



GENDER AND SOCIETY

COURSE CODE : M2ISO07DC
POST GRADUATE PROGRAMME SOCIOLOGY

**SELF LEARNING
MATERIAL**



SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

The State University for Education, Training and Research in Blended Format, Kerala

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

Vision

To increase access of potential learners of all categories to higher education, research and training, and ensure equity through delivery of high quality processes and outcomes fostering inclusive educational empowerment for social advancement.

Mission

To be benchmarked as a model for conservation and dissemination of knowledge and skill on blended and virtual mode in education, training and research for normal, continuing, and adult learners.

Pathway

Access and Quality define Equity.

Gender and Society

Course Code: M21SO07DC

Semester - II

Discipline Core Course
Master of Arts Sociology
Self Learning Material



SREENARAYANAGURU
OPEN UNIVERSITY

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DOCUMENTATION

Academic Committee

Dr. T. T. Sreekumar	Dr. Shilujas M.
Dr. Antony Palackal	Dr. Bushra Beegom R. K.
Dr. Swapnarani S. S.	Dr. Pushpam M.
L. Thara Bhai	Dr. Sandhya R. S
S. Hakim	

Development of the Content

Dr. Aswathy kunjumon, Dr. Soorya Gopi, Rajathy Johnson, Jayalekshmi L.

Review

Content	: Dr. Sudheesh D. N.
Format	: Dr. I. G. Shibi
Linguistics	: Dr. N. Krishnankutty

Edit

Dr. Sudheesh D. N.

Scrutiny

Dr. Suraj G., Remya Mol M. R., Dr. Aswathy kunjumon, Dr. Soorya Gopi, Dr. Jan Elizebeth Joseph, Dr. Abdul Razak Kunnathodi

Co-ordination

Dr. I. G. Shibi and Team SLM

Design Control

Azeem Babu T. A.

Cover Design

Jobin J.

Production

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Dear

I greet all of you with deep delight and great excitement. I welcome you to the Sreenarayanaguru Open University.

Sreenarayanaguru Open University was established in September 2020 as a state initiative for fostering higher education in open and distance mode. We shaped our dreams through a pathway defined by a dictum 'access and quality define equity'. It provides all reasons to us for the celebration of quality in the process of education. I am overwhelmed to let you know that we have resolved not to become ourselves a reason or cause a reason for the dissemination of inferior education. It sets the pace as well as the destination. The name of the University centres around the aura of Sreenarayanaguru, the great renaissance thinker of modern India. His name is a reminder for us to ensure quality in the delivery of all academic endeavours.

Sreenarayanaguru Open University rests on the practical framework of the popularly known "blended format". Learner on distance mode obviously has limitations in getting exposed to the full potential of classroom learning experience. Our pedagogical basket has three entities viz Self Learning Material, Classroom Counselling and Virtual modes. This combination is expected to provide high voltage in learning as well as teaching experiences. Care has been taken to ensure quality endeavours across all the entities.

The university is committed to provide you stimulating learning experience. The PG programme in Sociology is a logical development of the grammar of our UG programme. It is considered to be a progression of the finer aspects of theories and practices. The discussions are meant to arouse interest among the learners in understanding the discipline in the real context and therefore, the examples are drawn heavily from the real life experiences. The provision for empirical evidences integrated endeavour of the academic content makes this programme special and relevant. We assure you that the university student support services will closely stay with you for the redressal of your grievances during your studentship.

Feel free to write to us about anything that you feel relevant regarding the academic programme.

Wish you the best.



Regards,
Dr. P. M. Mubarak Pasha

01.12.2023

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CONCEPTUALIZING GENDER

BLOCK-01



Key Concepts in Gender Studies

Learning Outcomes

After the end of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- ◆ understand the difference between sex and gender
- ◆ be familiar with the major concepts used for explaining gender dimensions
- ◆ create an awareness on the social construction of gender
- ◆ apprehend the dynamic and modern perceptions of gender fluidity, LGBTQIA+ *etc.*

Background

You may be most familiar with the terms 'gender' and 'gender politics' in the everyday social scenario. Current discourses in culture, media, literature and films provide better provisions for such discussions. Understanding social construction of gender and related perceptions is very vital in carrying out in-depth social discourses. It also helps in carrying a humanistic social life. In the 20th century, sociological research on gender gained its momentum and hence emerged the discipline - Sociology of Gender. The central feature of the discipline was the theories formed as a result of intensive research. Sociologists have immensely contributed to understanding the influence of gender in transforming people's lives, attitude and behaviour. Gender plays a crucial role in influencing human conduct. Social and group life are influenced in a variety of ways; however, gender plays an imperative role in social ordering. Sociology of gender reveals that interactions within social institutions are gendered in some way or the other. 'Gendering' has reshaped the theoretical and empirical foundations of Sociology of gender. It is important to note that gender awareness has modified the existing sociological theory and the constructions of the new feminist paradigm. On the empirical side, gender awareness has also modified the research strategies and unlocked new topics for sociological research.

