were constructed through routine interactions between men and women, and language as a system focusing on ‘sexism’ within the language. Men dominate and control both interactions with women and the language system itself. Women use language in a way which reflects their subordinate position in society, and men in a way which reflects their power. Differences in men and women's speech is due to men's dominance and women's subordination. Therefore, the language we use is more about power and status than

gender. *Dominance* is an approach whereby the female sex is seen as the subordinate group whose difference in style of speech results from male supremacy and also possibly an effect of patriarchy. This results in a primarily male-centered language. Scholars such as Dale Spender and Don Zimmerman and Candace West subscribe to this view.

- Dominance approach by Lakoff (1975) claimed that the differential use of language needed to be explained in large part on the basis of women's subordinate social status and the resulting social insecurity.
- Dale Spender (1980) "It is the men, not women, who control knowledge, and I believe that this is an understanding we should never lose sight of" (from "Man Made Language").



- Zimmerman and West (1983) said that 99% of interruptions are made by males. They concluded that men's dominance in conversation via interruption mirrors their dominance in contemporary western culture. Interruption is "a device for exercising power and control in conversation" (West & Zimmerman, 1983). Men typically enjoy greater status and power than women in most societies, and they are more likely than women to assume they are entitled to take over the conversation.

Lakoff's theories still have much support, although some are more difficult to assess, such as women lack a sense of humor because they do not tell jokes well and often don't understand the punch line of jokes. Another central idea of Lakoff's

was that women were socialized into sounding like 'ladies', which then kept them in their place because being ladylike is a bar to being powerful in our culture. If women talked like 'ladies' they were seen as powerless and trivial, but if they talked like men, they were considered unfeminine. According to Dale Spender (1980), language itself sustains male power. Men seek to dominate women through talk. Men tend to speak in non-standard forms with covert prestige as a means of social bonding. Dale Spender agrees with and develops Zimmerman and West's dominance theory. Her radical view is that it is difficult to challenge male-dominated society because our very language reinforces male power.

#### **5.4.3 Difference Theory**

Early work on women's language had labelled it 'tentative' or 'powerless'. More recently and in reaction to this, there has been a move to value women's talk more positively, using terms such as 'co-operative'. It is considered that while dominance theory helped to reveal the apparent tendencies of males and females for different linguistic styles of interaction, it took an unfairly negative view of women's talk. *Difference* is an approach of equality, differentiating men and women as belonging to different 'sub-cultures' as they have been socialized to do so since childhood. This then results in the varying communicative styles of men and women. Deborah Tannen is a major advocate of this position. Tannen compares gender differences in language to cultural differences. Comparing conversational goals, she argues that men tend to use a "report style", aiming to communicate factual information, whereas women more often use a "rapport style", which is more concerned with building and maintaining relationships.

The difference approach could be said to be more neutral, however, since it doesn't focus on who has the power and who doesn't, rather it looks at gender as two subcultures where each sex learns to be different from childhood and who therefore uses language in ways which reflect that. Marjorie Harness Goodwin, for instance, carried out research where she recorded the speech and interaction of groups of boys playing, and groups of girls playing. She found that the girls were more likely to avoid commands and were more likely to make suggestions or use inclusive directives as proposals – this was because in the culture of little girls (and arguably women) it is offensive to be bossy or demanding. The boys, on the other hand, used directives as commands, expected things that they demanded to be done, and their groups were hierarchical based on which little boy got his way and was most forceful. The difference approach, therefore, says that male and female language reflects social differences inculcated in them from childhood – boys learn to be competitive and aggressive, girls learn to be cooperative and polite.

#### **5.4.4 Dynamic/Social Constructionist Approach**

The "dynamic" or "social constructionist" approach is, as Coates describes the most current approach to language and gender. Instead of speech falling into a natural gendered category, the dynamic nature and multiple factors of an interaction help a socially appropriate gendered construct. As such, West and Zimmerman describe these constructs as "doing gender" instead of the speech itself necessarily being classified in a particular category. Scholars including Tannen and others argue that differences are pervasive across media, including face-to-face conversation, written essays of primary school children, email.

Deborah Cameron, among other scholars, argues that there are problems with both the dominance and the difference approach. She argues that social differences between men's and women's roles are not clearly reflected in language use. Communication styles are always a product of context, and as such, gender differences tend to be most pronounced in single-gender groups. One explanation for this, is that people accommodate their language towards the style of the person they are interacting with. A similarly important observation is that this accommodation is usually towards the language style, not the gender of the person. That is, a polite and empathic male will tend to be accommodated to on the basis of their being polite and empathic, rather than their being male. Women are generally believed to speak a better "language" than men do. This is a constant misconception, but scholars believe that no gender speaks a better language, but that each gender instead speaks its own unique language.

### **5.5 SIX CONTRASTS OF MEN AND WOMEN'S SPEECH**

1. Status vs. support
2. Independence vs. intimacy
3. Advice vs. understanding
4. Information vs. feelings
5. Orders vs. proposals
6. Conflict vs. compromise

In each case, the male characteristic comes first.

#### **5.5.1 Status versus support:**

- Men grow up in a world in which conversation is competitive - they seek to achieve the upper hand or to prevent others from dominating them.
- For women, talking is often a way to gain confirmation and support for their ideas.

- Men see the world as a place where people try to gain status and keep it.
- Women see the world as “a network of connections seeking support and consensus”.

### **5.5.2 Independence Versus Intimacy:**

- Women often think in terms of closeness and support, and struggle to preserve intimacy.
- Men, concerned with status, tend to focus more on independence.
- For example, of a woman who would check with her husband before inviting a guest to stay - because she likes telling friends that she has to check with him.
- The man, meanwhile, invites a friend without asking his wife first, because to tell the friend he must check amounts to a loss of status.

### **5.5.3 Advice Versus Understanding:**

- To many men a complaint is a challenge to find a solution: “When my mother tells my father she doesn't feel well, he invariably offers to take her to the doctor.
- Invariably, woman is disappointed with his reaction. Like many men, he is focused on what he can do, whereas she wants sympathy.”

### **5.5.4 Information Versus Feelings:**

- A young man makes a brief phone call. His mother overhears it as a series of grunts. Later she asks him about it - it emerges that he has arranged to go to a specific place, where he will play football with various people and he has to take the ball. Men focus on conveying information as quickly as possible.
- A young woman makes a phone call - it lasts half an hour or more. The mother asks about it - it emerges that she has been talking “you know” “about stuff”. The conversation has been mostly grooming-talk and comment on feelings.
- Women focus on sharing emotions and elaborating on details.
- Historically, men's concerns were seen as more important than those of women, but today this situation may be reversed so that the giving of information and brevity of speech are considered of less value than sharing of emotions and elaboration.

### **5.5.5 Orders Versus Proposals:**

- Women often suggest that people do things in indirect ways - “let's”, “why don't we?” or “wouldn't it be good, if we...?”
- Men may use, and prefer to hear, a direct imperative – ‘We’ll go to the theatre first then get last orders in the food place’

### **5.5.6. Conflict Versus Compromise:**

- In trying to prevent fights, some women refuse to oppose the will of others openly. But sometimes it's far more effective for a woman to assert herself, even at the risk of conflict. This situation is easily observed in work-situations where a management decision seems unattractive.
- Men will often resist it vocally, while women may appear to agree, but go off and complain subsequently.
- Women's simultaneous talk as supportive and cooperative. Women use tag questions to interact sensitively in conversations as means of communicating sensitively and appropriately, respecting the face needs of the listener.

#### **Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)**

1. Identify main points of difference theory
2. Explain salient features of Dynamic/Social Constructionist Approach

## **5.6 ANALYSIS OF GENDERED LANGUAGE IN PAKISTANI CONTEXT**

In this heading a research work relevant to this chapter is being shared for your reading to see that how literature and language in Pakistani literature across male and females operate. In American International Journal of Contemporary Research, Shaikh and Khan published their work by the title of "Constructing Gender Identities in Discourse: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Two Short Stories" in 2012.

Writings of a particular culture provide the readers with a chance to peep into the very fabric of that culture and are considered a good source to understand the societal notions and ideologies related to every sphere of life. What the texts reveal is not only the identity of a culture but also the identities that are assigned to individuals and groups through the systems working in that culture. Society constitutes itself by an organized system of assigning identities to its members. This system of assigning identities is largely discursive, and identities are constructed implicitly rather than explicitly, through texts and talk. The studies of Language and Gender are concerned with the issues related to the process of assigning gender identities to different sexes in society, and how assigning one gender to one sex plays its part in giving different recognition in society to the people belonging to one sex as compared to the ones belonging to the other. The article under view aims to study construction of gender in short stories written by writers who share the same cultural background.

Khalique (2002) represents Pakistanis living in the West and Kohli (2002) represents Indians, and the setting of the stories is London where the families interact and have discussion in the background of partition of the Indian sub-continent. The article considers the linguistic and discursive measures the writers take to construct gender of their respective male and female characters. Pakistani society is largely a patriarchal society in which all stereotypical characteristics are associated with men and women, and they can be seen in the texts written by Pakistani writers of English language. The researchers have selected the above-mentioned texts as representative of the pre-determined ideologies which seem to assign only specific type of roles to individuals belonging to each gender, and hence creating certain “types” of identities.

#### **5.6.1 STORY 1 – *Roshanara Bagh, Nizamabad, Hounslow, Wembley* written by Khalique, A Pakistani writer**

The first story selected for analysis is “*Roshanara Bagh, Nazimabad, Hounslow, Wembley*”. Shaikh Raziuddin who lives on London is visited by Wajahat Muneer who has brought some gifts for him from Pakistan. They are having a discussion on the ideology of Pakistan and different other issues when they are joined by their neighbor Narinder Kumar Verma. Other characters represented in the story are Saeeda, Nafisa (Shaikh Sahib’s wife) and Verma’s daughter. The story starts with an account of Wajahat Munir who has come from Pakistan and has been asked by his mother to give *halwa* and a letter. In the story it was found that the females are given less space in the narration, and greater focus of the discussion is males.

As the story starts, Saeeda, who is Wajahat’s host, opts to stay home instead of accompanying him to visits because of her being female. Instead, she assigns this task of guiding Wajahat to Hussain, a male. When they reach Shaikh Sahib’s home, he meets them with “jolting hugs” and “loud Assalam o Alaikum”. On the other hand, his wife is “a little more cautious”. Shaikh Raziuddin is said to be having a “tall beard” and a “grave voice”.

When he is talked about by the writer, his organizational association “He belonged to Punjabi *Saudagaran-e-Delhi*, a well to do trading company” and the profession - banker” are specially mentioned, whereas on the other hand, there is no mention of his wife as to what she does. When the writer talks about Shaikh Raziuddin, he mentions his literary taste and academic skills, as he says, that he “*was very fond of Akbar Allahabadi’s and Zamir Jaffry’s poetry, had a good command over English*”. His introduction further includes a mention of his ideological association with the cause of Islam, Kashmir, Pakistan, Urdu.

As the writer states, he is „The protector of the ideology of Pakistan, promoter of Urdu language, and felt personally responsible for finding a good match for every boy and girl in the vicinity. “He uses the pronoun “we“ when he mentions the creation of Pakistan. Then he mentions that he has written some books so that his children could stay in touch with Urdu and Pakistani and Islamic roots.

During the absence of Verma, when he left for a brief period to listen to a call, they again talk about the political and ideological issues and as Shaikh Raziuddin says, the next male character talked about in the story is Verma. In his introduction again, the writer mentions his political association as he says that „He was an ardent supporter of BJP. “ He is said to be talking about the people killed in their Kargil war with Pakistan as martyrs, and Shaikh Razi criticizes says that his blood boils when he calls them martyrs. After seeing a comparison of the representation of males and females in the above characterization, we now move back to Nafisa, Shaikh Razi“s wife to see how males and females are represented differently with different characteristics, through discourse. The writer mentions her looking „elegant in her embroidered kurtas“ and her quality which is specially mentioned is that of cook. She is shown to be complaining of the household workload as she has to do all the work herself. One small mention is of Verma’s daughter who comes to give him his cell as there is a call from Delhi.

## **5.7 DISCOURSE OF THE STORY–1**

Social practices revolve around the politics of dominance and subordination. Societies create their own axis of division such as gender, race, ethnicity, class and sect, which become axis of power and hence axis of inequality. Those assigned superior role and superior identity are able to gain dominance over the other and those who are given weaker identities are left behind in the struggle of power and are subordinated by those who wield power. The above article seems to be constructing gender discursively through the discourse the writer has made use of.

- The identities of males are represented as very strong, vigorous and as holding all power in terms of their will to fight for ideology and dedicate themselves for the greater goals in life.
- Females on the other hand, are shown as a subject of their will, ready to work all the time in the kitchen, and to serve food to the males who are busy in political and ideological talk, something that they are shown to be worthy of. Females are not worthy of any grand venture of mind and soul. They are merely „body“ that is there to serve the men folk.
- The identity of Shaikh Raziuddin as a political and ideological worker and fighter and the personality of Verma as ardent supporter are examples of

discursive distribution of roles to different genders. Men are discursively said to be suited for dealing with the political and ideological issues, the realms that are the sources of power production.

- The hold of men on the institutions of power is possible only when women in the society are also given a specific role or roles that could keep her away from all institutions of power such as politics and ideology.
- Women are shown as soft, weak and mild creatures, whose primary business is to „look elegant“ as did Nafisa. They are discursively told by the society to stay at home and do not keep visiting people, as can be seen in Saeeda’s case, and to be cautious in talk, serve food to the guests and be an expert cook, as in Nafisa’s case.
- They are also expected to take care of the other greater businesses than men are doing in society and help and facilitate them. No major role is to be assigned to women so that they could be kept away from power, which, as the society prescribes, does not suit them.
- The employment of tools such as discourse in order to construct men’s identity as physically and intellectually strong, and women’s identity as someone who can only do household work can be taken as one discursive measure that the society uses to give dominance to one gender and push the other in the ditches of subordination.
- Discursive structures in society do not allow certain gender to take role for itself that the society has assigns to the other gender. Hence, men must be at the helm of affairs, of not only the family, but the locality, and above all the whole society.
- Pakistan is a patriarchal society in the sense. Men are the bread earners as well as the setters of norms of civilization. They are the ones to control female behavior in their families and the society at large.
- Women are normally reduced to household assignments such as cooking in the kitchen, washing clothes of all family members including men and children. They are not encouraged to compete with men in professional life.
- Although the trends are changing with the advent of modern education and the emerging cultural changes, yet men are the dominant gender and are assigned the roles of all powerful beings with the expectations of the society attached more to their strength and pride than to women.
- The resources of hegemonic control such as police, industry, army, and other institutions such as politics and economy are still dominated by men folk.
- The stereotyping is normally done through discourse, and this story is the best example of gender stereotyping in which men and women are shown to have different behavior in interaction and in normal family life due to different nature of their responsibilities, which again are discursively assigned.

- Saeeda and Nafisa are true representative women of Pakistani society who are aware of the roles assigned to female gender. The gendered stereotyping is visible in their acts as Saeeda prefers to stay at home instead of visiting people. She assigns Hassan the task of being a local guide for Wajahat.
- Nafisa is busy in cooking and talks about the traditions to be followed when the Muslim and Indian families come in mutual interaction, as she tells Verma that she took care of not stirring vegetable with the same spoon with which she cooked meat because she knows that he is a Hindu and would not like that as they do not eat meat.
- She is a guardian of the family values, whereas the males are the guardians of ideologies and identities.

## **5.8 STORY 2 – AND SING ME A POEM IN URDU WRITTEN BY KOHILI, A WRITER OF INDIAN ORIGIN**

The second story selected for analysis is Sing me a Poem in Urdu. It starts with the description of background of a Pakistani emigrant Rafiq Sardar whose parents belonged to Gurdaspur in India but later migrated to Lahore at the time of partition. He is joined by a Pakistani and some Indian friends in a club where all of them share their views about Urdu and Hindi. In the course of discussion, Rafiq shares his experience of interaction with Urdu and Punjabi and the subsequent identity crisis emerging on the basis of languages he spoke. Nalini is the only female character present in the talk.

The story starts with the introduction to Rafiq's background and the readers are told that he belonged to a family in which Urdu was spoken as a mother tongue and Punjabi was spoken by the members just because they needed to interact with the community.

As for the representation of male and female characters, we see that most of the talk is dominated by the males and their only female friend either stays quiet during the discussion which is supposed to be "scholarly", a realm in which „women“ are shown to be lacking interest and understanding, or, when she speaks, she is presented as an outsider who lacks intellectual understanding of the scholarly debate about languages that is going on in the story. The male characters are shown to be involved in the roles that demand more intellectual strength and demand managing skills whereas women are shown to be engaged in the lesser demanding roles, both management wise and intellectually. When talking about Rafiq's family, we see that the first female character, which is Rafiq's sister, has been mentioned in the context of her marriage. The second sister, who is teacher, is also

talked about in the same context. She is widow and lives with her brother-in-law. His brother is a banker, and his brother's son "knew half of Iqbal's poetry by heart", a characteristic which he shares with his uncle Rafiq.

Rafiq himself is a bachelor who has spent most of his life in traveling and learning languages and is now working as a broadcaster. His command of Urdu language and literature as well as broadcasting is described as "phenomenal". Wife of Rafiq's brother is again a teacher.

The next prominent character in the story is Balvinder who is a Punjabi poet from Amritsar. Just like Rafiq, he too has a great taste for Ghalib's poetry and "recited a quarter of Ghalib's Divan on seeing him" at the reception of the club.

Now let us compare the representation of Nalini who becomes "apologetic" for not being able to understand much of Ghalib's poetry and blames it on her southern descent. In the later lines, Kumar rejects her excuse by saying that "I also come from south and can easily make out the difference when Pakistanis speak." This puts Nalini at a disadvantage when she is seen to be someone who genuinely lacks understanding of literature just because it is not her area of strength in terms of intellectual ability, the one that is to be found only in men and is making different excuses. When Kumar has made his point, Nalini again tries to take the discussion forward and again exposes her intellectual weakness as she utters a "dumb comment" which would make no sense, and she herself realizes her mistake. She says "Pakistani Language is a mix of Urdu and Hindi. I don't know why they speak like that". Again, this point is highlighted in the following text when the description of Rafiq's ability to have detailed discussions on different languages is presented in contrast with Nalini's inability.

The writer says that "Language was Rafiq's talent" and that "He could indulge into a monologue now without feeling guilty". This obviously is a contrast depicted by the writer between the female and the males, and the portrayal shows females possessing lesser ability to opine in the matters falling under the intellectual arena.

Before the story closes, there is a mention of another female character Jharna Mukharjee who was an "elegant Bengali housewife" whose manner of talking to Hussain is described as "flirtatious". And the last female talked about in the story is Meenakshi ji, who is Kumar's aunt living in Scotland. When Kumar asks whether he can write Urdu as well as Hindi in his CV as the languages he knows, Hussain laughs and says "Meenakshi ji will never ask you to read a poem in Urdu". The following narration reveals that when Hussain went to see Meenakshi ji, she had said to him "Sing me a poem in Urdu and I will make you some mulled wine" despite that she knew little Urdu.

### ***Discourse of The Story 2***

All the above details regarding representation of male and female characters in the discussion reveal the thread of discourse as knit by the writers in a way that constructs the kind of reality suitable for one of the social groups. Meanings are constructed in a way that brings one group in a society in charge of the affairs whereas pushing the other groups on the margins or in the background. Construction of gender through assigning only specific roles to specific genders is one good example of “politics of representation”. The same is evident in the above discussion of male and female roles where females are shown to be more interested in the domestic side of life, having more to do with households and romance than intellectual aspect of life, which is presented as men’s domain, who are thought of as intellectually higher than their female counterparts.

### **5.8.3 Pakistani Case of Gender Representations in Textbook**

A more recent findings in Pakistani context can be seen by the work of Ahmad and Shah (2019) with the title of “A Critical Discourse Analysis of Gender Representations in the Content of 5th Grade English Language Textbook”. They found that investigation of this 5th grade textbook in English language for children shows that gender bias is deep-rooted in its content. It can be an organized and systematic manipulation of the content, in which both sexes, particularly females, have been presented in a way by which, females appear to be inferior to males. Gender prejudice is apparent in all spheres of life represented in the textbook except the household roles or activities. Thus, males and females have not equally been represented in the textbook even in such activities as can be considered suitable for them. Passive activities have been ascribed to females and active as well as highly esteemed activities have been ascribed to males. Limiting females to domestic roles only shows stereotypical as well as androcentric treatment against females.

Thus, such a positioning of females and males, as described in above paragraph, may have negative effects i.e., it can deliriously affect female learners by creating the feelings of alienation, devaluation, exclusion, and inferior expectations in them resulting in limiting the behavioral, linguistic, and social roles of female learners

Pakistani textbooks reflect pro-male bias, depict gender disparities as found in Pakistani societies (Ram, 2008) and lack in many of quality features among which equal representation of gender is dominant/ For example, a study on 194 textbooks, taken from all the four provinces of Pakistan, found that the national curriculum at school level mirrored gender to a great degree (UNESCO, 2004). The study also revealed that the textbooks contained only 7.7% representation of females. Among most of them were taken from Islamic history. Mostly, females are represented as being powerless, tolerant, dependent, pious, and caring and nurturing children and

husbands. Females are represented with passive attributes e.g., dear, noble, and modest whereas males are represented with bold attributes e.g., brave, and truthful. In addition, females are depicted in typical womanistic roles like cooking, washing dresses, cleaning, and raising the children. Similarly, in professional sphere the role of a woman is restricted to limited fields i.e., teaching, etc.

Females, in Pakistani textbooks, are also represented in inferior quality as compare to males and their occupations are shown to be traditional as well as less prestigious mostly featured with passive and introverted personality traits described this presentation as based on male superiority and female inferiority. Such a systematically discriminated representation of genders is conditioning the young children as gender conscious individuals. It is interesting to note here that Durrani conducted a study on children in 2008. She asked some boys and girls to draw the image of 'us'. She observed that none of the male participants drew a female portrait. On the other hand, female participants drew female portraits, but they were shown in domestic activities. Then she asked the participants of her study to pick the icons of their choice from the textbooks. She noticed that most of the boys selected male icons and girls opted for female icons. When she asked about the reason for opting female icons, her female participants replied that they opted for 'good wives or good mothers'.

## **5.9 WHAT CAUSES THESE DIFFERENCES**

It is not enough to find these differences. The more important thinking is to find what cause these differences. In a recent set of studies about the physical differences between the two genders, phonological processing in males was shown to be located in the left of the brain and in females to involve both left and right parts of the brain. No difference in efficiency was shown, nor is there any evidence so far that any neurophysiologic difference accounts for differences between the two groups in using language, so we can get the conclusion that the causes are social rather than physical. Since biological sexual differences cannot explain the differences in men's and women's societal roles and opportunities, scholars developed and employed other tools and analytical categories in order to understand these discrepancies. A baby born with female reproductive organs does not simply grow up to be a woman. She has to turn herself into a woman, or more correctly, she is turned into a woman by society she grows up in and in response to the expectations a conditioning and differs according to the dominant influences she is subject to in the subculture, subculture, ethnic group, religious sect, in which she grows up.

It is an accepted idea that women are more careful, sensitive, and considerate than men. Before a woman talks, she usually thinks the effect her words will cause, so she often appears to be more polite. On the contrary, men appear to be rash, and they just say what they want to say and seldom care what others think, so men's speech is usually blunt and solid.

Of the social causes of gender differences in speech style, one of the most critical is level of education. In all studies, it has been shown that the greater the differences between educational opportunities for boys and girls, the greater the differences between male and female speech. Usually, in many parts of the world, males are expected to spend longer time in schools. When offered an equal educational opportunity, there seems to be a tendency for women to be more sensitive than men to the status norms of the language.

Though many linguists have noticed the differences between the use of men and women, it was not until the 70s that some linguists tried to find the social root of these differences. Men and women differ in the kinds of language they use and how they use it because men and women often fill different roles in society. We may expect that the more distinct the roles are, the greater the differences.

Almost in every country, most of the important positions in governments are held by men. Men can almost dominate everything, including women. Most scholars notice that women's tone is not that self-confident as men's, and they point out that this is because they have little power or no power at all in the society. Women's social status makes them appear to be submissive to men. Women are often named, titled, and addressed differently from men, such as women are more likely than men to be addressed by their first names. Women are inferior to men in society, so they appear to be non-assertive when they talk. They tend to discuss, share, and seek reassurance. On the contrary, men tend to look for solutions, give advice and even lecture to their audience. The term gender was often understood to be the basis of women's subordination in public and private life. Women are supposed to be the second class in the household as well as in the workplace, everywhere.

The use of generic masculine, such as *Everyone must increase his awareness of environment protection*, reinforces the secondary status of women in many social groups. This kind of usage does not just reflect and record current prejudices, but they are easily transmitted, reinforcing the lower power and prestige ascribed to women in a society. With the growth of social awareness in many parts of the world over the past decades, there have been many attempts to overcome this prejudicial use of language. For instance, people use the word chairperson instead of chairman

more frequently nowadays. Many publishers and journals now adhere to guidelines to avoid gender stereotyping and gender prejudiced language use.

Women are very conscious about their status, and they long for a better position in society, so they try to improve themselves, including using standard language. Women are more conscious of using languages which associate with their “betters” in society, that is, those they regard as being socially superior. They therefore direct speech towards the models these provide, even to the extent in some cases of hypercorrection. On the other hand, men are powerful, including the lower-class men. They are less influenced by others.

For whatever languages, there are peoples’ unique lifestyles and modes of thinking behind them. It’s these lifestyles and modes of thinking that make the rules of languages, so language is also a kind of cultural phenomenon. Lakoff (1975) believes that the distinction between men’s and women’s language is a symptom of a problem in our culture, and not primarily the problem itself.

The women’s movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s tried to show how women’s difference from men was in many ways due to the artificial behavioral stereotypes that come with gender conditioning. Since these stereotypes were artificial, they could be minimized. Language has a great connection with society, so if change in society occurs, change in language too. With the development of productive forces and civilization, the strict rules that the society prescribes for men and women are changing.

People’s linguistic behavior is not only connected with social status, but also connected with their profession, education, etc. In modern society, more and more people receive high education, so we can see that more and more men begin to behave themselves when they talk. Usually, they seldom break into other’s conversation abruptly. Instead, they are patient enough to wait others to finish their talks. They use less rigid impressive sentences. We can hardly hear them using swear words or taboos. They become polite and gentlemen-like. The interesting thing is that they also begin to use tag questions.

## 5.10 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Explain your understanding of Language in the context of gender?
2. Define the discourse with the help of examples from the domain of gender and language?
3. Do you think, men and women speak differently, justify with the help of examples?
4. What are six classic differences between the speech of men and women?
5. Explain the concept of the gendered language with the help of theories.
6. According to you what are causes of language differences in both genders?
7. With the help of any local drama story and its characters, elaborate the gender differences in their language and dialogues?
8. What is your common observation in old Pakistani story books about the characters of men and women and theory gender roles reflected through language?

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**Unit-6**

**MEN AND WOMEN AT WORK – THE GENDERED  
DIVISION OF WORK IN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC  
DOMAIN**

**Written by: Atifa Nasir**

**Reviewed by: Aqleem Fatimah**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Historically, gender has not been perceived to be a central concept in economic analysis. However, as the force of current events has thrust gender-related issues to the fore, economists have responded. The outcome has given a better understanding of the nature and causes of gender differences, but also an enrichment of the discipline of economics itself.

## **OBJECTIVES**

This unit aims to;

1. Introduce the concept of gendered division of labor
2. Shed light on the theories of gendered division of labor and feminist critiques on them
3. Categorize paid and unpaid labour and its types
4. Familiarize with the notion of public and private domain

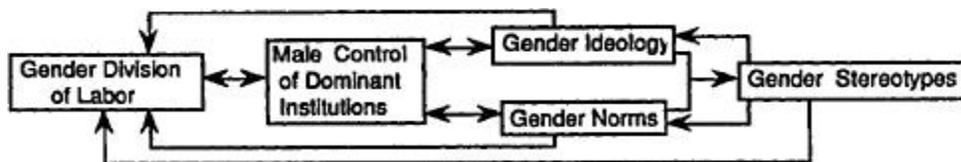
### **Learning Outcomes**

After studying the unit, you will be able to;

1. Describe the concept of gendered division of labor and its theories
2. Discuss the dichotomy of public and private domains and its impact on both genders
3. Distinguish the paid and unpaid labor and its impact on women's lives

## 6.1 GENDERED DIVISION OF LABOUR

Historically, the division of labor has been organized along gender lines. Gender roles – a set of social and behavioral norms about what is considered appropriate for either a man or woman in a social or interpersonal relationship – have affected the specialization of work in both agricultural and industrial societies. The McGraw-Hill (2004) *Sociological Theory*, Glossary defines 'division of labor' as: The form that work takes in modern society in which different individuals perform different specialized tasks instead of having everyone do essentially the same sort of task.



(Google image)

Elwell's Glossary of Sociology (undated) states:

*Division of labor is the specialization of work tasks or occupations. All societies have some division of labor based on age and sex. But with the development of industrialism the division of labor becomes far more complex which affects many parts of the sociocultural system.*

In simple words, the division of labour refers to the fragmentation of a work process so that employees specialize in specific tasks rather than an individual (craft worker) undertaking the entire work process.

Division of labor refers to the range of tasks within a social system. This can vary from everyone doing the same thing to each person having a specialized role. It is theorized that humans have divided labor since as far back as our time as hunters and gatherers when tasks were divided based mainly on age and gender. The division of labor became an important part of society after the agricultural revolution when humans had a food surplus for the first time. When humans weren't spending all of their time acquiring the food they were allowed to specialize and perform other tasks. During the industrial revolution, labor that was once specialized was broken down for the assembly line. However, the assembly line itself can also be seen as a division of labor.

The gender division of labour refers to the allocation of different jobs or types of work to women and men. In feminist economics, the institutional rules, norms

and practices that govern the allocation of tasks between women and men (and girls and boys) also constitute the gender division of labour, which is seen as variable over time and space and constantly under negotiation (Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, 2009). Both the gender division of labor and gender inequality in a society depend on its cultural beliefs about the nature and social value of gender differences in competencies and traits. Such taken for granted beliefs allow actors to be reliably categorized as men and women in all contexts and understood as more or less appropriate candidates for different roles and positions in society. For such cultural beliefs to persist, people's everyday interactions must be organized to support them. The empirical evidence suggests that unequal role and status relationships produce many differences in interactional behavior that are commonly attributed to gender.

Research studies suggest that most interactions between men and women actually occur within the structural context of unequal role or status relations (Smith-Lovin, 1999). These points together may account for the fact that people perceive gender differences to be universal in interaction, while studies of actual interaction show few behavioral differences between men and women of equal status and power. Small group interaction is an arena in which the appearance of gender differences is continually constructed through power and status relations and identity marking in the socioemotional empire.

#### **Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)**

1. What is meant by gendered division of labor?
2. What is the role of industrial revolution in gendered division of labor?

According to Walby (1990) Patriarchy is indispensable for an understanding of gender inequality and there are 6 "key patriarchal structures which restrict women and help to maintain male domination."

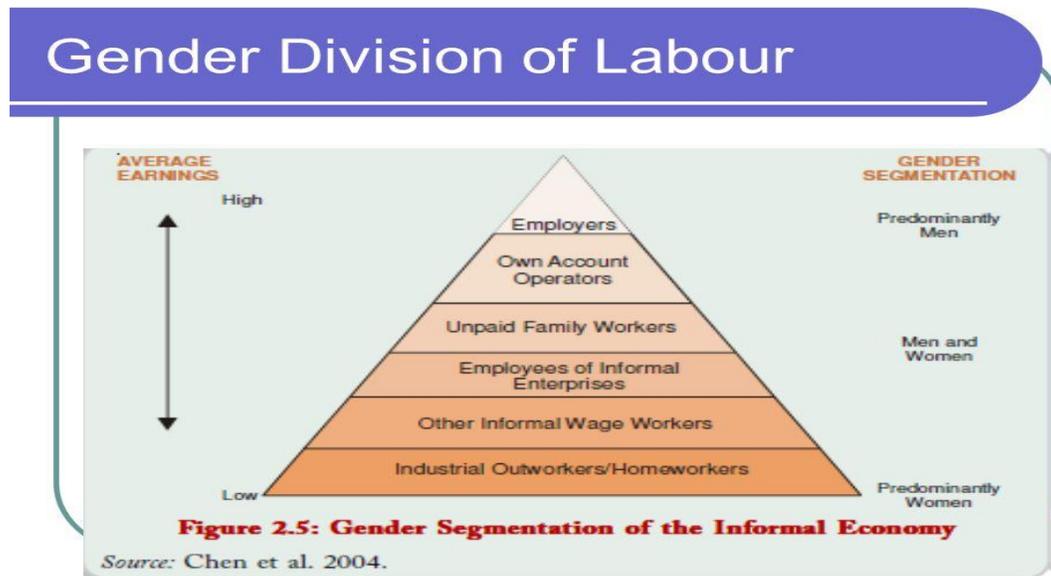
1. Patriarchy operates via paid work where females face horizontal and vertical segregation leading to lower rates of pay than for men.
2. Patriarchy operates via the gender division of labour in the household which forces women to take primary responsibility for housework and childcare even if they are also in full-time employment. Women may be trapped in unsatisfactory marriages because they are unable to find well paid jobs to support themselves and their children.
3. Women are also at a cultural disadvantage because modern western culture especially emphasizes the importance of feminine attractiveness which degrades and sometimes threatens women.

4. Heterosexual relationships are seen by Walby as essentially patriarchal although Sylvia Walby argues that women have made some gains in this respect, for example as a result of modern contraception and liberalization of abortion and divorce law.
5. Patriarchy is often sustained by male violence against women
6. Patriarchy is sustained by the activities of the State which is "still patriarchal as well as capitalist and racist" although there may have been some limited reforms such as more equal educational opportunities and easier divorce laws which have protected women against patriarchy to some extent.

According to Rekin (2002) Work in all countries is characterized by a sexual division of labor in which tasks are assigned to workers on the basis of their sex. The sexual division of labor among paid workers is termed sex segregation., sex segregation is the tendency for the sexes to do different kinds of paid work in different settings. It may involve physical, functional, or nominal differentiation of work. Segregation is usually measured by the index of dissimilarity which assesses the sexes' different representation across work categories. Segregation is a mechanism of inequality. Because economic and social rewards are distributed through people's jobs, segregation facilitates and legitimates unequal treatment. Segregation also contributes to sex inequality by assuming that the sexes differ in fundamental ways, by reducing the likelihood of equal-status contact between the sexes, and by creating same-sex reference groups against whom workers assess their rewards. The consequences of segregation include disparities between the sexes' pay and promotion opportunities. The sex composition of jobs is linked to employment rewards because men hold more desirable jobs and because customarily female activities are culturally devalued. Popular explanations for segregation focus on the preferences of workers and employers, including statistical discrimination. More useful explanations emphasize the impact of employers' or nations' policies and practices on the extent of sex segregation.

A number of factors over the past few decades have resulted in women entering and flourishing in a variety of different professions. Despite the enormous progress women around the world have made in pursuing careers, there remain significant obstacles women confront in the workplace. The glass ceiling and occupational sexism reflect the restrictions on women as they try to enter and rise in the ranks of the workforce. While occupational sexism and the glass ceiling will be explored in the section 'Inequalities of work,' what follows is a discussion of barriers to equal participation in the work force, including access to education and training, access to capital, network discrimination and other factors.

## 6.2 THEORIES ABOUT DIVISION OF LABOR



There are two most famous theories of Adam Smith and Emile Durkheim that talk about division of labor. They are briefly discussed as under. Adam Smith, a Scottish social philosopher, and economist theorized that humans practicing division of labor allows humans to be more productive and surpass faster. Adam Smith famously said in *The Wealth of Nations* that the division of labour is limited by the extent of the market. This is because it is by the exchange that each person can be specialized in their work and yet still have access to a wide range of goods and services. Smith argued against mercantilism and was a major proponent of laissez-faire economic policies. In his first book, "The Theory of Moral Sentiments," Smith proposed the idea of an invisible hand, the tendency of free markets to regulate themselves by means of competition, supply and demand, and self-interest. Smith thought the key was to encourage the division of labor. Smith argued that workers could produce more if they specialized. Smith argued that if all production could be specialized like the pin factory, workers could produce more of everything.

Adam Smith<sup>1</sup> presented three natural laws of economics. The law of self-interest, people work for their own good. The law of competition. Competition forces people to make a better product. lowest possible price to meet demand in a market economy. Adam Smith was among the first philosophers of his time to declare that

<sup>1</sup> Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. "Adam Smith (1723—1790)." Accessed March 1, 2021.

wealth is created through productive labor, and that self-interest motivates people to put their resources to the best use. He argued that profits flowed from capital investments, and that capital gets directed to where the most profit can be made. Emile Durkheim was a French scholar in 1700s who theorizes that specialization was a way for people to complete in larger societies. In the *Division of Labor in Society*, Emile Durkheim discusses how the division of labor is beneficial for society because it increases the reproductive capacity, the skill of the workman, and it creates a feeling of solidarity between people. There are two kinds of social solidarity, according to Durkheim.: Mechanical Solidarity and organic solidarity. According to Durkheim mechanical solidarity connects the individual to society without any intermediary. That is, society is organized collectively, and all members of the group share the same beliefs. The bond that binds the individual to society is this collective conscious, this shared belief system.

With organic solidarity, on the other hand, society is a system of different functions that are united by definite relationships. Each individual must have a distinct job or action and a personality that is his or her own. Individuality grows as parts of society grow. Thus, society becomes more efficient at moving in sync, yet at the same time, each of its parts has more movements that are distinctly its own (Crossman, 2012).

### **6.2.1 Sociological Significance of the Durkheim's Division of Labor Emile**

Durkheim's *The Division of Labor* is a classic of intellectual analysis. This was the first published book of Emile Durkheim in 1893. *The Division of Labour* explains the relation between individuals and the collectivity and the manner in which the multiplicity of individuals achieves the social coherence. *Division of Labour* he postulates as the basis of social solidarity. Solidarity means the solidity of the organization. It is the characteristic trait of a society. The concept of solidarity explains social differentiation or the division of labour in society. It makes individuals interdependent and effects social integration among them. This sociological analysis of Durkheim is based on his interest in social fact, on his acceptance of the functional character of society and of the supremacy of the whole on the part. Durkheim studied division of labour as a social institution and not as an economic institution as it generally taken to be. He took it to be an institution which produces morality in and of itself by subjecting individuals to the duties of their specialized existence. The moral effect of the division of labour he indicated is felt when people complement each other when dissimilar join hands and unity comes out of diversity. It is felt in friendship patterns and in the development of the family. It brings about social co-ordination and leads to solidarity. In *Division of Labour* Durkheim reacted against the view that modern industrial society could be based simply upon agreement between individuals motivated by self-interest and

without any prior consensus. He agreed that the kind of consensus in modern society was different from that in simpler social systems. But he saw both of these as two types of social solidarity. The measurement of social solidarity is the intensity of collective conscience. It is the sum total of belief and sentiment common to the member of society. Collective conscience persists through successive generations and keeps them united. In the “Division of labour” in society, Durkheim employs his evolutionary functionalism to examine the changing bases of social solidarity. According to him, the primitive society is characterized by mechanical solidarity based upon the conscience collective and the advanced society is characterized by organic solidarity based upon division of labour. The difference between mechanical solidarity and organic solidarity is due to the nature of social differentiation. Durkheim felt that the intensified struggle for existence produced the specialization and division of labour which permit some resources to support more people. Society undergoes structural and functional differentiation, as different individual activities are grouped into different institutions specializing in their respective functions. Individuals and institutions relate to one another on the basis of the complementary differences which make them mutually dependent on one another. The collective conscience becomes weaker and more abstract, permitting the development of greater individuality and freedom. Social existence means collectivity.