The idea of gender has changed over time, frequently shifting in significance. The idea is prevalent in many areas of life today. While gender theories initially served as a means of classifying people and organisations, they have now



developed into a vast, sophisticated system of identification that aims to capture the distinctiveness of each individual. The concept of gender has been extensively explored, leading to a wide range of definitions, all of which contribute to further complexity and moulding of contemporary ideas about gender. This unit would enable you to know gender dimensions which would be rather helpful in understanding in equality and oppression based on gender.

Keywords

Patriarchy, Feminine, Masculine, Bisexual, Paid and unpaid work, Identity crisis, Gender trouble

Discussion

◆ *Distinction*

Sociologists have distinguished between gender and sex since the 1970s. Sex refers to the biological distinction between humans, whereas gender refers to the socially constructed distinctions between femininity and masculinity. However, it is generally agreed that gender differences are to be understood as a central feature of patriarchy, a social system in which men have come to be dominant in relation to women.

◆ *Biological difference*

1.1.1 Sex

Sex describes the biological difference between men and women, which is universal and determined at birth. The term 'sex' is a physical differentiation between the biological male and the biological female. Thus, when an infant is born, the infant comes to be labelled 'boy' or 'girl' depending on their sex. The genital differences between male and female are the basis of such a characterisation. There is a biological difference between the sexes and most people are born (except for a few ambiguous cases) as one sex or the other.

However, it has been suggested that people are socialised in accordance with particular gender expectations and roles after being born into one sex or the other. Males who are biologically male acquire masculine traits. They are raised

◆ *Societal expectations*

to think and behave in patriarchal ways. Biological women acquire the ability to assume feminine roles. They are raised to think and act in ways that are more feminine. "One is not born, but becomes a woman", in the words of feminist author Simon de Bouvier.

◆ *Acquiring traits*

However, it has been argued that people are socialised in accordance with particular gender expectations and roles after being born into one sex or the other. Males who are biologically male acquire masculine traits. They are raised to think and behave in patriarchal ways. Biological women acquire the ability to assume feminine roles. They are raised to think and act in ways that are more feminine.

◆ *Gender construct*

Male and female infants do not differ greatly from one another at birth, aside from the obvious biological differences in genitalia and reproductive organs. With the use of gender constructs, society creates distinctions between boys and girls. Some psychological and socially created distinctions can be partially explained by the biological variations between the sexes. Judith Butler and other feminist writers have criticised this viewpoint.

◆ *Socialisation*

According to Judith Butler, sex is fundamental and should come first. Gender is perceived as a secondary construct which is imposed over the top of this natural distinction. Viewed thus, Butler argues that 'sex' itself becomes a social category. This demonstrates that the divide between men and women is a social creation, produced by society. It is a specific method of understanding and distinguishing the distinctions between "man" and "female." Butler explains that 'sex' though seen as biological, is as much a product of society as its gender. So, the term sex is also socially constructed.

◆ *Representation*

The scientific, biological meaning and definition of sex is an important source of explanation to point out the basic differences in sex. Butler's concern is that 'biology' itself, as a scientific discipline, is a social system of representation, and more importantly, there are a number of differences between human beings, but only some become bases for dividing human beings into distinct types. In other words, even if we accept that there are basic differences between the 'sexes', there is no logical or rational reason for dividing human beings into two groups or sexes.

In addition, Judith Butler emphasises that "sex" is more

◆ *Butler's perception*

than merely an analytical category. It also falls within the normative category. It specifies what genders are. Additionally, it specifies what men and women should be. It creates guidelines to control how both men and women behave. According to Butler, sex is a social category as well. Some feminist authors disagree with Butler and believe that "sex" is primarily biological in nature.