### **6.2.2 Criticisms of Gendered Divisions of Labor**

Historically, labor, whether inside the home or outside of it, was highly gendered. It was thought that tasks were meant for either men or women and that doing the work of the opposite gender went against nature. Women were thought to be more nurturing and therefore jobs that required caring for others, like nursing or teaching, were held by women. Men were seen as stronger and given more physically demanding jobs. This kind of labor divide was oppressive to both men and women in different ways. Men were assumed incapable of tasks like raising children and women had little economic freedom. While lower class women generally always had to have jobs the same as their husbands in order to survive, middle-class and upper-class women were not allowed to work outside the home. It was not until WWII that American women were encouraged to work outside the home. When the war ended, women didn't want to leave the workforce. Women liked being independent, many of them also enjoyed their jobs far more than household chores. Unfortunately for those women who liked working more than chores, even now that it's normal for men and women in relationships to both work outside the home, the lion share of household chores is still performed by women. Men are still viewed by many to be a less capable parent. Men who are interested in jobs like preschool teachers are often viewed with suspicion because of how society still genders labor. Whether it's women being expected to hold down a job and clean the

house or men being seen as the less important parent, each is an example of how sexism in the division of labor hurts everyone (Crossman,2012).

#### **Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)**

1. Define gendered division of labor
2. What is the main criticism on gendered division of labor

### **6.3 PUBLIC AND PRIVATE DOMAIN: A VISIBLE DICHOTOMY**

The concept of distinct public and private spheres can be traced back to the ancient Greeks, who defined the public as the political realm where the direction of society and its rules and laws were debated and decided upon. The private sphere was defined as the realm of the family. Sociologists' definition of the public and private spheres is largely a result of the work of the German sociologist Jurgen Habermas a student of critical theory and the Frankfurt school. His 1962 book, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, is considered the key text on the matter. According to Habermas (1962) the public sphere, as a place where the free exchange of ideas and debate happens, is the cornerstone of democracy. It is, he wrote, "made up of private people gathered together as a public and articulating the needs of society with the state." From this public sphere grows a "public authority" that dictates the values, ideals, and goals of a given society. The will of the people is expressed within it and emerges out of it. As such, a public sphere must have no regard for the social status of the participants, be focused on common concerns, and be inclusive all can participate.

In his book, Habermas (1962) argues that the public sphere actually took shape within the private sphere, as the practice of discussing literature, philosophy, and politics among family and guests became a common practice. As men started engaging in these debates outside of the home, these practices then left the private sphere and effectively created a public sphere. In 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe, the spread of coffeehouses across the continent and Britain created a place where the Western public sphere first took shape in modern time. There, men engaged in discussions of politics and markets, and much of what we know today as laws of property, trade, and the ideals of democracy were crafted in those spaces. As Habermas (1962) states, the private sphere is the realm of family and home life that is, in theory, free of the influence of government and other social institutions. In this realm, one's responsibility is to oneself and the other members of one's household, and work and exchange can take place within the home in a way that is separate from the economy of the greater society. However, the boundary between the public and private sphere

is not fixed; instead, it is flexible and permeable, and is always fluctuating and evolving. Reproductive rights, the glass ceiling, the domestic division of labour and equal pay have rarely gained the same degree of seriousness as those issues which dominate the public sphere. This political process is biased towards the public sphere and largely ignores the private realm. Public life is governed by shared norms and values while private life is the realm of the intimate, of personal identity, and free will.

An ideological dichotomy between domains gendered respectively as male and female, as in 'a woman's place is in the home'. The public sphere is that of adult males; the private sphere is that of women and children. Consequently, men tend to be defined by what they do whereas women are associated with nurturing relationships. Feminists argue that this split is a myth masking women's subordination and perpetuating gender inequality since both domains are both personal and political. Further connotations are associated with the public/private split (e.g., culture/nature, production/reproduction, work/consumption, reason/emotion, and instrumentality/expressivity). While in many contexts the public sphere has traditionally been privileged, romanticism (and especially Rousseau) associated the public sphere with conformity and falsity and the private sphere with authenticity and intimacy.

A central feminist critique is driven by Pateman (1987) argued social contract ignored sexual contract. Sexual contract is the basis of women subordination and sexual difference implies political difference because women who are assumed to lack naturally attributes of individual are denied civil freedom. In exposing the exclusion of women from political world, feminist pointed out the public private division is the crux of women problem This argument led to rise of second wave in 1960 and 70s. The public -private dichotomy has served to establish the patriarchal system and ensure the oppression of women. For instance, women find it difficult to raise issues that impact upon them. Feminists see the public and private domain in a different way as they are of the opinion that men dominate the public domain whereas women are essentially relegated to the private domain. By marginalizing the private sphere, men have maintained their dominance of the political process from one generation to the next. Feminists thereby seek to address this problem by redefining our understanding of what is 'political.' For example, the second-wave feminist Kate Millet views politics as 'Power -structured relationships and arrangements were by one group of persons is controlled by another'. Feminist has moved the debate of public /private debate in very effective way<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100353296>

The separation between home and work makes substantial differences to the daily life of both women and men. This means that there is a clear distinction between public and private life. Women are not placed on the same scale as men, but they act for the same purpose. The activities are presented to be different, but the place and the aim they have is almost the same. In recent years, difference has become a key concept in political, social, and cultural theory. There are many reasons for this. Since the late 1960s, second-wave feminism has led the way in putting a wide range of previously marginalized issues on the political agenda. Beginning as loose networks of consciousness-raising and campaigning groups, the women's movement attempted to develop new forms of political organization which aspired to non-hierarchical structures and aimed to empower all women whatever their background.

Differences between individuals and groups, between sexes, classes, races, religions, and nations, become important political issues when they involve relations of power. Power takes many forms, affecting access to material resources as well as questions of language, culture, and the right to define who one is. Power relations of class, sexism, heterosexism, and racism have ensured that it has been largely white, Western, middle- and upper-class men who have defined meaning, controlled economics, and determined the nature of relations between East and West and North and South. In the process, women, all people of color and non-Western nations have been defined as different and implicitly or explicitly inferior. Differences can be categorized in various ways social, political, cultural. How differences are defined has implications for whether they are seen as desirable, changeable, or fixed. Ideas of difference which are grounded in a mixture of biology and 19th century middle-class views of femininity have not disappeared from contemporary Western culture. Man is the provider in a hostile world, who fights to preserve our values and way of life. The woman is the vulnerable sexual partner or passive nurturer. Gender difference, a control issue in popular culture and the practices of everyday life, is also a key dimension of social and cultural life, the law, religion, psychology, and the life sciences. The assumption that women are naturally different from men is fundamental for the history of Western civilizations. Theories of gender differences have most often been written from perspectives that assume the white male to be the norm against which all others should be measured and which see all women as deviating from this norm in ways that fit them for domesticity and motherhood. Their supposed natural attributes both contrast with and complement those of men.

Biological theories of difference tend to focus on women's and men's different reproductive roles. Motherhood as the essence of woman's being was central to 19th and early 20th century scientific accounts of gender. Scientific theories of

difference were used to justify women's exclusion from higher education and public life. Both white women and both women and men of color were said to possess smaller brains than white men, a factor taken to indicate their lesser powers of reasoning. At the beginning of the new millennium, and in the wake of two significant waves of feminist activism, such ideas seemed both extreme and outdated. Difference as lack and inferiority has remained a key aspect of many influential 20th century theories of sexual difference. In Freudian psychoanalysis we find a theory which takes the male as the norm and defines women as different and inferior to this norm. Sex role psychology has long categorized certain qualities as masculine and other as feminine. In such studies the feminine role tends to be identified with a long list of predictable characteristics including lack of independence, passivity, illogicality, indecisiveness, and lack of confidence which continue to surface in popular representations of gender difference (Weedon, 1999:1-10). Throughout its history, feminism has taken issue with the hegemonic meanings ascribed to women's biological and anatomical differences from men. The meanings given to femaleness and femininity assumed political importance for women because they were used to determine and limit the social and economic spheres to which women had access. In Britain, in the 1790s Mary Wollstonecraft argued that women were different from men as a result of an inadequate education, which privileged sensibility over reason. Education was a theme to which feminists would return again and again over the next two centuries. Indeed, the debate over girls' and women's education has remained a key aspect of feminist politics to the present day.

Many feminists contended in the 19th century that to accept the assumption that women and men are intrinsically different should not necessarily imply that women are inferior. Their platform was a familiar one, suggesting that women and men are equal but different. This type of argumentation was rejected by most Anglo-American feminists of the 19th century, who campaigned for suffrage and access to education and to the professions on the basis of women's similarity to men. The right to be different without being seen as inferior is still a key theme of present-day feminist thought.

Women who choose motherhood and domesticity over a career and public life countered second-wave rejections of women's traditional roles in the patriarchal nuclear family. The issues of women's dual role as both domestic and paid worker, and of motherhood and family responsibilities, pointed to the need to move beyond the binaries. The need to respect differences and choices and to re-evaluate traditional hierarchies of what counts as important remains an important feminist issue (Friedan, 1992).

## 6.4 PAID AND UNPAID WORK

People allocate their time on activities that can be classified as paid work, unpaid work, and no work. Leaving aside sleep time, the concept of “no work” is commonly understood as consisting of free time spent on personal care and leisure activities. We should note here the often-neglected distinction between “no work” as voluntarily chosen free time and “no work” as the outcome of enforced inactivity due to chronic lack of employment opportunities. Paid work refers to time contracted out that receives remuneration. Work arrangements and the extent to which paid work is performed under decent conditions. Informality and lack of decent work conditions have received considerable attention worldwide by government and non-government organizations, trade unions, the International Labour Organization as well as academic researchers. Labour market segmentation, wage differentials, unemployment, labour force participation rates are also relatively well investigated subjects and national labour statistics departments routinely collect data on these issues. Unpaid work has received less attention and we now turn to this. “Unpaid work” includes all non-remunerated work activities, and it is safe to say that it lacks social recognition. The overall division of time between paid and unpaid work depends upon many factors including age, gender, type of household structure, social class, geographic location, and presence of children to name a few. Shelton (2006) explains that gender remains strongly associated with women’s and men’s patterns of unpaid work. The amount of time invested in unpaid work as opposed to paid work, the distribution of unpaid work time among specific tasks, and the patterns of care and responsibility are all determined to a large degree by one’s gender. Women continue to spend more time than men on housework, whether they are employed or not; they continue to do more of the work involved in caring for children and to take more responsibility for that work; and finally, women’s volunteer activities are more likely to be related to family than are men’s. There have been numerous attempts to explain the gendered patterns of time spent on housework and childcare and, although there is support for each of them, none can fully account for the gendered patterns of unpaid work time. The gender display approach offers some hope for better understanding the relationship between gender and unpaid work time, but efforts to evaluate its usefulness are necessarily indirect. That is, there is no simple way to determine the extent to which unpaid work time is an expression of gender; we can only determine whether a particular pattern is consistent with the gender display model<sup>3</sup>. It remains clear that the nature of women’s and men’s participation in housework, childcare and volunteer work are different and that

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<sup>3</sup> Shelton B.A. (2006) Gender and Unpaid Work. In: Handbook of the Sociology of Gender. Handbooks of Sociology and Social Research. Springer, Boston, MA

changes in women's labor force participation are not sufficient to eliminate gender differences in unpaid work activities.

#### **6.4.1 Measuring Unpaid Work**

Many argue that unpaid work should therefore be measured as part of the GDP of each nation. The United Nations (UN) Statistical Commission now recommends that national statistics offices account for economic activities that are outside the current production boundary by imputing a dollar value to unpaid work in the home and community. The aim is to make unpaid domestic work visible in official figures, formally recognize its value, and thereby the economic contribution of women. It would be a particularly important addition to national accounting in developing nations, where women's work outside the formal economy is especially prevalent. Accounts for the domestic sector are called satellite accounts. The suggestion is that they would be separate from, but consistent with, the present UN System of National Accounts (SNA), so they could be used together with the SNA as a basis for public policy. In most countries for which figures are available, the value of unpaid work is in trillions of dollars, ranging from 40 to 60% of the GDP, with the proportion even higher in developing nations. The primary data source for measuring and valuing unpaid domestic work is time use surveys. Many countries now have national surveys which collect data on the time people spend in all activities throughout the day. These statistics can be used to develop satellite accounts. Time use surveys provide the most accurate current estimates of all unpaid work and family care that takes place in society and give an otherwise unavailable statistical picture of unpaid domestic labour in the home.

Many women left work upon marriage reflected cultural norms, the nature of the work available to them, and legal strictures. The occupational choices of those young women who did work were severely circumscribed. Most women lacked significant education and women with little education mostly toiled as piece workers in factories or as domestic workers, jobs that were dirty and often unsafe. Educated women were scarce. Fewer than 2 percent of all 18- to 24-year-olds were enrolled in an institution of higher education, and just one-third of those were women. Such women did not have to perform manual labor, but their choices were likewise constrained. Despite the widespread sentiment against women, particularly married women, working outside the home and with the limited opportunities available to them, women did enter the labor force in greater numbers over this period, with participation rates reaching nearly 50 percent for single women by 1930 and nearly 12 percent for married women. This rise suggests that while the incentive and in many cases the imperative remained for women to drop out of the labor market at marriage when they could rely on their husband's income, mores were changing. Indeed, these years overlapped with the so-called first wave of the women's movement, when women came together to agitate for change on a variety of social issues, including suffrage and temperance, and which culminated in the ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920 guaranteeing women the right to vote.

Between the 1930s and mid-1970s, women's participation in the economy continued to rise, with the gains primarily owing to an increase in work among married women. By 1970, 50 percent of single women and 40 percent of married women were participating in the labor force. Several factors contributed to this rise. First, with the advent of mass high school education, graduation rates rose substantially. At the same time, new technologies contributed to an increased demand for clerical workers, and these jobs were increasingly taken on by women. Moreover, because these jobs tended to be cleaner and safer, the stigma attached to work for a married woman diminished. And while there were still marriage bars that forced women out of the labor force, these formal barriers were gradually removed over the period following World War II. Over the decades from 1930 to 1970, increasing opportunities also arose for highly educated women. That said, early in that period, most women still expected to have short careers, and women were still largely viewed as secondary earners whose husbands' careers came first. As time progressed, attitudes about women working and their employment prospects changed. As women gained experience in the labor force, they increasingly saw that they could balance work and family. A new model of the two-income family emerged. Some women began to attend college and graduate school with the expectation of working, whether or not they planned to marry and have families.

Since the 1960's a substantial amount of research has been undertaken to take stock of differences in the socio-economic status between men and women. At the same time, mobilization and awareness building culminated in international fora and, under the auspices of the United Nations, many governments committed to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women. To document the progress made (or lack of) new conceptual frameworks were developed that made evident the need for gender sensitive data collection processes. Thus, came the great push forward for data gathering that allowed tracking of differences between girls and boys, women, and men at the national level for both developing and developed countries. In the decades that followed, research findings pointed out that upgrading gender disparities in paid and unpaid work, a goal in its own right, is a contributing factor to promoting gender equality but also pro-poor growth, social cohesion and improvements in overall human development.

As a result, policy attention and resources were devoted to address gaps in health and education, labour markets and labour rights, and access to credit and markets. These have been important initiatives and rising female labour force participation rates provide encouraging testimony to that end. Progress made notwithstanding; gaps remain. Women are still overrepresented among the underpaid and unprotected workers around the world. Despite their contributions to the economy, returns to education are lower for women; gender-based wage differentials persist; market segmentation and occupational segregation further exacerbate inequalities. Last but not least, gender disparities in the division of labour between paid and

unpaid work also persist, with men spending more of their work time in remunerative employment and women performing most of the unpaid work.

By the 1970s, a dramatic change in women's work lives was under way. In the period after World War II, many women had not expected that they would spend as much of their adult lives working as turned out to be the case. By contrast, in the 1970s young women more commonly expected that they would spend a substantial portion of their lives in the labor force, and they prepared for it, increasing their educational attainment, and taking courses and college majors that better equipped them for careers as opposed to just jobs. These changes in attitudes and expectations were supported by other changes under way in society. Workplace protections were enhanced through the passage of the Pregnancy Discrimination Act in 1978 and the recognition of sexual harassment in the workplace. Access to birth control increased, which allowed married couples greater control over the size of their families and young women the ability to delay marriage and to plan children around their educational and work choices. By the early 1990s, the labor force participation rate of prime working-age women, those between the ages of 25 and 54 reached just over 74 percent, compared with roughly 93 percent for prime working-age men. By then, the share of women going into the traditional fields of teaching, nursing, social work, and clerical work declined, and more women were becoming doctors, lawyers, managers, and professors. As women increased their education and joined industries and occupations formerly dominated by men, the gap in earnings between women and men began to close significantly<sup>4</sup>. Unpaid work is interlinked with the location individuals occupy in paid work through many channels. Such are as under.

1. shapes the ability, duration and types of paid work that can be undertaken and therefore limits access to existing and potential collective, action processes and social security (Jahan, 2005; Çagatay and Ertürk, 2004).
2. does not offer monetary remuneration which reduces the exercise of "voice" over decision making and ability to accumulate savings and assets
3. as in many societies it is regarded a woman's "natural" work, performed in the "private" sphere of the family, it essentializes this work and strips it of its socioeconomic dimensions and contributions.
4. assigns paid social reproduction (care) workers to jobs that are presumed to be unskilled, with low pay, slender options for promotion and scant social protection. Taking care of one's own household and family members' needs may be labour of love, but it is also labour of sorrow and drudgery.

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<sup>4</sup> This essay is a revised version of a speech that Janet Yellen, then chair of the Federal Reserve, delivered on May 5, 2017 at the "125 Years of Women at Brown Conference," sponsored by Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island

Unpaid care work, in particular, though embedded in feelings of obligation and commitment to others' wellbeing, is also rooted in patriarchal structures that interact with the rest of the economy in ways that need to gain more visibility. The male-breadwinner female-caregiver polar representation perpetuates a "gendering" ideology that distorts and limits human potential and narrows the range of experiences of "being" and "doing" for men and women. If we are to make further progress towards gender equality, we have to address the fact that it is neither "normal" nor "natural" for women to be performing most of the unpaid labour. Most importantly, unpaid care work entails a systemic transfer of hidden subsidies to the rest of the economy that go unrecognized, imposing a systematic time-tax on women throughout their life cycle.

These hidden subsidies signal the existence of power relations between men and women. But also, they connect the "private" worlds of households and families with the "public" spheres of markets and the state in exploitative ways. There is a need to shed light on these interconnections in ways that motivate public dialogue, and action on behalf of policy makers, to remedy this phenomenon.

There are different forms of unpaid work like caregiving, domestic work and volunteering are defined, socially valued, organized, and gendered<sup>5</sup>. Unpaid work refers to the production of goods or services that are consumed by those within or outside a household, but not for sale in the market. An activity is considered "work" (vs. "leisure") if a third person could be paid to do a certain activity (Morrison,2011).

It is widely recognized that women perform the bulk of unpaid work in households and in the paid labour force. (Beneria, 2009; Marshall 2006). This work is often socially, politically, and economically devalued because "work" is often defined in conventional statistics as paid activities linked to the market (Beneria, 2009). Despite the efforts of several generations of feminist scholars to make unpaid work visible, it remains marginalized in most methods of measuring economic activity.

Absences and gaps revealed through these data also provide a basis for formulating new questions, and therefore evidence-based policies, that better account for the *total* work performed in an economy. Based upon this literature and available data to date, several useful subcategories help define unpaid work and demarcate the boundaries between its diverse forms of work and paid work. These subcategories

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<sup>5</sup> Conceptual Guide to the Unpaid Work Module, Prepared by Marion Werner, Leah F. Vosko, Angie Deveau, Giordana Pimentel and Deatra Walsh with past contributions from Abetha Mahalingam, Nancy Zukewich, Krista Scott-Dixon, Megan Ciurysek and Vivian Ngai

include unpaid informal caregiving; volunteering; unpaid domestic work; unpaid subsistence activities; unpaid family work; and unpaid work in paid workplaces.

#### **Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)**

1. Define paid and unpaid work.
2. How unpaid work is measured?

Some of the most recognizable forms of unpaid work is briefly discussed as under.

#### **6.4.2 Unpaid Informal Caregiving**

Unpaid informal caregiving encompasses care and assistance provided by individuals to other individuals outside of civic or voluntary organizations. This work is often similar in character to paid caregiving occupations such as those related to childcare provision, nursing, and home care. These are typically among the lowest paid occupations in the labour force.

The burden of unpaid informal caregiving falls disproportionately on women. Unpaid informal caregivers are often family members, relatives, friends, and volunteers. The recipients of care are usually children, elders, individuals who are ill or people with disabilities, as well as individuals within the paid workforce like supervisors, co-workers, and friends (see unpaid work in paid workplaces). As women age, their care work seldom diminishes and may even increase. A large proportion of grandmothers are responsible for the care of their grandchildren. Moreover, increasing numbers of elderly women are responsible for the care of their husbands.