◆ *Different categorisation*

Sometimes sex and gender are used interchangeably. Sometimes sex means sexuality. It may refer to biology and physiology. A woman is assumed to be feminine female, a man a masculine male. Research variables polarize sex as males and females; sexuality is polarised as homosexual and heterosexual; these reflections conventionalise bodies and do not take into account transvestites, transexuals, bisexuals and so on. In gender studies, or women studies the focus of concern is biological sex – man, woman, female and the way in which biological differences have been socially gendered in different ways by the patriarchal society. When infants are categorised as a particular sex, they are subjected to a range of gendered behaviour through gendered socialisation.

◆ *Social structure*

1.1.2 Gender

The term "gender" relates to how men and women are assigned roles and obligations in our families, societies and cultures. The notion of gender also includes preconceived notions about the traits, abilities and likely behaviours of both men and women (femininity and masculinity). Gender roles and expectations fluctuate both within and between cultures and they can alter over time. Systems of social differentiation such as political status, class, ethnicity, physical and mental disability, age and more modify gender roles. The concept of gender is vital because when applied to social analysis, it reveals how women's subordination (or men's domination) is socially constructed. As such, the subordination can be changed or ended. It is not biologically predetermined or fixed forever.

Beginning in the early 1970s, the concept of gender gained popularity in feminist publications and other sociological discourses. Gender explains the disparities between men and women in terms of what they can and cannot do in society as men and as women. Therefore, gender is a socially constructed analytical category used to distinguish between the biological differences between men and women. The terms "masculine" and "feminine" – which are used to

◆ *Analytical category*

categorise the variations in behaviour between men and women – are also used to refer to gender. Focusing on this, feminist literature contends that these distinctions are social constructs of patriarchal culture rather than biological ones.

◆ *Stereotypes*

Some theories contend that the mental and physical distinctions between men and women are also a result of their biological differences. They argue that men are naturally stronger and smarter than women. The biological differences between men and women, according to some theories, are exaggerated. The patriarchal social structure, in which men are regarded as superior to women, creates the disparities. As a result, in society, men now have the upper hand over women.

◆ *Performance*

The concept of gender is examined by Ann Oakley in her 1972 work, "Sex, Gender and Society." According to Oakley, women typically perform the roles of "housewife and mother" in western civilization. This is due to the biological predisposition of women to fill certain jobs. The western worldview holds that any attempt to alter the established roles of men and women in society risks weakening the moral structure. According to Oakley's conclusion, the patriarchal society is supported and maintained by this viewpoint on the roles of men and women.

◆ *Authority*

Hope you remember the quote by Simon de Beauvoir in her book *The Second Sex* discussed while explaining 'sex'. Beauvoir says: "One is not born a woman, but becomes one".

She describes how the man's status as the breadwinner elevates his social position in society. He gains authority in the family and society as a result. Men are placed above women in a hierarchy, which places gender differences in opposition. Women are perpetual outsiders because of their position as the "other."

The 'Dialectics of Sex' by Shulamith Firestone, published in 1970, makes the argument that patriarchy takes advantage of women's inherent biological propensity for procreation. She says that utilising technical advancements to relieve themselves of the weight of childbirth is the only option for women to overcome this oppression. She supported creating communes without monogamy or nuclear families in order to sever the biological link between mothers and their offspring. Few feminists accept Firestone's views mainly

◆ *Exploitation*

because both technology and its uses are still firmly in the hands of men. Cultural feminists question whether all the key differences between men and women are solely cultural and not also biological. These feminists prefer to value and celebrate the mothering role as evidence of women's natural disposition towards nurturance and would not like to relinquish it even if they could.

◆ *Gender Portrayal*

Ann Oakley states that there is a constant slippage between sex and gender; for example, people are generally asked to declare their 'gender' instead of sex on an application form. In feminist writings there are references to the close association of gender with the biological or natural as inevitable. Recent writings on sex and gender suggest that feminism has relied too much on the polarisation of sex and gender distinctions, showing that the meanings attached to sex differences are themselves socially constructed and changeable. It is dependent on the way we understand them and we attach different consequences to these biological 'facts' within our own cultural - historical context. At the same time, there is an argument that biology does contribute to some behavioural characteristics. According to some anthropologists, concept of a 'third gender' appeared in England circa 1700. M. Kay Martin and Barbara Voorhies developed the distinct idea of a "third gender" to help people who felt excluded by the sole descriptive options of "man" or "woman" in the 1970s. It was introduced as an intuitive notion to interpret non -Western cultures by highlighting the nonconformity of binary gender patterns and sexuality.