Caregiving accounts for a large proportion of unpaid work performed by individuals. Although unpaid informal caregiving benefits society, as well as caregivers and care recipients, it still lacks social recognition and is not counted as part of a country's productive output (ILO, 2007). Feminist economists estimate that, were it to be counted, this type of work would account for at least half of a given country's total Gross National Product (GNP) (ILO, 2007). Thus, for some scholars conducting research in the area of gender and work, a central concern involves measuring and assigning value to unpaid informal caregiving and highlighting the sex/gender divisions that exist when it comes to who performs such types of work. Some analysts, such as Zukewich (2003), argue that only when adequate tools are created to measure and value unpaid informal caregiving will we have a better understanding of how the social and economic costs of sustaining ourselves and dependents relate to individuals' capacity to engage in the labour force. Although men's participation in childcare duties within dual-income families has increased over the last three decades, women remain responsible for the largest share of unpaid caregiving within the home despite their growing participation in

paid employment (Marshall, 2006). Moreover, in single-earner households, 89 percent of mothers stay at home to fulfill caregiving responsibilities.

### **6.4.3 Volunteering**

Unpaid work that extends beyond one's own household into the households of others, and social institutions more broadly is generally classified as "volunteer work". These activities are integral to maintaining the labour force, although they are rarely recognized as such. Beneria (2009) defines volunteer work as unpaid work performed for recipients who are not members of the immediate family and for which there is no direct payment (Taylor, 2004). Volunteer work includes both works done for formal organizations as well as help and care provided in an informal manner by individuals for other individuals.

Women's volunteer work predominates in institutions and sectors that are associated with the feminized work of care such as schools, hospitals, and voluntary services related to elder and childcare. In instances where these services are restructured, and fewer financial resources are dedicated to them, mostly female volunteers become essential sources of unpaid labour, tied to the overarching belief in a woman's "natural" capacity to carry out care work (Denton et al. 2002; Baines, 2009). In contrast, men are more likely than women to take on leadership roles in their volunteer work, as well as more maintenance, coaching or teaching positions (Rotolo and Wilson 2007).

### **6.4.4 Unpaid Work in Paid Workplaces**

Various types of unpaid work are performed by individuals in the workplace itself and often misrecognized as volunteer work. As with other forms of unpaid work, the bulk of this work is undertaken by women. Forrest (1998) documents how women carry out unpaid work on-the-job outside their formal job requirements. These activities include cleaning, informal caregiving, serving other individuals, and maintaining interpersonal relations. The latter activity can involve empathy work: the often-taxing efforts of employees to establish personal connections by means of listening and attending to the emotional needs of their clients, co-workers, or employers. Despite the benefits of the various unpaid work activities to workplaces, they still remain largely invisible. There is a tendency among policy makers, employers, and analysts to define paid work as time and effort spent directly in the production of goods and services for the market and thus to discount unpaid work in the workplace.

This form of unseen and unpaid work can be strongly associated with female-dominated and feminized occupations and sectors. For example, Baines (2004; 2009) documents the increasing reliance upon unpaid work performed by mostly female employees in the social service sector. These activities include unpaid policy- and service-building work, fundraising, and unpaid care for social service clients and their families. Restructuring of social services linked to privatization

and declining state support for them have led to increased demands upon workers in this sector to perform these unpaid duties for their own or other service agencies.

#### **6.4.5 Unpaid Domestic Work**

An analysis of types of unpaid domestic work continues to reveal sex/gender divisions of labour in households. Although the gap between men's and women's performance of domestic work has narrowed slightly, a greater share of housework in Canada continues to be performed by women (Marshall, 2006). Although a majority of women engage in paid work, women remain disproportionately responsible for daily housework in dual-earner families. Thus, women carry the double burden of paid and unpaid work. Social context matters, however. The composition of families – especially the numbers and ages of children and multigenerational households – influence the number of hours spent on performing domestic duties, and the burden of this work on women (Marshall, 2006). The timing of life transitions, specifically ages of marriage and childbearing, also shapes the distribution of unpaid domestic work between women and men in households (McMullin, 2005). As McMullin observes in her study of generational patterns of unpaid work in Canadian families, women who married and had children early in life are more likely to undertake more unpaid domestic work responsibilities than their older female counterparts. The home has long been a site where unpaid domestic work is combined with paid employment, especially for women. Historically, paid work in the home (or homework) has been associated with women's work in systems of industrial production in, for example, the garment industry (Scott, 1988). The reorganization of industry and changes in information technology have seen more workers in white collar occupations such as writers, editors, programmers, and software engineers shift to perform paid work in the home, with growing numbers of men working from home.

Despite this shift, gendered divisions and uneven normative expectations regarding housework continue to persist in homes where paid work is also undertaken in either industrial or white-collar sectors (Mirchandani, 2000). Men working from home are more likely to segregate paid work from unpaid housework in comparison to their female counterparts for whom this divide tends to be especially blurred, leading to longer hours of paid and unpaid work arranged in fragmented periods. The isolated and unregulated nature of homework tends to consolidate uneven gendered roles in these households (Ibid.). Furthermore, women who shoulder the dual burden of paid labour and unpaid work in the home are more likely to suffer from related stress and adverse effects on their physical and mental health (Marshall, 2006).

For example, in Pakistan, the traditional Indian imagination of a household almost takes it for granted that certain jobs within the household are to be performed only by women. These tasks can include domestic upkeep, cooking, cleaning, and childcare, while a broader definition would also include the hours of emotional labour that goes into holding families together and putting up with patriarchal

constructions of what women are expected to tolerate and expect. However, regardless of the hours of the day women put into this domestic labour, the work is often dismissed as a set of daily chores and not accounted for in either the GDP or the employment metrics. Since the work done at home doesn't necessarily generate products and services for the market, economists often ignore it in their calculations and the result is that a massive portion of the work done by women in India goes unrecognized as labour and is treated as a duty.

The list of unpaid domestic activities illustrates the diversity and indispensability of these activities. Tasks include meal preparation and clean-up; clothing care; cleaning; plant and garden care; home maintenance/management; care for children and adults; unpaid help to other households; shopping or obtaining services; travel as part of care or obtaining services; and unpaid work in family businesses. Each category of unpaid work also includes a subset of tasks. For example, care to children includes attending to their health needs, supervising their education, transporting them to school and other activities, "babysitting", and so forth.

#### **6.4.6. Unpaid Subsistence Activities**

Subsistence and/or survival-based activities form yet another type of unpaid work performed predominantly by women that is socially undervalued and made invisible in economic accounts of work. Subsistence activities can include the cultivation of vegetables, fetching wood and water, and the care of livestock animals, especially important for farming households' economies. While subsistence activities are often associated with so-called developing countries in the global South, they remain vital to livelihoods in industrial economies, especially in rural areas. Women's participation in subsistence production tends to be underestimated, especially where it is classified as unpaid family work (Philipps, 2008).

#### **6.4.7. Unpaid Family Work**

Unpaid family work refers to the direct contributions of unpaid family members to production for the market, work that is officially counted under another member of the household. For example, one household member may be constructed legally as an owner or entrepreneur although the business may also rely upon the unpaid work of relatives who assist in the business' operations (Philipps, 2008). Unpaid family work is generally performed by women from diverse geographical and social locations, such as immigrants, farm wives and executive/political spouses.

For example, although initially associated with unpaid work on farms, unpaid family work is increasingly comprised of women who contribute to small businesses officially belonging to one member of the household, often, a male head of the household (Philipps, 2008). Unpaid family work and its gendered dimensions also persist on farms. Women engage in long hours of on-farm unpaid work, activities also often combined with off-farm paid labour.

## 6.5 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Define gendered division of labor in detail. How it effects women's lives?
2. Discuss in detail the theories of gendered division of labor.
3. Describe Durkheim theory of division of labor and explain theory 'main points with examples.
4. Discuss the main criticism on gendered division of labor.
5. Explain public and private domain. How it effects women's lives?
6. What is the main criticism of feminist on public and private domain? Discuss
7. Describe paid and unpaid work in detail. How it is measured?
8. Discuss the most important forms of unpaid work in detail.

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**Unit-7**

## **BODY IMAGE**

**Written by: Atifa Nasir**

**Reviewed by: Aqleem Fatimah**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This unit throws light on body image, objectification theory and the unique impact of self-objectification on men and women's self-body relations. Despite several limitations to generalizability, the research on objectification theory indicates that self-objectification and self-surveillance do indeed serve as critical explanatory factors for understanding women and men's body image in contemporary societies. Self-objectification keeps appearance at the forefront of both men and women's minds. The consequences associated with this self-perspective are serious and numerous. Thus, the sexually objectifying gaze specially in the case of women serves as a particularly potent way to limit women's social roles and behaviors by coaxing them into habitual self-monitoring of their physical appearance. Limitations to generalizability notwithstanding, objectification theory can explain how the sexualized way in which women's bodies are evaluated within cultural contexts has both personal and political implications specially for women's lives.

## **OBJECTIVES**

This unit aims at:

1. introduce definitions of body image and body objectification
2. examine various theories related to body image formation and its impact on both genders
3. shed light on objectification theory with reference to women objectification
4. feminist understanding of female beauty and male body representation through various mediums

### **Learning Outcomes**

After reading the unit you will be able to:

1. define and utilize relevant concepts that are pertinent to body image
2. debate how various theories are relevant to body image formation
3. discuss objectification theory with special relevance to its impact of women
4. deliberate male body representation through media and its impact on men

## 7.1 BODY IMAGE

Body image is one of the components of personal identity. Body image is the figure that one has on their anthropometric measurements<sup>1</sup>, contours, and shape of the body; and also, the feelings correlated to these factors that affect the satisfaction with the body or specific parts of the body. (Ferriani L, Viana, 1992). Body image is a multidimensional concept. The complexity of body image can be appreciated by looking at its components. These components apply to people with healthy and unhealthy perceptions of their bodies and include:

- Cognitive: thoughts and beliefs about the body
- Perceptual: how people perceive the size and shape of their body and body parts
- Affective: feelings about the body
- Behavioral: the actions that people perform to check on, tend to, alter, or conceal their body (Yamamotova, et al, 2017).

The relationship between body image concerns and eating disorder. (image retrieved from google on 4.8.21)

There are some debates as to when body image development begins. Primary socialization takes place early in life, and a sense of self-recognition is assumed to develop by the age of two. Children in the toddler years become aware of their gender. They also discover social norms, such as competitiveness and athleticism for men (strong legs, muscles, large arms), and beauty or smallness for females (glossy hair, perfect skin, tiny waist, no hips). When children become aware of their body appearance, they attempt to manipulate their parents to receive admiration and approval. This need for approval grows upon starting school, exhibiting a need for social acceptance. Body image as a learned behavior that children mainly focus on appearance in the context of the toys they play with, such as Barbie dolls. As children grow and socialize, they begin comparing themselves with other children, especially concerning appearance (e.g., little children desire to be bigger). By the age of 6, body shape becomes increasingly prominent consideration (especially muscle and weight) (King, 2018).

Adolescence indicates the transition from childhood to adulthood and is associated with physical and social changes. Adolescence is a critical period in body image development. Body image in adolescents is also under the influence of parents. The parent-adolescent relationship has a significant impact on the development of adolescents' body dissatisfaction. Parents send sociocultural or critical messages

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<sup>1</sup> Anthropometric measurements are a series of quantitative measurements of the muscle, bone, and adipose tissue used to assess the composition of the body. The core elements of anthropometry are height, weight, body mass index (BMI), body circumferences (waist, hip, and limbs), and skinfold thickness

and messages about body appearance ideals to their children. When Individuals feel secure regarding their relationships, they are more satisfied with their body and less likely to think in ways that they have to adhere to appearance ideals to receive others' acceptance. Many research studies have shown that adolescents with better parent-adolescent relationships are less likely to experience body dissatisfaction (Bearman et al ,2012). Although in younger children, the influence of families on body image development is more significant than friends, the role of parents decreases as children get older and peer responses become more important than families. Body image in people aged 14 to 27 is greatly affected by their peers. A critical event or series of events such as teasing, and rejection may lead to body image misperception. Studies have found that the more frequent being teased about body size and weight while growing up, the more likely to experience body image distortion and body dissatisfaction during adulthood (Grilo, et al ,1994).

#### **Self- Assessment Questions (SAQs)**

1. What is meant by body image?
2. What is the role of parent-adolescent relationship on body image?

Body image may be explained by many theories. Some of them are briefly discussed for more understanding.

#### **7.1.1 Sociocultural Theory**

Sociocultural theory has emerged as one of the primary frameworks within which body image and eating concerns has been conceptualized. This theory posits that social agents such as the media, peers, and parents convey strong messages regarding the importance of appearance, and pressure to conform to unrealistic body ideals (Brown and Bobkowski, 2011). These messages are then internalized by individuals who adopt societal standards of beauty and slenderness as their own. The discrepancy perceived between the ideal and one's own body often results in body dissatisfaction followed by disordered eating behaviors aiming to bring one's body closer to the ideal (Thompson et al. 1999). According to Levine and Murnen (2009) physical appearance comparison constitutes a second mechanism leading to the development and maintenance of body image and eating pathology, as in many instances comparisons are not favorable, especially when media images are chosen as comparison targets.

The sociocultural theory of body image and eating concerns' focus on media, peers, and parents as socializing agents has made it developmentally very relevant to adolescents and youth (Borzekowski and Bayer 2011). The media, in particular, have been shown to present a relentless stream of images of ideal bodies, almost

without exception carefully digitally modified to create an unattainable image of physical perfection. Furthermore, the weight-loss industry, representing over \$50 billion in North America, promotes products promising an immediate solution to perceived imperfections and physical transformations through little or no effort. A wealth of correlational, prospective, and experimental studies has provided support for the role of media exposure in the development of body image dissatisfaction and eating pathology among adolescents and suggested that media exposure might be a causal risk factor for these concerns (Levine and Murnen, 2009).

Peers represent another important source of sociocultural influence during adolescence and young adulthood. Adolescents who conform to social ideals of appearance are typically more popular and provide an example of the rewards of conformity and the pursuit of social ideals. Furthermore, fat talk, that is conversations focusing on weight and appearance and involving explicit self-deprecating statements, complaints regarding personal physical appearance, and weight management tips, is related to body image and eating concerns. From a network perspective, friendship cliques have also been shown to report similar body image and eating concerns, a phenomenon sometimes referred to as peer contagion. Furthermore, appearance-related comments from friends have been found to reinforce the relationship between body dissatisfaction and disordered eating. Thus, peers have been shown to constitute an important source of influence on body image and eating concerns among adolescents.

Within sociocultural theory, particular attention is paid to physical appearance comparison as one of the mechanisms proposed to account for the relationship between sociocultural pressures to achieve appearance ideals and body image concerns and eating pathology (van den Berg et al. 2002). Consistent with this, media-ideal internalization and appearance comparison have emerged as mediators of the relationship between sociocultural influences and body dissatisfaction and eating pathology among adolescent girls. Thus, appearance comparison plays a critical role in the impact of sociocultural influences on body image and eating concerns.

### **7.1.2 Self-Objectification and Feminist Theory**

In feminist theories of the development of body image and eating concerns, the Western focus on female appearance that encompasses both the glorification of thinness and the vilification of fatness, is viewed as a form of sexism and misogyny, and therefore as a means of maintaining the patriarchal status quo (Brown, 1989). appearance as Gilbert and Thompson(1996) say that persistent promotion of thinness serves the interests of the diet and beauty industry as well as hampering women's empowerment and sense of self-efficacy by maintaining an anxious focus

on Furthermore, feminist theories of body image and eating concerns highlight the conflicting attitudes surrounding the increasing social success of women, and suggest that women are motivated to try to conform to societal standards of appearance in order to assuage male anxieties resulting from their growing role in society, and gain male approval . Consistent with these theories, meta-analytic findings have shown a positive association between feminist identity and positive body image and lower eating pathology among women. (Murnen and Smolak, 2009), suggesting that feminist consciousness may help adolescent girls to engage in critical assessment of their cultural environment and resist sociocultural pressures. Thus, feminist theories of the development of body image and eating concerns have received empirical support.

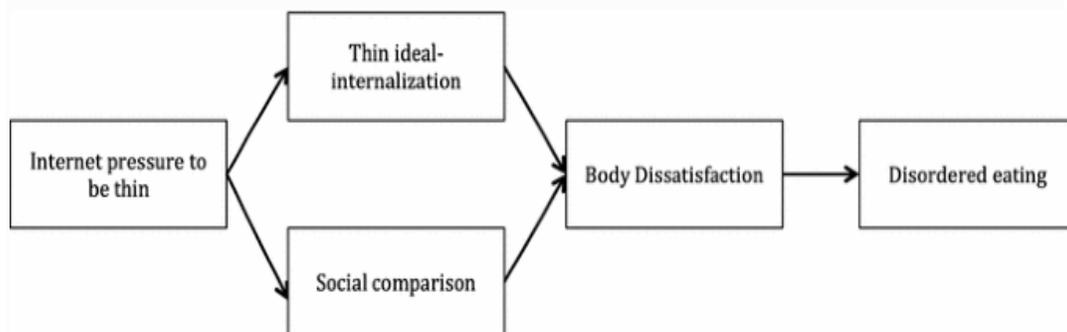
Another important concept developed by feminist theories of body image and eating concerns is the objectifying male gaze. Objectification can be defined as the tendency to treat bodies as objects as opposed to entities (Fredrickson and Roberts, 1997). In other words, through objectification, individuals, particularly women but increasingly men as well, are considered and treated “as bodies”. Self-objectification refers to the tendency to join society in viewing oneself as an object. Thus, self-objectification theory posits that Western society socializes its members to treat themselves as objects to be evaluated, and in many cases, sexual objects (Fredrickson and Roberts, 1997). From a theoretical standpoint, self-objectification would contribute to body dissatisfaction and eating pathology through the resulting experiences of increased body-related anxiety, shame, and surveillance. A robust body of work has supported objectification theory and the usefulness of considering body image and eating pathology within this framework and provided evidence for the relationship between self-objectification and body dissatisfaction and disordered eating in women as well as muscularity concerns in early adult males. Furthermore, media content analysis has revealed the ubiquitous presence of objectifying images of women and men. Media and peer influences have also been linked with increased levels of self-objectification among adolescents, suggesting that being exposed to images of ideal figures intensifies feelings of objectification (Aubrey and Frisby, 2011). In this way, self-objectification theory has emerged as a useful lens through which to conceptualize body image and eating concerns.

### **7.1.3 Social Identity Theory**

Social identity theory proposes that one’s sense of personal identity is drawn from knowledge of social group membership (Tajfel, 1983). As a result, individuals are likely to engage in social categorization, rely of stereotypic characteristics of groups, and use social comparison processes as a means of preserving a positive identity (Tajfel, 1983).

Body image concerns and eating pathology<sup>2</sup> have both been described within a social identity framework (Ison and Kent, 2010). As previously described, physical appearance plays a central role in identity. Consistent with social identity theory, in order to maintain a positive identity individual, need to experience feelings of membership to a desirable group in terms of appearance and to sustain this with positive social comparisons.

In Western society, in which there is an emphasis on a generally unachievable body shape, it is likely that individuals may experience difficulties trying to maintain their identity as part of this ingroup and finding targets for positive social comparisons. The ingroup can be defined in various ways such as, for example, the peer group. Thus, adolescent girls have been reported to associate body satisfaction with the recognition that certain members of their peer group are more attractive than them while others are less so (Kramer et al.2008). Gender group and gender role identity has also been hypothesized to be associated with body dissatisfaction and disordered eating in that investment in appearance is considered to be a feminine trait, therefore, women for whom gender is a salient identity trait will be more likely to invest in their appearances. Consistent with this, stress resulting from adherence to rigid traditional feminine roles has been associated with disordered eating. Thus, social identity theory has received support as a framework for examining body image and eating concerns. Severe eating disorders such as in Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia Nervosa have also been described as central elements of an individual's identity. In this way, the disorder becomes one of the primary characteristics around with the self is constructed and relationships with others are formed. Social identity theory may, therefore, be particularly useful when considering the clinically severe forms of eating disorders.



(Google image retrieved on 4.8.21 showing body image and its relationship with eating disorder)

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<sup>2</sup> Pathology is the medical specialty concerned with the study of the nature and causes of diseases

#### **7.1.4 Gratifications Theory**

Gratifications theory has also been used to conceptualize body image concerns and eating pathology (Fitzsimmons-Craft, 2011). According to Hesse-Biber et al. (2006) contrary to sociocultural theory, gratifications theory restores the agency of the individual in seeking out media exposure and selectively tailoring their media environment to their choices. According to this theory, individuals are motivated to selectively expose themselves to cultural messages as a source of information on appearance standards (Tiggemann, 2003).

Tiggemann (2003) says that consistent with this theory, it has been shown that exposure to fashion magazines and television thin-ideal content has differential associations with body image and eating variables, suggesting that individuals may seek out these media for different reasons and report different impacts among college women. Furthermore, individual characteristics and motivations to select media are thought to interact with exposure, thereby producing differential effects in different individuals (Hesse-Biber et al.(2006). Thus, individuals with higher initial concerns seem more greatly affected by exposure to ideal images. Gratifications theory, therefore, offers a more active account of media influences on body image and eating concerns.

#### **Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)**

1. What are the main debates within body image discourse?
2. Is sociocultural theory and feminist theory have different stance about body image?

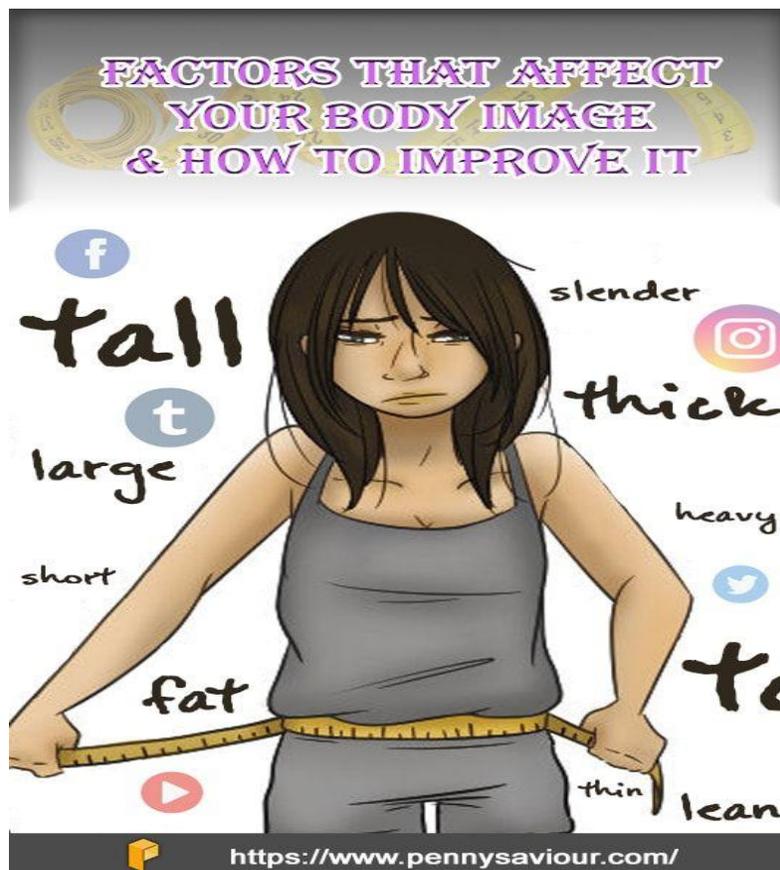
## **7.2 FACTORS AFFECTING BODY IMAGE AND BODY IMAGE DISORDERS**

Related but different terms are often used interchangeably in the literature concerning the state of consciousness in which there is an altered body image perception, including body image distortion, body image misperception, body image disturbance, negative body image, altered body image, and body dissatisfaction.

Thereupon, body image disturbance can manifest as disturbance of percept (i.e., distortion) and concept (i.e., body dissatisfaction). Perceptual disturbance involves the failure to evaluate the size of one's body accurately. Body dissatisfaction includes attitudinal or affective perception of one's body and negative feelings and cognitions. Body image disturbances are thought to also manifest on a behavioral level, such as body avoidance, body checking, or dieting (Lewer and Hartmann, 2015).

Negative body image characteristically demonstrates a dissatisfaction of body or body parts, preoccupation with appearance, and engaging in behaviors such as frequent mirror checking, self-weighing, or avoidance of public situations. Negative body image often gets measured as body dissatisfaction. Body dissatisfaction is attributable to a discrepancy between the perception of body image and its idealized image (Ferriani L, Viana, 1992).

To date, various factors that influence body image have been studied such as BMI, family, peers, society, media, culture, self-esteem, psychopathology, gender, age, marital status, education level, smoking status, alcohol consumption, physical activity, weight control behavior, religiosity, and spirituality. Since body dissatisfaction is detrimental to wellbeing, it is essential to identify its correlates.



### 7.2.1. Body Mass Index (BMI)

One of the most important factors influencing body image and body satisfaction is BMI, a continuous variable using the standard formula of kilograms over height

squared. As a biological component, BMI has been found to contribute to body image and fear of negative evaluation (fear that one will be evaluated unfavorably because of one's appearance). Overweight individuals are more likely to report the sense of fear associated with being negatively evaluated while engaging in social situations compare to their normal-weight counterparts. They also tend to show negative affective attitudes toward their body (Ahadzadeh et al ,2018). Body image discordance is the discrepancy between body image and BMI and defined as perceived body size minus actual body size. Underestimation is perceiving the body as smaller than the actual BMI, and overestimation is perceiving the body as larger than the actual BMI. body image discordance is associated with body image dissatisfaction and negatively impacts mental health, including lowering self-esteem and increasing depression.

### **7.2.2. Family**

Family plays an important role in the development of children's body image, body size attitudes, and eating patterns, as they form in early childhood. Family is a prominent and continuing influence, as children develop the need for parental admiration and approval. Parents may increase or decrease the risk of the development of body image and eating concerns in their children, directly or indirectly. Parents with particular attention toward weight control behaviors have significant influences on children's body satisfaction. Direct parental attitudes can include commenting to a child about their weight or appearance, teasing about a child's weight, pressuring a child to lose weight, or encouraging a child to diet. Indirect parental behaviors are actions or attitudes that are not necessarily planned to influence the child, including parents' negative comments about their bodies and parental engagement in excessive exercise or dieting. These behaviors may model self-criticism and inspire children to judge themselves or others based on appearance and highlight the importance of adhering to social and cultural body size ideals. Some other family features may also contribute to body satisfaction, such as the socioeconomic status of the family and living in large cities. (Shoraka et al ,2018)

### **7.2.3. Social pressures**

Shoraka et al (2018) state that although body image is a mental concept, it is observable as a social phenomenon. Both women and men attempt to present and maintain themselves in socially desirable body shape. Social acceptance is a critical component of the lifecycle and is central to wellbeing. In response to the need for social acceptance, individuals develop behavioral responses that enhance their social desirability. Through the social learning process, individuals observe, imitate, and reinforce their behavior to increase the likelihood of social acceptance; this is particularly important in adolescents for attaining acceptance in peer groups.

Weight-related bullying during adolescence significantly contributes to the development of negative body perceptions and body dissatisfaction. The pressure to lose weight or gain muscle that adolescents experience from society is associated with body dissatisfaction.

#### **7.2.4. Media**

Children and adolescents today grow up in a world flooded with different types of mass media such as television, movies, videos, billboards, magazines, music, newspapers, and the internet. Newer forms of media (e.g., internet, social media, computer games) is being more popular than traditional forms (e.g., printed materials and TV) as time goes on. Several studies suggest a link between the muscular male body ideal and the thin female beauty ideal represented in the media with a variety of psychological conditions including body image misperception, body dissatisfaction, and eating disorders. This link has been explained mostly by socio-cognitive processes such as social comparison.

#### **7.2.5. Social Media**

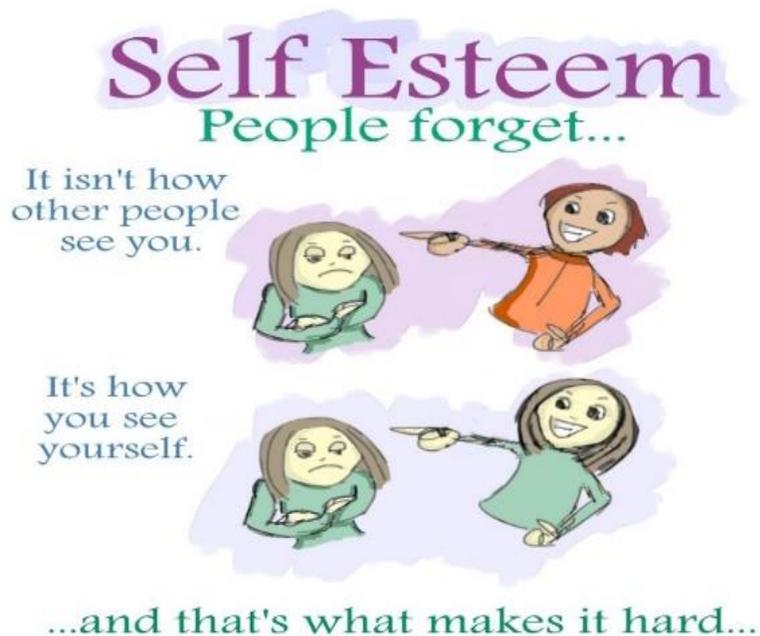


Social media is a more recent form of media that has become increasingly popular worldwide, and nowadays, messages regarding appearance ideals delivered through social media. Due to its continuous availability (e.g., on smartphones), the influences of social media may be more potent than traditional forms of media. Several studies have suggested that active social media engagement may negatively influence body image and appears to be associated with body dissatisfaction and

eating disorders. Different theoretical mechanisms have been proposed, such as body appearance comparisons and self-objectification. (van den Berg, et al, 2010). On social media, users post their photographs and view photos of others, and physical appearance is an important factor in these activities. In addition to receiving messages and comments about their bodies on social media, users see carefully edited and selected social media imagery including depictions of thin bodies (thinspiration) or lean and muscular bodies (fitspiration).

According to van den Berg et al (2010) users might frequently compare themselves with appearance ideals that conveyed to them through social media and internalize these ideals as the standards for their own body. When their physical appearance is not a match for the internalized ideals, this may result in body dissatisfaction. This concept is particularly important in adolescents who spend more time and receive more feedback about their appearance on social media.

#### 7.2.6. Self-Esteem



Body image is highly related to an individual's self-esteem and self-concept. Self-esteem can be a potential factor reducing the adverse association of BMI, body image, and fear of negative evaluation. Higher self-esteem may serve as a protective factor, decreasing the negative association between BMI and feelings of individuals about their body, also reducing the level of anxiety caused by others' unfavorable

judgments. Van den Berg et al (2010) describe that body dissatisfaction is negatively associated with self-esteem and is a strong predictor of self-esteem reduction, particularly in adolescents. This association is not equal for all adolescents, and it may be more influential in racial, ethnic, or gender groups that pay more attention to appearance and body shape.

### **7.2.7. Supplementary factors**

Chronic illnesses may have a negative influence on the self-concept. The social stigma due to serious illnesses such as endocrine disorders and cancers can affect self-esteem and body image. Many studies have investigated the association between experiences of abuse and body image concerns. Physical and sexual abuse strongly influences the physical and mental health of victims. Research has demonstrated that such abuse is associated with more severe symptoms of depression, more negative body image and low self-esteem, and a higher propensity for eating disorders (Kremer et al, 2013).

#### **Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)**

1. Which one is the most significant factor that has influence in making of body image among youth?
2. How self-esteem is hurt by negative body image?

## **7.3 OBJECTIFICATION THEORY**

Objectification theory is a framework for understanding the experience of being female in a culture that sexually objectifies the female body. The theory proposes that girls and women, more so than boys and men, are socialized to internalize an observer's perspective as their primary view of their physical selves. Objectification is a notion central to feminist theory. It can be roughly defined as the seeing and/or treating a person, usually a woman, as an object. In this entry, the focus is primarily on sexual objectification, objectification occurring in the sexual realm. Objectification theory was developed to understand and explain the experiences of girls and women. In general, it appears that girls and women come to take more fragmented, compartmentalized views of their bodies, whereas boys come to take more functional, holistic views of their bodies.

Objectification theory by Fredrickson and Roberts (1970) provides a platform for research studies in understanding and researching ideas to improve women's lives in a sociocultural context which sexually objectifies the female body and equates a woman's worth to her body's appearance and sexual functions. Before the existence

of television or mass media, women were objectified during the Cleopatra Era. For as long as there has been mankind, the female body has been objectified (Heru, 2003). While men were remembered for their bravery and war achievements, it was the women who were immortalized for their beauty, for their control over others through the objectification of their bodies" such. Even in the media today, rarely are their portrayals of dominant women without mentioning the likes of their beauty. With this in mind, Fredrickson, and Roberts (1970) developed Objectification Theory and postulated that women are sexually objectified and treated as an object to be valued for its use by the male gender and the media. The understanding of this theory is that the media plays an important role in shaping women's thoughts on how they should or should not be looked upon in the public. Objectification theory takes as a starting point that cultural practices of sexually objectifying women are pervasive in the societies and create multiple opportunities for the female body to be on public display. A large body of research has documented that women are targeted for sexually objectifying treatment in their day-to-day lives more often than are men. Sexual objectification refers to the fragmentation of a woman into a collection of sexual parts and/or sexual functions, essentially stripping her of a unique personality and subjectivity so that she exists as merely a body. It is important to note that these experiences of sexual objectification occur outside of women's personal control. Objectification theory articulates the range of ways in which sexual objectification can manifest in day-to-day life. Common situations that would constitute sexual objectification include gazing or leering at women's bodies, sexual comments about women's bodies, whistling or honking the car horn at female passersby, taking photographs of women's bodies and body parts with a cell phone, exposure to sexualized media imagery or pornography, sexual harassment, sexual violence, and rape. Sexual objectification plays out most obviously in two arenas:

- (1) actual interpersonal encounters (interpersonal encounters of sexual objectification can include interactions with familiar others (e.g., family, friends, colleagues, employers, and acquaintances) or with strangers.
- (2) media encounters

Media encounters of sexual objectification occur in every form: prime-time television programs, sports programs, television commercials, cartoons and animation, Internet, music videos, music lyrics, video games, magazines and newspapers, cell phone applications, and billboards. In general, media portrayals are considered sexually objectifying when the visual media spotlight women's bodies and body parts, especially when depicting them as the target of a non-reciprocated male gaze. It is not merely sexual gazing but actual violence against women that is also eroticized and rendered normative in these portrayals.

In this way, Fredrickson and Roberts argue that girls and women in societies come to see themselves through a 'veil of sexism'. The sexualization of girls and women, and the more specific incidents of sexual objectification, is part and parcel of broader sexist ideologies that perpetuate the culture-wide gender status quo.

These objectifying advertisements encourage men to be dominant and never take "no" for an answer which creates problem such as low self-esteem for women (Kilbourne, 1999). When a woman is portrayed merely as a thing, it dehumanizes them which can lead to violence against that

Stankiewicz (2008) argued that the regular images of women as sex objects in media may cause people to think that a woman's physique and sexuality are what makes her precious. These stereotypical portrayals of women are taken as a socially acceptable reality and with repeated exposure of women as "sexualized product adornments" (Pritchard, 2001:79), these images will crystallize into a form of perspective (Noraini, Esmaeil and Shahizah, 2014)

The most insidious manner in which objectifying gaze affects women is in people's encounter with visual media which highlights bodies, body parts and aligns viewers with sexualizing gaze (Mulvey, 1975). Research on mainstream films (Kuhn, 1985), visual arts (Berger, 1972) and music videos (Sommers-Flanagan, 1993), each provide evidence that a women's body is targeted for sexual objectification more often than men.

People today are the most media saturated, and media engaged in the media history. As media takes the center stage in shaping the world's perception of itself, the individual struggles to maintain its unique identity. The individual absorbs the output of the media as the way of life and thus perceptions begin to form on certain genders, cultures, and understandings. These individuals feed on the output of the media to the extent that it influences their way of thinking and life. Many people think they are immune to media influences. Survey shows that almost everyone thinks media affect others but not themselves (Kilbourne, 1999).

However, scholars who study media say that most people rely on media to craft their opinions, identities, and lives (Shade, 1995). Media scholar Kellner (2011) noted that media culture provides viewers with "models of what is meant to be male or female." This creates the ideals of what is desirable in women and men. This in return creates a stereotyping individual who belittles the opposite sex based on the media's perception. Kellner (2011) stated that it is difficult to look at gender and not judge oneself in the process. One reason is that gender objectification is almost inseparable from in one's everyday life. The positioning of men and women in

society is controlled by their position in economy and social status and the power relations within these structures. It can be seen as an individual or public concern.

#### **7.4 THE MEDIA'S ROLE IN BODY IMAGE DISTURBANCE**

Although it has been proposed that several factors can contribute to the development of body image disturbance such as body talk, teasing, parental influence, peer popularity, and social comparison (Mills et al., 2012), much of the blame has been put on the media. The media are revered as one of the most powerful influencers of body image in both men and women by promoting body ideals that amplify existing body sensitivities and evoke negative body attitudes (Agliata Barlett et al., 2008)

The media have the power to construct the body types people strive to achieve, however unrealistic they may be (Mills et al., 2012). When a person is exposed to these body ideals, he/she may either internalize these ideals or use them as a basis for comparison, which could potentially result in body image disturbance. When a person internalizes a body ideal, he/she uses it as a standard that becomes an integral part of his/her sense of self; as a result, reaching this ideal becomes increasingly important for him/her. If a person uses media body ideals as a basis of comparison, he/she will constantly evaluate the difference between his/her own body and the bodies portrayed in the media; because media ideals may be unrealistic for some, a person may constantly be dissatisfied with his/her body no matter hard he/she tries to achieve it. (Mills et al., 2012).

#### **7.5 BODY IDEALS PORTRAYED IN THE MEDIA**

The current “culturally approved” (Hatoum and Belle, 2004) ideal body type portrayed by the media for women is very lean and ultra-thin (Mills et al., 2012). Although many women attempt to reach this ideal perhaps to be thinner (and consequently better) than the average woman (Mills et al., 2012), critics contend it is a dangerous exaggeration of slenderness that is completely unreachable by any means (Mills et al., 2012). According to some, one of the best representations of this unrealistic body female ideal is the Barbie doll, with its super-slim waistline combined with a curvaceous body that is physically impossible to achieve.

A number of studies have found that the majority of U.S. and European women have a desire for this thin ideal, no matter what their current body weight is (McCabe and Ricciardelli, 2004). Results from Muth and Cash's (1997) study on

adults' desire to be thinner presented a linear relationship between body weight and body dissatisfaction among women; the more a woman felt fat or the more she weighed, the more she felt dissatisfied with her own physical appearance.

Leanness, the central feature of the female body ideal, is only secondary to the main defining feature of the male body ideal portrayed by the media: muscularity. Recognized as toned, trimmed, athletic, and mesomorphic (Hatoum and Belle, 2004) the current male body ideal emphasizes the need for both muscularity and leanness in men. The specific body shape corresponding to this ideal is V-shaped with a muscular upper body, narrow hips, and a flat stomach. The problem with this ideal is in its promotion of unrealistic, hyper muscular bodies that are very difficult to achieve because of their tremendously high lean muscle mass and dangerously low levels of body fat implying the possible need for steroid use or dangerous dieting habits (Hatoum and Belle, 2004).

The cultural shift to this hyper muscular body ideal for men has been occurring for many years (Blond, 2008; Hatoum and Belle, 2004). Studies have shown that especially in the past four decades, the male body ideal has greatly increased in terms of muscularity, and this has been reflected in various media forms such as action figures and magazines.

Results indicated that over time, action toys increased greatly in terms of muscularity, and the figures that belonged to the present time period represented advanced body-builder or physically impossible bodies.

## **7.6 REPRESENTATIONS OF THE MALE BODY IN ADVERTISING**

Historically, the research literature on body image has focused predominantly on women and girls. Recently, however, greater interest in male body image has emerged. Men and women differ in terms of their ideal body image preferences. Whereas women seem to idealize a thinner, toned appearance, a large percentage of men idealize heavily muscular, yet lean physique. Adult men typically select an ideal body that is more muscular, but not fatter, than their own. In comparison with women, who tend to become increasingly dissatisfied with increases in body weight, both underweight and overweight men report more body dissatisfaction than their average-weight peers. Many of today's media images of muscularity are unattainable for most men.