Third Sex

The term "third sex" was used to describe homosexuals and gender nonconformists of the twentieth century. It lost popularity among LGBT communities and the general public in the wake of the 1970s gay liberation movements and the growing disentanglement of sexual orientation and gender identity. Some people in the modern West are starting to identify as members of a third sex again due to the renewed interest in gender exploration that feminism, queer theory, and the modern transgender movement have brought about. Pangender, bigender, genderqueer, androgyne, intergender, "other gender," and "differently gendered" are some other contemporary identities that touch on related topics.

◆ *Conceptual shifts*

It is difficult to accept a rigid distinction between sex and gender as either wholly biological or singularly cultural. There is a constant shift between conceptualisations of human beings as controlled by either predominantly biological or social forces. The debates on sex and gender will continue as some will argue in favour of biological differences while other feminist writers will favour the differences as socially constructed, supported by social institutions like religion, caste, family, marriage and so on. The significant change in women's aspirations and lifestyles during the 1960s explains why the term "feminine" has been used so loosely. The debates by feminists and others on women's issues have taken on new dimensions as a result of the significant changes in women's roles and performances during the past few decades.

1.1.3 Social Construction of Gender

Just think of your perception of gender before a decade. Many of you may have thought that male and female obligations are determined by biological status. Some of you may have seen your mother being more affectionate, and father the opposite. Why is it so? It is because the behavior of male and female is the reflection of the existing patriarchal social system.

◆ *Biological aspects*

Since women reproduce, they are naturally more caring than males; and are best suited to be moms who raised their children at home. Neuro biological researches have found that women have higher level of Oxytocin which enhances bonding, monogomy and connection. Men are better fitted to go out to work and support their families; because they have no physical / biological limitations when compared to women. Hence men are less caring and more aggressive. But now we are aware that it is no longer how we should view men and women.

◆ *Nature-nurture*

Here it is important to understand the nature - nurture aspect related to gender. The nature vs nurture argument about human behavior is shown by the social construct of gender. It interprets that gender is only a social construct and the only reason why men and women behave differently is that society has assigned them certain duties. Gender differences and sex are vibrant topics in the "nature vs. nurture" debate. However, many experts think that environmental influences have a significant impact on how the brain develops, regardless of the role that innate biological elements play.

◆ *Overarching category*

While rethinking gender categories, it is necessary to look at sex and gender as conceptually distinct. Each is socially constructed in different ways. Gender is an overarching category – a major social status that organizes almost all areas of social life. Therefore, bodies are gendered and are built into major social institutions of the society such as economy, ideology, polity, family and so on.

◆ *Grouping*

The sex category given to a person at birth based on the appearance of their genitalia constitutes their gender. Gender identity, gendered sexual orientation, marital and procreative status, gendered personality structure, gender views and attitudes, gender at work and gender responsibilities in the home are all covered under each area. All these social aspects are expected to be compatible with a person's biology. The actual combination may or may not be compatible with the components of gender and sex, as well as with one another. In addition, the components may not neatly fit on one side of the binary divide.

◆ *Gender role*

People who are referred as “females” or “males” possess characteristics that are classified as feminine or masculine. As a result, concepts like gender must be understood in the context in which they are used. One set of scripts for males and another for females is used to structure gender roles. Even before birth, adults begin to treat girls and boys differently, which is the beginning of gender role training. In colleges and universities as well as in societies, it is supported and expanded. Families, institutions of higher learning, and society are all products of culture, as is the socialisation process. The media, which today's children and teens are most likely to be influenced by, plays a significant part in gender construction by portraying stereotypical representations of men and women in ads, serials and other media.

◆ *Adaptation*

Socialisation refers to the processes through which individual take on gendered qualities and characteristics and acquire a sense of self. In addition, through socialisation people learn what their society expects of them as females or males. Even if these expectations are not realised fully, people learn that they will at some level be held accountable to them; that is, they will be assessed in part on the basis of whether they are 'appropriately' masculine or feminine.

1.1.4 Gender Socialization



◆ *Personality*

Gender socialisation is a two-sided process. On one side is the target of socialisation, such as new born, who encounters the social world through interactions with parents and caretakers. Through these encounters children not only experience other people and the outside world, but also become aware of themselves. The fact that information about gender is so essential to understanding and interacting with a new born reveals just how deeply implicated gender is in the process of becoming human and developing a self. On the other side of the socialisation process are the agents of socialisation – the individuals, groups and organisations who pass on cultural information.