Since the 1980s men's bodies have appeared more frequently in advertising, offering a similarly idealized body to that presented to women. An increasing

number of advertisements are showing men as sex objects. Pope et al. (2000) undertook a study of male body obsession and found that advertisements for everything from cars to underwear were using body-builder images with ‘washboard abdominal muscles, massive chests, and inflated shoulders [...], a combination of muscularity and leanness probably achievable only by drugs’ (P: 34). They claimed that an industry of men’s lifestyle magazines focused on body image has exploded over the last couple of decades. They argued that, as traditional masculine roles have eroded with women gaining greater equality in society, men have become more preoccupied with muscularity because it is still perceived as a cultural symbol of masculinity. Men are developing an ‘Adonis complex’ and eating disorders after being overexposed to idealized and unattainable male bodies in advertising.

Hellmich (2000) claimed that men are being ‘bombarded with images of muscular, half-naked men on the covers of men’s magazines’ (P: 06D), many of which are unrealistic. It is suggested that men now have to deal with exploitation and objectification with its adverse effects in the same way as women have had to for years. Kolbe and Albanese (1996) conducted a content analysis of sole male images in men’s magazines and found that the majority of the bodies in advertising were not ‘ordinary’, but those of strong and hard ‘male icons’. The study found that men were usually represented in an objectified and depersonalized manner in advertising. A study by Patterson and England (2000) also identified a relatively uniform depiction of male bodies within lifestyle magazines, where the audience was routinely presented with mesomorphic (strong, muscular, and hard) male bodies that were hyper-masculine in their iconography. The depiction of ectomorphs (thin and lightly muscled) was limited mainly to the advertising of clothing where products may look more attractive on the slimmer, taller man. Endomorphs (soft and round) were rarely used and, where they were, tended to be the object of humor. Moreover, Patterson and England (2000) indicated that representations of male bodies were often used irrespective of whether they were relevant to the product category being advertised.

#### **Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)**

1. How the male body is represented in media?
2. Highlight the role of media in image distortion?

## **7.7 FEMINISM AND THE IMAGE ‘FEMALE BEAUTY**

The feminist philosopher Simone de Beauvoir, in her volume *The Second Sex*, stated that ‘one is not born but becomes a woman’ and women are confined to

certain roles in society with limited opportunities and circumscribed social status (de Beauvoir, 1949-2014). Tseëlon (1993) in the paper, *The ideology of beauty*. The writer further explains that,

in a society where sexual difference forms part of its dominant ideology, men and women are bound to occupy different positions on the attractiveness dimension. Looks may be important for the man, but they are consequential for the woman: both in terms of how others value her, and how she values herself” (Tseëlon, 1993: p. 319).

Sturken and Cartwright (2001) say that female is a ‘visible object’ and from the childhood she sees herself in a mirror where she realizes an ‘outside appearance’ imposed upon her (Further, the male observation of the female body is linked with this mirror stage theory, which means ‘femininity’ is socially constructed and the ‘feminine object’ is an object of desire for males (Sakar, 2014). As explained by many feminist scholars, ‘ideology of beauty’, which reproduces power on female bodies, is socially constructed and that is shaped by political and economic agendas (Tseëlon, 1993; Bordo, 2004).

The so-called ‘fantasy female body image’ includes being fair, slim, wrinkleless, flawless etc., and these false ideals of body perfection are carried to the world through visual arts, media, science, technological innovations and also literature (Karacan, 2007). ‘Hegemonic beauty ideology’ is a ‘myth’ based on the European values and this myth of beauty of female body has been used as a tool to control females (Karacan, 2007). Therefore, some feminist scholars have identified female beauty as ‘Ideological State Apparatus (ISA)’ which functions by violence (Butler, 1993). As an ideological tool, ISA defines the formation of power in a society.

Since there are huge gaps between physical appearance of natural unmodified female body and ideologically defined and valued appearance of women, only a few females can represent physical standards of socially constructed ideal of beauty. Thus, women tend to spend more time, energy, money and emotional resources in the futile effort to modify, improve and change their natural body/looks to correspond with these ideal beauty standards (Forbes et al., 2007). From early childhood, western beauty standards have been fantasized and imposed on females through cultural norms, visual arts, movies, novels, fairytales and even toys like Barbies (Karacan, 2007). As Synnott (1990) argued, sometimes innocent fairy tales are able to create the ‘bad and ugly’ fantasy and so-called ideology of female beauty in the child’s mind.

The beauty mystique is rooted not only in physiognomy and philosophy, linguistics, ethnic relations, war, and criminology, but also in our literary heritage. Our fairy

stories imbue children with the mystique. In Grimm's story, 'Cinderella', it is the remarkably beautiful and amazingly good Cinderella who wins the heart of the prince, in 'Beauty and the Beast', Beauty, who is both good and intelligent enough to see through ugliness, breaks the spell over the beast, which promptly turns into a handsome prince. The moral of the stories is not only that virtue triumphs, but so does beauty. All of these stories exemplify the beauty mystique and socialize children into the cosmic value and practical utility of beauty" (Synnott, 1990: p. 57).

According to fairytales, beautiful women are characterized with shiny long hair, thin body, and very fair skin and thus, together with their being morally good and sweet they win the heart of a powerful prince/ man (Karacan, 2007). Then the question arises as what happens to others, those who are considered physically less attractive on the scale of so-called beauty standards or have not modified/improved their natural looks to match these fantasy beauty ideals. Will they, despite their good heart and sweet selves, hold a chance against those who are 'physically attractive'? The 'ugliness/dark skinned' usually associates with demons/devils or something bad and evil in fairy tales. This phenomenon, "physical beauty is believed to symbolize inner moral or spiritual beauty or goodness, so too physical ugliness is believed to symbolize an inner ugliness or evil" (Synnott, 1990: p. 56). Simply, such ideological construction of beauty has emotionally charged a majority of females from across the globe, especially ones in non-European regions (Cheng, 2000), to believe in the myth that "beauty/ fair skinned is an asset and ugliness/dark skinned is a stigma (Tseëlon, 1993). Considering that radical feminist discourse has identified female beauty ideology as one of the main factors contributing to gender inequality (Forbes et al., 2007), the myth of ideal beauty has emerged as a violent backlash against feminism in general (Wolf, 2013).

Another argument of feminists is that the 'beauty myth' has contributed to cause unusual competition among women in the contemporary world that act as a barrier to achieve gender equality. Based on the beauty myth, females have divided categories of age, weight, color, youth etc., and beauty is creating an invisible 'class' among women. This in turn leads to marginalize a majority of females in the world (Wolf, 2013; Karacan, 2007). Therefore, feminist discourses have opposed and criticized the creation of 'female image, body and beauty' as an instrument of discrimination and harassment against women (Sakar, 2014).

## **7.8 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS**

1. What is meant by body image? Explain with examples.
2. What is the role of parent-adolescent relationship on body image? How peers and adults can play part in constructing body image in adolescents? Explain with examples.
3. What are the main debates within body image discourse? Discuss in detail.
4. How sociocultural theory and gratification theory explain body image? Compare the theories in detail and support your answer with examples.
5. Discuss different factors that have influenced in making of body image in youth?
6. How self-esteem is hurt by negative body image?
7. How the male body is represented in media? Discuss the role of social media in body image making
8. Highlight the role of media in image distortion? What are the major contributing factors?
9. How feminist describe female beauty? Discuss in detail
10. How male body is represented in media? what are the negatives images men face about their body image presented in media?

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**Unit-8**

**GENDERED SOCIAL NORMS,  
SCHOOL TEXTS AND SYLLABI**

**Written by: Atifa Nasir**

**Reviewed by: Aqleem Fatimah**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Education plays a particularly important and formative role in society and represents a global common good (UNESCO, 2015). It has been accepted that education plays a critical role in empowering children to become active participants in the transformation of their societies and that learning should include a focus on values, attitudes and behaviours that will enable individuals to live together in a world that is diverse and plural. Education has been used effectively in many contexts to engage young people in critical reflections on gender and social norms, on stereotypes around masculinity and femininity, and on how these norms and stereotypes can affect young people's lives and relationships. Education can equip young people with the life skills and attitudes to engage in healthy peer relationships and violence prevention. Efforts to strengthen gender-responsive curricula and pedagogy and are crucial in this respect.

Visual images are often treated as decorations, although they are much more than that. Young learners learn from illustrations which help them to formulate their own roles in the society. Books and textbooks are role models for our children who can form stereotypes by the age of five. Children's books are important source of gender stereotype because they present a model to children on which they organize gender behaviour. The main way in which young people experience the socially constructed curriculum in schools is through subjects and the 'selection from the culture' is formulated at policy level and implemented at school level through subject disciplines. This unit looks at the gender social norm and the way they are reflected in the curriculum through subjects and academic texts. Gendered norms and stereotypical visual images have been part of the curriculum and back the gender ideology and its construction within the society. This unit will also identify discriminatory norms and practices that damage the social construction of gender along with how education can contribute to gender equality.

## **OBJECTIVES**

This unit aims at:

1. Introduce definitions of social norms and gendered social norms
2. Examine how education contributes to gender equality
3. Shed light on different Discriminatory norms and practices within education
4. Feminist understanding of gendered curriculum

## **Learning Outcomes**

After reading the unit you will be able to;

1. Define and utilize key and other relevant concepts that are pertinent to social norms and gendered social norms
2. Debate how education is relevant to gender equality
3. Discuss gendered discriminatory practices that are present in education
4. Understand different ways to end the educational discriminatory practices that shape stereotypical images of men and women in academic texts

## 8.1 GENDERED SOCIAL NORMS

Gender, as distinct from biological sex, holds the ideals of masculinity and femininity; it is the relations of power between women and men, boys and girls (and shapes relations among men and among women, boys and girls); it is both the beliefs and the practices of gender that structure our experiences as men and women. Social norms are the social rules, either explicit or implicit, that define our expectations of appropriate behavior between people. They include things like shaking hands when you meet someone, standing a certain distance away from another person when you speak, and which way you face in a crowded elevator. Gender norms are a subset of social norms, and these are the behavioral expectations around a person's sex. Historically, social gender roles in the workplace have been largely binary-masculine and feminine. There are many well-documented gender stereotypes associated with masculinity and femininity. These include things like women wear dresses, men like cars, women are nurturing, men are good at math, it's important to note that these gender stereotypes are not necessarily true; they are simply things that a critical mass of people generally believe about male and female genders.

Gender-related social norms define what is expected of a woman and a man in a given group or society; they are both embedded in institutions and nested in people's minds. They play a role in shaping women's and men's (often unequal) access to resources and freedoms, thus affecting women's and men's voice, agency, and power.

<sup>3</sup>Every society has sets of norms that influence behaviors. Although these apply to the gamut of human relations, many core norms relate to gender. Or, to put it more precisely, many norms flow (albeit in complex ways) from gendered relations. Every society and every era have distinct gender norms; this is because gender itself is a fluid and ever-changing entity. However, most societies have some common denominators when it comes to specific norms for women and men. Indeed, patriarchal cultures, where men hold power and women are to varying degrees excluded from power through both formal and informal mechanisms, are the global norm. The norms that flow from and reinforce gender relations and definitions are important because they are behavioral guides. Like any norms, they can play a positive role, but many gender norms become justifications for individual self-censorship and collective social control. In this sense, gender norms have a strong ideological character and reflect and reinforce relations of gender power.

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<sup>3</sup> Information s taken from <https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/Advocacy%20Brief-%20Gender%20Norms-1.pdf>

If norms that flow from the gendered division of labor stipulate that it is not manly to do housework or look after children (and takes time away from men's prescribed roles as breadwinners), then this creates enormous hardship for women and ensures that generations of men grow up with reduced empathetic ties to children. If it is normal to see a man as weak if he seeks help or unmanly if he shows physical or emotional vulnerability, then men may be more likely not to look after their own health needs, both physical and emotional.

Gender norms reflect the historically unequal power relations between men and women in the public and private spheres; all individuals live within a set of norms, and in turn reinforce the underlying social structures that make those norms seem timeless and natural (or essential). This is particularly true since norms are reflected, reinforced, and celebrated in the media, religious practices, sports, schools, workplaces, and families. For example, if for generations it has been the norm for women to carry babies and to do the bulk of childrearing, then it is assumed that men don't have the 'natural' ability to look after children. Or, if generations of men in patriarchal societies are trained to kill in war and deny their own fears, then it is assumed that men are "naturally" or biologically violent.

Since norms reflect deeper social structures, and since they are held in place and reinforced by numerous social institutions, changing norms is a daunting task. Change is even more difficult because some people benefit (or perceive that they benefit) from the status quo. If a society says that only men can hold certain jobs and professions (particularly trades such as doctors, senior managers, politicians, etc.), then a man only has to compete with half of the population for those positions. If governments, religions, families, economies, media, and educational systems are structured with men in charge, then power (and the benefits that come with it) is apportioned to men over women. Moving toward gender equality produces apparent winners and apparent losers and, thus, there are those who are invested in defending the status quo.

Changing norms is even more challenging because personalities are in part constructed through the internalization of gender norms and practices. From birth onward, children absorb and personalize gender definitions into their developing brains. Since individuals come to embody gender relations and gender norms, helping men (and women) to change what is not only perceived as, but also experienced as, normal behavior for men (and women) can be a difficult task. While there is often a belief that such norms are ingrained, and thus fixed or rigid from an early age, research on the dynamic nature of human behavior finds that attitudes and practices change all the time, in different contexts throughout the life cycle, and that children are active participants in the process. Inequitable norms are taught to boys and girls at very young ages, but they are never inevitable nor unchangeable.

### Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)

1. Explain social norms
2. How would you describe gendered social norms?
3. How gendered norms impact children?

## 8.2 EDUCATION AND GENDER EQUALITY

Education is one of the most powerful drivers of gender equality because it can empower individuals and enable them to challenge discriminatory gender norms – the informal, often unspoken rules of masculinity and femininity, which people mostly abide by. How does education actually change gender norms? Actually, it creates a potentially righteous cycle, whereby education leads to changes in gender norms, and these changed norms contribute to improved learning outcomes. But this process is not automatic; prevailing gender norms and gender discriminatory practices in schools and in wider society can undermine the potential of education to bring about changes.

Gender inequalities, sustained in part by discriminatory norms, have a critical, negative impact on children's access to education and their learning experiences. The majority of literature focuses on the impacts on girls, but there is growing recognition that gender norms also contribute to boys' disadvantage in education. Recent data on trends in gender disparities in education and the role of gender norms in these patterns are summarized in UNESCO Global Education Monitoring reports<sup>4</sup>. Gender disparities in educational enrolment and outcomes vary notably by region, socioeconomic group, and age/ school stage. In many contexts, these studies show that the education outcomes of the poorest girls are worse than their better-off peers. Here, we very briefly outline some of the ways that discriminatory gender norms affect educational enrolment and outcomes, highlighting key resources.

Norms around the relative value of girls' and boys' education Where families cannot afford to fully educate all their children, boys have often been prioritized. This is because their families perceive them as more likely to be able to get good jobs and support their parents in later life, while girls' futures have more often been perceived as home-makers in their marital families rather than supporting their families of origin. These perceptions continue to affect family decisions about children's education in low-income contexts. There is some evidence that, as a result of economic pressures and demographic change, norms are beginning to change so that it is acceptable for parents to accept old age support both from adult sons and daughters, who were formerly 'lost' to their marital families. Where norms are relaxing in this manner, or

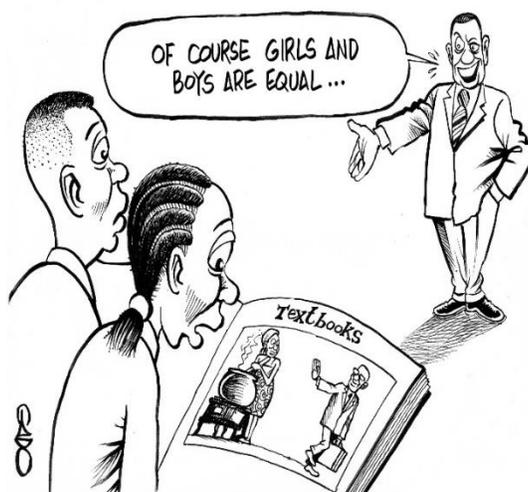
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<sup>4</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/>

where economic opportunities for educated women mean that girls' education is perceived as a good investment, there is some qualitative evidence of parents making education decisions more on the basis of individual children's aptitude and potential than simply on their gender. Stipends or other cash transfers that reduce the costs of school attendance have also shifted perceptions of the relative costs and potential gains associated with educating boys and girls.

### **8.2.1 Discriminatory Norms and Practices within Education**

Because schools reflect gender norms in wider society, discriminatory norms and practices are frequently replicated in schools, unless there is a strong gender-egalitarian ethos and teachers are sensitized to gender equality and how to combat it. Here, we signpost evidence on some of the ways in which discriminatory gender norms are manifested in schools and undermine educational outcomes.



[https://gem-report2017.unesco.org/en/chapter/gender\\_accountability\\_through\\_school/](https://gem-report2017.unesco.org/en/chapter/gender_accountability_through_school/)

### **8.2.2 Gender Discriminatory Practices and Stereotypes about Girls' and Boys' Abilities**

The discriminatory norms and stereotypes are reinforced through teaching practices (such as responding more readily to boys or asking boys more questions) and through school and classroom organization, such as gendered assignment of chores such as asking girls to clean and boys to chop wood. Some studies suggest that boys' schools are at particular risk of reinforcing hypermasculinity (exaggerated male stereotypical behaviour). There is also conflicting evidence on how far girls' schools are likely to challenge stereotypes concerning girls' achievement and capabilities, and how far they reinforce conventional norms about femininity. In both cases, the extent to which discriminatory norms are reinforced or challenged is likely to reflect the school's ethos and its commitment to gender equality, rather than simply reflecting whether boys and girls are educated together. Within schools,

and reinforced by wider society, discriminatory norms and stereotypes affect learning and education outcomes. These stereotypes often concern girls' overall competence or their competence in specific subjects (usually mathematics, scientific or technical subjects) and are linked to norms about what are 'suitable' subjects for girls to study or suitable sectors/industries for women to work in.

### **8.2.3 Intersecting Discriminatory Norms**

Gender norms do not operate in a vacuum as they are tied into a web of other norms, beliefs and practices and strongly influenced by the socio-economic context. Parents' decisions about which of their children to educate, and children's experiences in schools, reflect not only gender norms but also prevailing stereotypes and norms about the characteristics and capacities of different groups of children. For example, children from marginalized castes in India often face discrimination and mistreatment, as do children from marginalized ethnic groups across a wide range of contexts; stereotypes about these groups, their behaviour, and their capacities to learn are often gendered. Poverty and other practical constraints (such as the curriculum being taught in the main language) can prevent children from marginalized ethnic and linguistic groups accessing or doing well in school. Children with disabilities also face complex gendered perceptions of their capacities to learn, as well as negative perceptions of the value of educating them. Girls with disabilities (particularly learning disabilities) are more likely to be excluded from schools than boys in most contexts.

These processes of exclusion reflect both prevailing gender norms and specific challenges around managing disabilities and perceptions of vulnerability. For example, fears about girls' safety can be heightened in the case of girls with physical disabilities (who might face additional challenges in repelling or fleeing an attack) or girls with hearing difficulties (who may not hear an attacker approach). Conversely, in some contexts, girls with disabilities are perceived to be less likely to marry and so to have greater need of education in order to be self-supporting.

The general lack of attention to making schooling inclusive also has gender dimensions. For example, while all children need clean, safe toilets at school, toilets may need adaptations such as handles or rails to enable children with physical disabilities to use them; and girls with disabilities may need particular support with menstruation management. Several recent reports have documented the absence of reliable, gender disaggregated data on the education of children with disabilities.

#### **Self-Assessment Question (SAQs)**

1. What is meant by gender discriminatory practices in education?
2. Explain the link between education and gender equality?