◆ *Social Preference*

The process of gender socialisation is another kind of individualist explanation for sex segregation. A socialisation perspective emphasises the ways in which men and women develop different traits, abilities, values and skills. To the extent that this occurs, men and women would be expected to approach work differently, make different kinds of choices and consequently end up in different kinds of occupations. Another kind of empirical challenge to socialisation accounts comes from research on women and men in gender-atypical occupations. From a socialisation perspective, the different socialisation boys and girls receive should lead each sex to make different occupational choices.

There are three theories of socialisation to learn about gender:

a. Social Learning

◆ *Reinforcement*

According to the social learning theory, children acquire gender roles through the positive and negative reinforcement they experience for engaging in gender suitable and gender improper behaviour. This viewpoint also acknowledges that learning occurs through modelling and observation. According to social learning theorists, reinforcements are the main way that kids pick up gender-appropriate behaviours, whether they are experienced directly through rewards and punishments or indirectly through observation. Gender disparities in behaviour are caused by parents and other socialising forces treating male and female children differently. It is important to note that parent's response to their children do not have to be conscious or intentional to have consequences. Indeed, parents' actions can be reinforcing regardless of intent or awareness.

b. Cognitive Development

◆ Logical reality

According to this theory, gender development is a broader psychological process that involves cognitive maturation. According to this viewpoint, kids are motivated to exhibit gender-appropriate behaviours once they have identified themselves as either female or male and realise that this identity is constant across time and in different contexts. According to Ben (1993), children learn to use gender to interpret their experiences and absorb new information in societies like American society where gender distinctions are strongly emphasised.

c. Identification Theory

◆ Doing gender

Gender, gender identity and sexuality are directly addressed by identification theory. The viewpoint presented by Nancy Chodorow in her seminal 1978 book, *The reproduction of Mothering*, is the type of psychoanalytical theory that has had the biggest impact on gender sociologists. According to Chodorow, children make emotional bonds with a same-sex parent or other adult throughout their formative years, which is when gender identity is created.

1.1.5 Gender Stereotypes

◆ Labels

Stereotypes are not simply labels, but are assumptions about traits and behaviours that people in the labelled categories are thought to possess. Gender stereotypes have a familiar quality, and most people would readily recognise the list of traits commonly identified as descriptive of men and women. These traits have been the focus of decades of research on gender-based stereotypes. Early researchers identified two principal dimensions; beliefs that women are concerned with the welfare of other people and beliefs that men are assertive and controlling. More research verifies that these constellations of personality traits remain strongly associated with women and men. Women, for example, are viewed as more emotional, gentle, understanding, and devoted whereas men are seen as more active, competitive, independent and self-confident. The association between gender and these traits is remarkably consistent across respondent age, geographic region and respondent sex.

Men and women are thought to occupy distinct social roles; for example, men are viewed as leaders, financial providers and heads of households, while women are seen as caregivers who shop, tend the house and provide emotional

◆ *Social roles*

support. It is believed that men are good at abstract thinking and problem solving, whereas women excel in artistic and verbal reasoning. Popular descriptions reflect marked differences in gender stereotypes about women's and men's physical appearance; women's physical attributes include dainty, pretty, soft -voiced, and graceful; men's include athletic, brawny, broad shouldered and physically strong.

◆ *Role play*

Emotions are believed to be at once gender segregated and more firmly associated with femininity. Women are believed to both experience and express a broad range of emotions than men, although two emotions – anger and pride are more strongly associated with men.

◆ *Distinctiveness*

1.1.6 Gender Identity

Gender identity refers to people's own sense of themselves as males or females. In psychological terms, it is a 'fundamental existential sense of one's maleness or femaleness, an acceptance of one's gender as a social - psychological construction that parallel's one's acceptance of one's biological sex'.

◆ *Dominant Standpoint*

1.1.7 Gender Role

Sociologists explain gender roles using a variety of theoretical frameworks, broad conceptualizations of social reality, which direct the research process and offer a framework for evaluating the data. According to the research, women are more likely than men to be employed in lower-paying positions with fewer chances for career progression. Domestic work done by women in or near their homes is valued less than work done by males outside of their homes, both in the United States and across cultures. Since gender is a topic that cuts across several fields, these facts can be explained using the theoretical stances of those subjects. Theories from biology, psychology, and anthropology all explain how attitudes and behaviour are connected to gender difference.

◆ *Social performance*

The goal of gender roles is to establish limits between what is seen acceptable for men and women in society in relation to both the public and private spheres. The phrase "gender roles" refers to the tasks that are assigned to men and women based on perceived distinctions. The social, cultural, and environmental characteristics that define a particular society, community or historical period have an impact on how

gender roles are socially determined, develop across time and space and are impacted. Girls and boys internalise these roles from an early age and accept them as “normal,” thanks to the gender roles they see in their social surroundings.

◆ *Social stereotyping of gender*

Both men and women play multiple roles in their lives, including those in the productive domain, which includes tasks and activities relating to the creation and maintenance of the family and the household, as well as those in the reproductive domain, which includes tasks and activities relating to the production of goods for consumption or trade and income generating activities. The duties that men and women are expected to fill based on their sex are known as gender roles. Many western nations have historically held the belief that women are more nurturing than men. As a result, the traditional interpretation of the feminine gender role dictates that women should act in a nurturing manner.

◆ *Perspectives*

From an ecological perspective on gender roles, interactions among people, communities and their environments shape gender roles. That is why both specific individuals and the physical and social contexts in which they function play a part in the construction of gender roles. From a biological perspective on gender roles, men and women naturally gravitate toward the feminine gender role and the masculine gender role, respectively.

◆ *Human instincts*

In general, gender generalisations are never precise. All genders are capable of loving and also show aggressive acts of compassion. Consider a mother who screams and firmly drags her child away from approaching vehicles (an example of fierce compassion) or male military personnel who console one another during a friend’s passing (an example of nurturing compassion). All of us, men and women alike, are naturally endowed with love, compassion, and kindness in all of their manifestations.

◆ *Social description*

A sociological perspective on gender roles holds that masculine and feminine roles are learnt and are not always related to the biological characteristics of men and women. Sociologists investigate the various connotations and ideals that male and female gender roles have in society. A feminist perspective on gender roles argues that as they are taught, they can also be unlearned and new, distinct roles can be made. The feminist viewpoint emphasises that gender roles are related to the various amounts of power that men and women wield in society, not only notions about what

behaviour is proper for men and women.

1.1.8 Gender Discrimination

Gender inequality and gender discrimination are related. At all social levels, this connection is clear. Institutional policies and structures contribute to the development of gender discrimination. The larger cultural value and worth placed on maleness and all things judged masculine in comparison to femaleness and everything deemed feminine is one way to express this. The traits and qualities associated with men and masculinity are given higher social value than those associated with women and femininity at the individual level. From an interactionist viewpoint, the development of gender hierarchies contributes to the production of prejudice. Even at the level of organisations and institutions, resources, worth and position are awarded to people in different ways based on their gender. It is important to understand that gender discriminations and inequalities are produced and reproduced at all levels of the social world. Gender discrimination is reproduced through two interrelated processes: institutionalisation and legitimation.

◆ *Disparity*

1.1.9 Gender Fluidity

A person whose gender identity or expression shifts between masculine and feminine or falls somewhere along this spectrum is fluid in terms of gender. Gender fluidity refers to a child who is unconfined by one single gender identity and whose gender identity manifests differently over time. Some gender fluid youth will identify differently day to day, while others will shift over long periods of time.

◆ *Unconfinement*

Some people identify as being “gender-fluid.” It usually falls under the transgender and non-binary category of identities, which includes people whose gender identity does not correspond to the sex assigned to them on their original birth certificate. Everyone who experiences changes in their gender expression or identity does not necessarily identify as being gender-fluid. Also, not everyone wants to have gender affirming medical procedures to improve their physical appearance.

◆ *Changing orientations*

1.1.10 Heteronormativity

The term “heteronormativity” was first used by queer theorist Michael Warner in 1991 to describe how heterosexuality is prioritised in social interactions, pushing

◆ *Integration*

sexual minorities to the outside of society. Homophobia, the irrational dread of gays and lesbians, and heterosexism, the discrimination of sexual minorities within social interactions and structures, are made acceptable by heteronormativity. Most social institutions, including religion, the family, the educational system, the media, the law and the state, promote heteronormative standards and discourses that justify the persecution of sexual minorities. For instance, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer persons are frequently stereotyped or underrepresented in the media. In the world of education, resources on sexual health and other pedagogical topics frequently completely exclude LGBTQ individuals. As their relationships are considered less than a heterosexual partnership, sexually marginalised people may suffer discriminatory practises such as being denied access to marriage or domestic partner benefits.

◆ *Norms*

Homosexuality and heterosexuality are seen as binary opposites by prevailing heteronormative standards. Sexual relationships between people who play complementary gender roles should take place in the privacy of their own homes because the gender roles of masculine men and