## **8.3 EDUCATION AND NORM CHANGE PROCESSES**

A growing body of evidence suggests that the following are key mechanisms through which norm change process may begin:

### **8.3.1 Developing Self-Confidence and Communication Skills**

The self-confidence to challenge discriminatory norms and practices and overcome setbacks, and the communication skills to speak out and share your views are two building blocks for norm change. According to Kautz et al (2014) they are also increasingly seen as vital for economic well-being and effective participation in society. It is also evident on how education can enhance self-esteem and resilience among adolescent girls. There are surprisingly few retrospective studies with women looking back on how their education has (or has not) helped them develop these and other skills. Studies from Tanzania by Hanna (2013) explore girls' views about how education has contributed to their self-efficacy, enabling them to be confident, resourceful, and knowledgeable individuals who can handle setbacks. If more girls enter the labour market and other public spheres with greater self-confidence and stronger communication skills, they may create their own righteous cycle, challenging stereotypes about the relative competence of men and women, as well as pervasive views on gender roles.

### **8.3.2 Exposure to New Ideas about Gender Within Schools**

One obvious route for change is exposure to new information and ideas that challenge established gender norms. UNESCO's (2015) review of *Comprehensive Sexuality Education* found that 'issues of gender and rights are almost consistently absent or inadequately covered through current curricula across all regions.' It appears that – in mainstream school curricula – shifts in young people's thinking on gender norms and practices are driven largely by new information (often in science classes on health or biology or through education on personal and social relationships) rather than education that questions discriminatory ideas and norms explicitly. Levtoy (2014) summarizes attempts to integrate material on gender equality more widely across school curricula in social studies, personal, health and social education, and within other subjects (e.g. as a topic for argument or debate in language classes).

### **8.3.3 Role Models**

Role models such as teachers, classroom assistants, mentors, counsellors and visiting speakers can also raise girls' aspirations by demonstrating that educated women can work in a variety of careers.

### **8.3.4 Normalization of School Attendance**

Large numbers of girls attending school and moving around in this public space can help to shift norms on female mobility, the acceptability of education, and gender equality more broadly. Alongside communications from government or non-

governmental organizations (NGOs) on the importance of girls' education (a common approach in many countries), this can start to shift norms so that girls' education is seen as valuable and a responsible course of action for parents.

### **8.3.5 Changing Community-Level Perceptions of Girls and Young Women**

The value attached to education by the wider community affect the perceptions of girls and young women who have attended school. Girls who attend school are often seen by other community members as knowledgeable and more worthy of respect. A shift in perceptions of young women who have attended school among their partners/ spouses and in-laws may be visible. This, in turn, contributes to subtle changes, such as more joint activities between husbands and wives, and (in India) slightly less control over young wives by mothers in-law. Women who had been to secondary school, in particular, were also more able to influence household decisions. Gaining such respect is particularly important for girls from poor backgrounds, ethnic minorities and other marginalized and disadvantaged groups, not just in improving gender relations but also enabling them to chart their life course on more equal terms (Crivello, 2009).

### **8.3.6 A Strong Gender Focus in Curricula**

Efforts to promote more equitable gender norms have moved from community base to mainstream education, sometimes as part of personal, health, social and relationships education, and sometimes as stand-alone initiatives delivered by external facilitators working with schools. The best-known is the Gender Equity Movement in Schools (GEMS) programme which started in India and has now spread to Bangladesh, the Philippines and Viet Nam, among other countries. Gender equality education is far more effective when embedded in a broader education programme that helps people develop critical thinking and citizenship, as well as mastering knowledge and core academic skills as it uses learning to negotiate more gender-equitable practices at home, and had the skills to turn aspirations into reality, challenging norms about appropriate occupations for women.

#### **Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)**

1. How education can contribute to bringing change in social norms?
2. Discuss the key mechanism which can bring change in social norm process?

## **8.4 GENDERED CURRICULUM**

Gender inequality in curriculum exposes indications that female and male learners are not treated equally in various types of curriculum. There are two types of curricula: formal and informal. Formal curricula are introduced by a government or an educational institution. Moreover, they are defined as sets of objectives, content, resources, and assessment. Informal curricula, also defined as hidden or unofficial,

refer to attitudes, values, beliefs, assumptions, behaviours and undeclared agendas underlying the learning process. These are formulated by individuals, families, societies, religions, cultures, and traditions<sup>5</sup>.

The curriculum is gendered in three main ways:

1. Different subjects are associated with masculinity and femininity.
2. Teachers teach different material, or treat it differently, according to whether they are teaching girls or boys.
3. Gender biases and stereotypes in school texts

### **1. *Different subjects are associated with masculinity and femininity***

Most curriculum areas are associated with one gender or the other. For example, generally it is expected that mathematics and science are seen as masculine subject areas, as is technology.

Humanities and languages (the national language and modern foreign languages) tend to be associated with femininity, though this is less strong as the link between mathematics, science and technology with masculinity. It's important to understand that this gender marking is not hard and fast and is mediated by society. It tends to be high status areas that are seen as masculine, lower status ones as feminine. So, for example, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the masculine-labelled subjects were the then high-status classical languages.

The result of this gendering is that young people can feel uncomfortable if they enjoy or are successful at subjects that are labelled for the other gender. This can inhibit their performance and also lead to them opting out of those subjects as soon as they are allowed to. The big problem with this is that girls and young women are less likely to study mathematics, science, and technology, closing the door on high-status and better paid careers later on. Similarly, boys are more likely to opt out of the humanities and modern foreign languages, closing down other options.

### **2. *Teachers teach different material, or treat it differently, according to whether they are teaching girls or boys***

Teachers tend to use commonsense views about what girls and boys are likely to enjoy or relate to when they plan their teaching. This can cause problems because they may then teach boys and girls differently, leading to an impoverished curriculum for one gender. For example, [researcher] found that British teachers taught the same material very differently according to whether they had a class of girls or a class of boys, and that both sexes could lose out, depending on the subject area and teachers

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<sup>5</sup> UNESCO (2015). A Guide for Gender Equality in Teacher Education Policy and Practices (PDF). Paris, UNESCO. pp. 9–10, 59–61. ISBN 978-92-3-100069-0

teaching English to boy-only groups focused on ‘war, guns, and cool, tough things (Wayne and Meyenn,2001).

Education holds the power to form the understanding, attitudes, and the behaviour of individuals. It is used as a tool for the promotion of national identities and can enhance the privilege of certain groups in the society (Smith, 1991), including men’s power over women. Gender roles and inequalities are reproduced, formed, defined, strengthened, and promoted by educational institutions through implicit and explicit means.

While research has focused on unequal access to education and differences in enrolment rate for girls and boys, the way curriculum and textbooks can position boys and girls unequally and constructs them as gendered subjects must be explored as well (Durrani, 2008). Textbooks signify what it means to be a child in a specific context, which encompasses learning gender identity through socialization (Kereszty, 2009). Textbooks at elementary level are particularly crucial as they shape the factual knowledge of skills children are supposed to acquire, which can be different for girls and boys and can set the base for gender stereotyping (Kereszty, 2009). In the case of Pakistan, gender disparities have been found in the curricula and textbooks (Durrani, 2008; UNESCO, 2004). In Pakistan, the national identity espoused in school textbooks gives learners an “understanding of relative positioning of religion and gender in relation to nationhood” (Durrani, 2008). In a study that included 194 textbooks from four provinces of Pakistan for six subjects, it was found that the national curriculum reflects a significant gender bias towards males in at least three of these subjects (UNESCO, 2004). In the analysis, only 7.7% of the personalities in the textbooks were found to be female, with most of them relating to Muslim history, and the rest were male. In the textbooks on the history of the subcontinent, only 0.9% of the historical icons mentioned were females.

In another study with a smaller sample size, the representation of women in illustrations was likewise found to be minimal, with 21.4% of illustrations portraying women and the rest portraying men (Durrani, 2008). Gender bias in language was also observed with ‘he’ and ‘him’ being used as a noun more often as ‘she’ or ‘her’.

The context in which women are represented in the Pakistani textbooks is similarly gendered. When female icons are talked about, they are shown as helpless, tolerant, pious and domesticated figures supporting their husbands (Durrani, 2008; Ullah and Skelton, 2012). The textbooks depict women in stereotypical gender roles-cooking, cleaning, washing dresses, raising children, and taking the lead in domestic chores. Representation of females in professional life is also confined to a limited variety including schoolteachers and doctors, primarily (UNESCO, 2004; Durrani, 2008; Ullah & Skelton, 2012).

The way in which the unequal representation of women in textbooks is producing gender identities and hierarchies is demonstrated in a study by Durrani (2008). The methodology comprised asking a sample of students to draw the image of “us” (Pakistanis); none of the drawings by male students were of women. As for female students, there were some drawings of females, however, these images showed women undertaking stereotyped activities such as cooking. The students were also asked to pick an icon from the textbooks, and only 4.1% of the male students selected a female icon. In contrast, the girls who picked female icons shared that they did so because she was a “good wife or mother” (Durrani, 2008).

The discussion around these differences in representation and discrimination in school textbooks is important, as it has an impact on children’s life choices as well as motivation (Ullah & Skelton, 2012). Students develop their self-esteem and identity according to the gendered role models they are exposed to (Campbell, 2010). Curricula hold the power to “naturally” orientate women towards certain careers (Griffith, 2010). This is consistent with research conducted in Pakistan, which find that girls view doctors and teachers as role models in professions they can aspire to, whereas very few go for non-traditional jobs as pilots or engineers, for example (UNESCO, 2004; Ullah & Skelton, 2012). A way to address this gap is to increase the number of female authors of schools textbooks. Studies show that in cases where textbooks were written by female authors, there was a higher representation and frequency of female icons (Durrani, 2008; UNESCO, 2004). Authors can also be sensitized towards these biases and trained to be more gender sensitive in their writing. Furthermore, teachers can be trained to identify and counter gender bias in the textbooks and encourage their students to do the same.

### **3. *Gender biases and stereotypes in school texts***

Visual images are often treated as decorations, although they are much more than that. Illustrations also contain stereotypes. Young children are bombarded daily with language and images that influence their formation of gender roles (Narahara, 1998). Hartley proved that by the age 4 girls realize that their primary role is “housekeeping” and the boys’ is “wage-earning.” Children have formed rigid stereotypes by the age five and at age six can identify female or male commercials. By age seven and maybe as early as age four, children begin to understand gender as basic component of self. When children enter school, books begin to play a huge influence on children. Books are the medium used to teach social studies framework which provides learning cultural, geographical, ethical, historical, and cultural literacy. Through illustrations books define standards for feminine and masculine behavior (Narahara, 1998). Nevertheless, many masculine and feminine characteristics are not biological at all, they are learned, acquired.

Gender schema theory suggests that youngsters develop a sense of femaleness and maleness based on gender stereotypes and organize their behavior around these (Taylor, 2003). Taylor (1998) claims that people practice gender ideology. Gender

ideology is presented as a system of signs, in other words a code. For example, when trying to establish cultural standards for beauty, women may use cosmetics, certain styles of dress and even certain color. People may not be aware that their perception about reality is constantly structured in an ideological manner (Eisenberg, 2002). Illustration provides children to see themselves in a greater range of roles, activities, and settings, and, above all, it presents them a resource that expands their world, connects them to the values of society, and helps them to define who they are. That is why children's pre-school books and schoolbooks are very important cultural mechanism for teaching children gender roles (Narahara, 1998).

Generally, literature in the nineteenth century focused on family and also on childhood. Books have always reflected the traditional values and served as socializing tools to pass values to the next generation. Books were divided in two groups, one for boys and another for girls. Books written specially for boys or girls began to increase during the last quarter of the nineteenth century to provide literature that addressed gender appropriate behaviours. Books for boys emphasized leadership and action while books for girls stressed girls' virtue such as obedience and humility. In the 1960s and the 1970s researchers began to take notice of gender stereotypes in children's books. First research that confirmed huge gender differences was made by Weitzman in 1972. He confirmed that in children's books females (girls and women) were almost invisible while men were leaders and presented an active role. They also found an underrepresentation of females in the titles, central roles, and main characters at a ratio 1:11, occupation roles of males had a higher status than women, and character differences described women as passive and immobile. On the other hand, males were described as leaders, independent and active (Narahara, 1998). Research studies followed and the 1987 research found a majority of the female characters failed to express any career goals, female role models were lacking, and male characters were still presented as independent. It was like they found positive trend in children's picture books. In the 1990s a research suggested that the traditional portrayal of women is giving way to more equal depiction for both men and women.

Gender differences show in context, behavior, and language development. Gender role stereotypes affect how children perceive themselves. In children's responses, especially older children, gender differences start surfacing, but it is crucial to realize importance of developing stereotypes. Young children have not yet developed a strong identity are especially vulnerable. There were also studies which confirmed that girls and boys who were exposed to a strong female/male story character increased their scores on a self-concept measure significantly.

It was also proven that children experience positive effect if they are exposed to non-sexist literature. It has been shown in their self-concept, work habits, attitudes and their behaviour (Narahara, 1998).

*Types of Gender Education (adapted from Rands, 2012).*

Way of Thinking About Gender Identity	Form of Gender Education	Limitations
Traditional	<b>Gender Stereotyped.</b> All people are either male or female only.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender norms and stereotypes are reified.</li> <li>• Males are privileged over females.</li> <li>• Transgender, genderqueer, and gender nonconforming people are excluded.</li> </ul>
Silencing	<b>Gender Free/Gender Blind.</b> Gender is better left ignored or deemed irrelevant to education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reproduces gender oppression</li> <li>• Prevents equity and inclusion</li> <li>• Ignores issues of gender outside the classroom</li> <li>• All gender identities are excluded</li> </ul>
More progressive	<b>Gender Sensitive.</b> Teachers should pay attention to how gender operates and reflect on the consequences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transgender, genderqueer, and gender nonconforming people are often excluded.</li> </ul>
Inclusive	<b>Gender Complex.</b> Gender is fluid and notions of gender should be challenged and reconstructed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficult to navigate without education/training</li> </ul>

## 8.5 FEMINIST UNDERSTANDING OF GENDERED CURRICULUM

Moi (1985) states that the “principal objective of feminist criticism has always been political: it seeks to expose, not to perpetuate, patriarchal practices. Given the gender bias of school curricula, one of the prime aims of feminist curriculum practice has been to challenge and change the content of taken- for- granted school knowledge(s) (Coffey and Delamont 2000:38).

Feminist educational thinking closely scrutinizes the way in which gender stereotypes pervade curricula, syllabi, and teaching materials, how schools, colleges and universities perpetuate stereotypes, the link between education and gender conceptions of society, the family, and the economy. While the academic establishment in India is slowly taking note of these developments, a lot remains to be said about the actual rhetoric and practices of educational discourse.

Generally, in any national curriculum framework it is understandable that they must use textbooks as one of the primary instruments for equality, since for a great majority of school going children, as also for teachers, it is the only accessible and affordable resource for education.

The textual material that is developed for the school-going children is of paramount importance in education. It is the textbook that they are exposed to in the classroom, and the teacher conveys its meaning and interpretation, while embossing his / her own ideas on the minds of children, who are yet in the formative stage. This is one of the earliest and most important influences on the young, growing minds. It is necessary and relevant to study and understand how gender is depicted in primary school textbooks, because by age seven, and perhaps as early as age four, children begin to understand about the basic concept of self.

Social scientists and educational researchers paid relatively little attention to issues of gender and education until the 1970s, when questions emerged concerning equity in girls' and women's access to education across the world. Researchers documented a link between increasing rates of female education in developing countries and a subsequent decline in fertility rates (e.g., Boserup 1970). In the context of an emerging global economy, increasing female representation in primary and secondary education was cited as an important factor in promoting national economic development, and therefore seen as a vehicle for social change.

As the feminist movement increased awareness of widespread gender inequality within US society, researchers began to focus on the educational system as a site of an explanation for women's subordinated status. During the 1970s and 1980s, women gained access to higher education and their share of college degrees climbed steadily. Women now comprise the majority of US college students and have achieved parity with men in number of undergraduate and graduate degrees, though men are overrepresented in the most prestigious colleges and universities and obtain a greater number of doctoral degrees than women (Jacobs, 1996). Despite this greater equality in educational access, women remain significantly behind men in economic and social status. There remains a significant gender gap in pay, while women are also concentrated in low status, sex stereotyped occupations and continue to bear primary responsibility for domestic tasks despite their increased labor force participation. This paradox has led researchers to shift their focus from women's educational access to their academic experiences and outcomes.

While education is seen as an important mechanism of upward mobility in US society, many sociologists of education have described the educational system as an institution of social and cultural reproduction. Existing patterns of inequality, including those related to gender, are reproduced within schools through formal and informal processes. Knowledge of how the educational system contributes to the

status of women requires a look at the institution itself and the processes that occur within schools.

While women's access to education has improved, sex segregation within the educational system persists. For example, the American Association of University Women revealed in a 1992 report titled *Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America* that girls took fewer advanced math and science courses during high school, and these course taking patterns left them unprepared to pursue these fields in higher education. This contrasts with the primary school years, where girls receive better grades in math and are often overrepresented in high ability math courses, while boys are overrepresented in low ability courses. Additionally, average math test scores for boys and girls are similar, although there is more variation among boys, leaving them with the highest, but also with the lowest, scores. Girls' attitudes toward and interest in math and science begin to decline during the middle school years (fourth through eighth grade), and gender differences in test scores in these subjects are apparent by high school.

Recent research suggests that the gaps in high school course taking are closing, and girls and boys now take similar numbers of math and science courses. This may be the result of increased educational requirements and fewer choices in course enrollment, as girls continue to score lower on standardized tests and express less interest in these subjects. In addition, girls are now taking advanced courses such as calculus at comparable rates to boys, with the exception of physics. Furthermore, technology and computer courses remain highly gendered: though both boys and girls take computer courses, boys are more likely to take high skills classes, such as those that focus on computer programming, while girls are overrepresented in courses featuring word processing and data entry, skills associated with secretarial work (AAUW, 1999). Conversely, girls are more highly concentrated in the language arts, including literature, composition, and foreign language courses, and they tend to score higher than boys on verbal skills on standardized tests. This gender gap in favor of girls does not appear to be closing, but it is given relatively little attention in discussions of gender and education.

These high school course taking patterns foreshadow gender differences in higher education, where a high degree of sex segregation remains in terms of degrees and specializations. In the United States, women are concentrated in education, English, nursing, and some social sciences, and they are less likely than men to pursue degrees in science, math, engineering, and technology. As these male dominated fields are highly valued and highly salaried, women's absence from them accounts for a great deal of the gender gap in pay.

Sex typing in education appears to be a worldwide phenomenon, though it varies somewhat in degree and scope between countries. In countries where educational access is limited and reserved for members of the elite, women are often as likely

as men to have access to all parts of the curriculum (Bradley 2000; Hanson, 1996). However, in countries with more extensive educational systems, women have lower rates of participation in science and technology (Hanson, 1996) fields greatly valued because of their link to development and modernity.

Some have used a rational choice approach in explaining the persistence of educational segregation, particularly that of higher education. These scholars suggest that women choose female dominated fields despite their lower status and pay because they will suffer smaller penalties for an absence from the workforce for child rearing; however, women in male dominated fields not only receive higher pay but are also offered more flexibility and autonomy. Others suggest that while individual choices are at play in perpetuating sex segregation, these choices are constrained by cultural beliefs that limit what women (and men) see as possible or appropriate options (Correll, 2004). Math, science, and technology are regarded as masculine subjects, especially given their emphasis on objective knowledge and rational action, and women are seen as ill equipped for these fields. Conversely, subjects such as language arts and nursing are perceived as feminine subjects, and men are largely underrepresented in these fields. In contrast to the push to include women in male dominated fields, however, the under representation of men in these subject areas goes largely unacknowledged and is often not regarded as problematic, probably due to the low status and low paid jobs associated with these fields.

These beliefs about appropriate interests and talents for men and women are part of a “hidden curriculum” that involves interactions and covert lessons that reinforce relations of gender, as well as those of race and social class, by teaching and preparing students for their appropriate adult roles. Several scholars have examined this hidden curriculum within schools, pointing to ways in which classroom interactions with teachers and between students impart these lessons. Observational studies by Sadker and Sadker (1994) suggest that in the same schools and in the same classes, boys receive more attention than girls. Teachers ask them more questions and offer them more feedback and constructive criticism, all of which are essential to learning. Boys monopolize classroom discussion beginning in the early school years, and girls become quieter over time, participating little in college classrooms. These classroom dynamics reinforce notions of femininity, teaching girls that they should be quiet, passive, and defer to boys, characteristics that disadvantage girls in competitive fields of math and science. Furthermore, an emphasis on social and romantic success can distract young women from their studies and make academic pursuits tangential.

Several feminist scholars have advocated single sex schooling in order to avoid these negative consequences. They argue that girls in all girls’ schools have greater achievement, higher educational and career aspirations, attend more selective colleges, take more math courses and express a greater interest in math, and hold less stereotyped notions of female roles. These benefits allegedly result from

smaller classes, higher teacher quality and attention, and freedom from social pressures of romance. However, other scholars argue that single sex education itself does not ensure any particular outcomes because these schools vary greatly in the inspirations, desired outcomes, and sociocultural environments they embody. Indeed, recent research on single sex schools is often inconsistent, and their advantages in comparison to coeducational schools may have decreased after public schools began addressing issues of gender bias. More research is needed on school characteristics that are associated with improved outcomes for girls.

Some educational researchers suggest that concern for girls' education overshadows boys' disadvantages in education, advocating a shift in focus to boys. They argue that though the gender gap in math and science is closing, boys remain behind in language arts course taking and verbal skills. Further, boys are over-represented in remedial and special education classes, and they are more likely to fail a course or drop out of school. Others contend that these disadvantages are short term costs of maintaining long term privilege: subjects in which girls outperform boys are devalued, so boys focus their energy elsewhere, such as in sports or math and science, which hold more prestige and will earn greater status and pay in the long run. Moreover, negative outcomes tend to be concentrated among working class boys and boys of color, suggesting that these problems may reflect race and class inequality rather than disadvantages affecting all boys.

Regardless, considering boys only as a contrast group to the experiences of girls, rather than examining their position within and experiences of the educational system, will not provide a complete understanding of issues of gender in education. Future research focused on the experiences and behaviors of boys in schools is needed to further this knowledge. Research on how race and class shape gendered educational experiences and outcomes has been relatively scarce, and only in the past ten years have race and class become focal points in research on gender in education. The advantages granted boys in schools are not equal among all boys: working class boys and boys of color do not demonstrate the same academic success as white, middle class boys. Further, among some groups, girls surpass their male counterparts in math and science course taking and achievement. Ferguson (2000) examines how the hidden curriculum affects black boys, noting that many school practices disadvantage black boys, leading them to seek achievement and masculinity in ways that are detrimental to their future success. Similarly, perceived cultural differences can penalize girls who do not meet white, middle class standards of femininity: working class girls and girls of color are sometimes seen as troublemakers for being outspoken or assertive. Research on how the intersection of race, class, and gender shapes educational experiences and outcomes is an important direction for the future of the sociology of education.

## **8.6 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS**

1. Describe social norms and gendered social norms in detail
2. Do you think education contribute to stereotyping of socially constructed roles of men and women in a society? Illustrate your answer taking example from Pakistan.
3. Explore the link between gendered curriculum and social norms, Give examples
4. How education and norm change processes can bring change in the society? Illustrate your answer with examples.
5. Discuss feminist objections on gendered curriculum.
6. Why feminist thin that stereotypical text and visuals are impacting school children in the texts books?
7. What is meant by gendered curriculum? Do you think it contribute & to social construction of gender in nay society?
8. What is feminist critique on gendered curriculum? give examples
9. What are the three major points that identify that curriculum is gendered?
10. Why Pakistani national curriculum may be changed and what are your suggestion / recommendation for it?
11. Do you agree that gender biases and stereotypes exist in our curriculum? what is its impact on our society? write in detail.
12. Why the curriculum of government school is different from private school? Why both curricula should not be same? if yes why and how?

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**Unit-9**

## **NEW THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENTS**

**Written by: Atifa Nasir**

**Reviewed by: Aqleem Fatimah**

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## INTRODUCTION

Gender is defined here as the psychological, social, and cultural domain of being male or female. Gender is a social construction and system of meanings with multiple dimensions including gender identity, both personal and social. Gender identity is interpreted as including components of both personal identity and social identity, that is to say, the self as both individual and cultural. Gender identity has been defined as “the sameness, unity, and persistence of one’s individuality as a male or female (or ambivalent), in greater or lesser degree, especially as it is experienced in self-awareness and behavior. However, given anthropological and social-historical investigation of gender variation, this definition needs revision to include the possibility of third and/or supernumerary (additional) gender identities as personal and social constructions. Gender identity incorporates the private experience of personal identity or one’s self concept, while social identity refers to the sociocultural recognition or categorization of gendered identities. It includes status or position in society as a gender that is, as a woman, man, girl, boy, and role concomitants such as appearance, demeanor, and behaviors. In Western culture, this includes social concepts of femininity and masculinity. This unit highlights to new development within social construction of gender which are gender role reversal and cross-dressing in social and anthropological context. this section helps to understand beyond restricted boundaries of masculine and feminine divide.

## OBJECTIVES

This unit aims at:

1. introduce definitions of gender role reversal and cross dressing
2. examine different aspects that relates gender role reversal and cross dressing
3. shed light on its existence in ancient times and cotemporary world

### Learning Outcomes

After reading this unit you will be able to;

1. Define and utilize relevant concepts of gender role reversal and cross dressing to social construction to gender.
2. Discuss how they survived through generation and contemporary world.
3. Explain different types of cross dressing in social lives of people in different societies.

## 9.1 GENDER ROLE REVERSAL AND GENDER CULTURE

Gender is also one of the most contested of concepts in the social sciences and in contemporary political struggles. What many take for granted is seriously questioned by some. Anthropologists have long been able to demonstrate the cultural relativities of genders that men can be like women; that women can be like men; and that often there are no differences (Williams, 1986). They have also shown many cultures where categories of androgyny, hermaphroditism and variations of all degrees can appear and even be institutionalized. Likewise, historians have suggested that our current views of two genders have only clearly emerged in the modern world. We have only recently 'made sex' in the way we take for granted, and prior to the eighteenth century, the worlds of men and women were not so tightly drawn. Sociologists have also shown how gender gets socially constructed and socially organized through material and cultural conditions, shifting quite dramatically between different groups so that working-class masculinity in late nineteenth-century England is very different from middle-class masculinity amongst 1950s Italian men, which in turn is very different from the Latino male youth culture of Los Angeles in the 1990s. Gender in this view is something socially achieved, dramatically performed, a set of culturally produced practices of daily life which are open to much change and variability.

A type of relationship where partners play a role contrary to generally accepted norms. For example, a woman acts as a breadwinner and a man act as a housewife. This applies to all aspects of relationships, with no exceptions. Gender reversals, cross-dressing, and gender innovations have been found in all historical epochs. Cross-dressers have included Hatshepsut (an Egyptian ruler of the fifteenth century BCE), Roman Emperor Elagabalus, Rudolf Valentino, and British pop star Boy George. The sixteenth-century King of France Henri III habitually wore female attire and even asked of his courtiers that they refer to him as "Her Majesty". Similarly, in eighteenth-century Russia, Empress Elizabeth regularly wore men's clothing when riding on her steed, and in 1744 started holding regular "metamorphosis" balls in which all the guests were expected to cross-dress. Elizabeth herself liked to come to these events dressed variously as a cossack<sup>5</sup>, as a French carpenter, or as a Dutch sailor with the twice-dubious name Mikhailova.

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<sup>5</sup> The Cossacks are a group of predominantly East Slavic Orthodox Christian people, who became known as members of democratic, self-governing, semi-military communities originating in the steppes of Eastern Europe



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Transsexual cases have been documented not only in the US and Britain, contrary to what transphobes sometimes claim, but also in many other countries from Russia and Poland, to Spain, Germany, Japan, Egypt, Brazil, and Mexico. In most states of the European Community, transsexuals are able to obtain at least partial refunds for relevant surgery and, in 1989, the European Parliament issued a call for an end to discrimination against transsexuals whether at the workplace or elsewhere. Where Asia is concerned, transsexualism is likewise gaining increased public acceptance, and, in autumn 1994, New Delhi played host to an international

transsexual congress. Transsexualism and other forms of cross-gender behavior are worldwide phenomena.

The ancient Greeks told of a certain Teiresias, a legendary blind prophet, born a man, who was miraculously transformed into a woman, returning to his male form only after having lived eight years as a woman. Later, according to the story, the divine royal couple, Zeus, and Hera, turned to Teiresias to help them settle an argument. Each of them, claimed that the other derived more pleasure from sex. Since Teiresias had the benefit of experience in both sexes, they asked him his opinion. Without a moment's hesitation, Teiresias answered that the woman obtained far more pleasure from sexual relations than did the man. Hera was angered at this disclosure and punished Teiresias by blinding him; but Zeus compensated Teiresias by imparting the power of prophecy and by granting Teiresias a life lasting seven generations.

The theme of gender reversal frequently occurs in ancient religion and mythology, as well as in ancient rituals, and has recurred in diverse societies in every era. But the significance attached to gender reversal varies greatly, depending on the context, the specific form of the reversal, and the given gender culture. The concept of *gender culture* is crucial to an understanding of the phenomenon of gender reversal because the latter arises within the parameters set by a gender culture and because it is a society's culture that informs its members as to the meanings of specific forms of individual and collective behavior. This concept of "gender culture" is derived from the growing literature on the social construction of gender. In brief, this literature is concerned with how societies generate and enforce standards for expected gender-linked behavior and socialize their members to abide by those standards. This literature is thus concerned also with issues of social control. Mackenzie (1994) speaks for most supporters of this approach when she writes that the theme of gender reversals has occurred in all societies since the beginning of recorded history. Many societies in the past institutionalized procedures for permanent or temporary gender reversal or gender change; other societies, such as the Aztec system have endeavored to enforce a rigid gender system in which nothing may ever change and in which no boundaries may be crossed.

## **9.2 WHY GENDER REVERSAL?**

Gender lies at the core of an individual's self-definition. We establish our identities through work and friends, through nationality and religious affiliation, but underlying all of these, as a kind of foundation upon which any individual builds, is gender. One can live without a sense of nationality, without a religion, without a job or career, even (although with much more difficulty) without friends; but without a concept of one's gender identity, existence itself is thrown into question. It is for this reason that changing gender is associated with intense energy, with

magic, with miracle, even (as amply demonstrated in ancient religious rituals of gender transformation) with the supernatural. Gender cultures also define the limits of social tolerance and, in this regard, may be seen within the scope of the overarching cultural system as a whole.

### **9.3 THE FUNCTIONS OF GENDER REVERSALS IN RELIGIOUS MYTHOLOGY AND RITUAL**

The theme of gender reversal occupies a prominent place in the ancient cult of Inanna, in the Olympian religion of the ancient Greeks (most specifically in the cult of Dionysos), in Mahayana Buddhism, in Hinduism, and even in medieval Christianity. In its earliest incarnations, the capacity of the deities to change their gender at will and to project both female and male avatars was a natural outcome of the belief of the ancients in their deities' capacity to adopt any form at will. Among the Aztecs, the sky god, was sometimes represented as a dragon, covered with feathers, over a serpent-like body; at other times, he was portrayed as a two headed monster. The Aztec god *Xolotl*, himself an avatar of *Quetzalcoatl*, had his own subsidiary avatars, including any of a number of animal forms, that of a dog being his most usual choice. Again, in Hindu mythology, Krishna, an avatar of the god Vishnu, transforms himself into a beautiful woman in order to destroy the demon Araka. Zeus, the supreme god of the Greek pantheon, is said to have assumed the form of a bull on at least one occasion, while Artemis was sometimes called the "bear-goddess". The ancient Greek deities had the power to cast spells changing humans into any of a number of animals or plants. In other words, gender reversals in certain polytheist religions are situated within the context of a wide array of transformations of form and presentation, none of which, however, imply a change of essence.

The ancient Sumerian goddess Inanna (also called Ishtar) is a good example of both gender ambiguity and gender reversal. She was described variously as the goddess of love and of war and was said to live the life of a young man, engaging in warfare and avariciously seeking ever more lovers.

In some religious traditions, gender reversal seems to hint at an earlier matriarchal system. In traditional Japan, for example, *Amatarasu-no-Omikami*, the sun goddess, is still the most important deity(god) in the Shinto pantheon. And when a new emperor is enthroned, he must take part in the *daijosai* enthronement ceremony, in which he is ritually dressed as a female, as a symbolic incarnation of the goddess, *Amatarasu*. Cross-dressing may also be associated with purification and with elevation to a higher state.

Mahayana Buddhism shows evidence of similar thinking. As Cynthia (1993) relates, the theme of gender reversal emerges in Mahayana Buddhism in the belief

that "...it is not only one's female physical appearance that must change, but also one's 'women's thoughts', that is, her woman's nature and mental attitude." Gender is perhaps the most fundamental level of individual identity, the touchstone of one's personhood. In identifying a person, it is natural that among those signifiers we mention first is some clue as to the person's sex.

#### **9.4 THE FUNCTIONS OF GENDER REVERSALS IN SOCIAL ORDER AND SOCIAL MOBILITY**

Gender reversal has also figured in maintaining social order and as a subtheme of social mobility. Taking up social order first: in traditional societies (especially rural ones), it is often a matter of great consequence that there be male offspring, whether to carry on the name or to assume responsibility for carrying out tasks associated with males.

In contemporary China, where families have been limited in the number of children they might raise, adults have addressed these concerns by drowning female babies. The Balkan people, like many Indian nations of North America, found "adaptive" alternatives. In the Balkans, the practice of raising biological females as males became accepted among Serbs, Montenegrins, and Ghegs, in families which were unable to give birth to a biological male. Known as *musškobanje* (the plural of *musškobanja*), these cross-gendered individuals assumed a male social identity and performed work associated with men. They were not allowed to take either sex for a spouse but were sworn to virginity. They were often highly respected in their communities, and at least one such *musškobanja* (in late nineteenth-century Montenegro) was allowed to vote in parliamentary elections, even though female suffrage had not yet been introduced. This practice was the subject of Srdjan Karanovics 1991 film, *Virginia*. Among various Indian nations of North America, similar practices survived until the latter part of the nineteenth century.

By contrast with the Balkan peoples, the Indians allowed their cross-gendered persons to marry, although they were expected to marry persons whose gender was in some sense "opposite" to their own. In practice, this meant that a cross-gender "female," insofar as he was recognized as a social male, was expected to marry a traditional female, while a cross-gender "male" was expected to marry a traditional male. At issue was the preservation of a clear, gender-based division of labor within the household something that would have broken down if social females (or males) had married each other.

## 9.5 CROSS DRESSING

The practice of wearing the clothing of another gender figures largely in many media, literary, and popular cultural sources. Simply put, cross-dressing is the name for the act of a person wearing clothing meant for a different gender. Another term for cross-dressing is transvestitism. Someone who engages in transvestitism is called a transvestite. However, the term transvestite is considered a slur word within some communities. The term *cross-dressing* denotes an action or a behavior without attributing or proposing causes for that behavior. Some people automatically connect cross-dressing behavior to transgender identity or sexual, fetishist, and homosexual behavior, but the term *cross-dressing* itself does not imply any motives. However, referring to a person as a *cross-dresser* suggests that their cross-dressing behavior is habitual and may be taken to mean that the person identifies as transgendered. The term *cross-dresser* should therefore be used with care to avoid causing misunderstanding or offense.

Cross-dressing, thus, while nowadays narrowly construed to refer but to dressing across gender lines, was at one time a much broader concept, referring to any breach across the rigid regulations governing attire. These regulations, found in all ancient societies including the Aztec and Inca, as well as in European society as late as the seventeenth century was designed to keep people in their assigned places, and included often precise prescriptions relating to class, trade, and lineage, as well as gender. Often specific colors were off limits to certain groups: in the Ottoman Empire, for example, only Muslims were permitted to wear green, while in Tudor England purple cloth was reserved for persons of noble extraction.



## 9.6 TYPES OF CROSS-DRESSING

Not every culture has a distinct line between the two Western genders. Some cultures, like Eastern Indian culture, recognize more than two genders. In India and nearby countries, the Hijra are typically men transitioning into a third gender, neither male nor female. Generally, Hijra form their own communities and have been legally recognized as a third gender in several parts of the East. Further examples of cultural cross-dressing include some Native American cultures that feature men dressing as women for particular rituals and dances.

Some individuals also cross-dress as part of a type of performance art called drag. What differentiates drag from other forms of cross-dressing is that the dressing is part of a show. The performance aspect of this form of cross-dressing involves a variety of different categories of dress, from the casual to the outlandish. A major type of drag is the performance of the drag king or drag queen. A drag king is generally a female who dresses as a male, while a drag queen is a male who dresses as a female. Both king and queen are expected to play their roles in an exaggerated and sexualized manner as part of the performance. Some drag queens prefer the term female impersonator, especially if they impersonate celebrities as part of their performance.

The third major reason a person may choose to cross-dress is because he or she expects to pass as a member of a different gender. Passing is essentially the practice of changing the appearance of one's gender in order to go places one's actual gender is not allowed or expected. The most familiar version of this practice has found its way into stories as that of a woman dressing as a man in order to enter military service, like in the myth and Disney film of *Hua Mulan*. This practice has been woven into a variety of stories and myths over the years. Notable in history are the charges made against Joan of Arc, one of which included dressing like a man.

The clothing included in cross-dressing can technically be anything, but generally involves gender signifiers. These signifiers, such as the color pink, dresses, or revealing clothing are linked strongly in people's minds with their use by one particular gender. Most signifiers in Western culture are female in nature; male clothing is often considered gender-neutral. Because of this, the most visible cross-dressers are male.

## 9.7 CLASSIC EXAMPLE OF CROSS-DRESSING

*The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975) is one of a variety of films that contain cross-dressing as a strong thematic element. It continues to have a following, years after its production, making the film a cult classic. This kind of film, however, often fails to spell out the facts of the matter when it comes to cross-dressing. Cross-

cross-dressing is the act of wearing clothing commonly associated with another gender within a particular society. Nearly every society throughout history has had a set of norms, views, guidelines, or laws, regarding the wearing of clothing and what is appropriate for each sex. Cross-dressing is a behavior which runs counter to those norms and therefore can be seen as a type of transgender behavior. It is not, however, necessarily transgender identity since a person who cross-dresses does not always identify with the other sex.

## **9.8 DRAG**

Drag is a special form of performance art based on cross-dressing. A drag queen is a male-bodied person who performs as an exaggeratedly feminine character, in an elaborate costume usually consisting of a gaudy dress and high-heeled shoes, heavy makeup, and a large wig. A drag queen may imitate famous female film or pop-music stars.

A drag king is the counterpart of the drag queen, a female-bodied person who adopts an exaggerated masculine persona in performance or who imitates a male film or pop-music star. Some female-bodied people undergoing gender reassignment therapy also self-identify as *drag kings*, although this use of "drag king" is considered inaccurate by some.

## **9.9 TRANSGENDERISM**

In the course of the 1980s, a grass-roots movement emerged in the United States and Western Europe. Identifying itself as "transgenderist", this movement has been characterized by a consensus that the existing gender culture, or, if one prefers, gender system, is oppressive. Self-designated transgenderists share the conviction that the existing dyadic gender culture constitutes "an apartheid of sex" into which people are "brainwashed. The entire notion of identifiable male and female "natures" amounts to pure mythology, and offers, in place of the existing two-gender system, the proposition that "there are five billion people in the world and five billion unique sexual identities. Mackenzie (1994) takes up the same theme, in consequence characterizing transsexualism as "...a symptom of the cultural illness brought on by a rigid bipolar gender system, whose cure may only be effected by the radical transformation of the current gender system. Mackenzie (1994) concludes her book with an exhortation "...to dismantle the current one-nation-under gender-divided-and-unequal and recognize the transgender nation. Transgendered people who have undergone gender reassignment therapy are usually not regarded as cross-dressing.

## **9.10 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS**

1. What is meant by gender role reversal?
2. Why gender role reversal exists in societies?
3. Why gender role reversal is found in mythology and what is role they play in them?
4. Do you that gender reversals help to maintain social order and social mobility?
5. Define cross-dressing with examples.
6. Explain various types of cross dressing.
7. What is meant by Drag? How it is different from cross dressing?
8. Explain transgenderism in your words with examples.

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**Department of Gender & Women Studies**  
**Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities**  
**Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad**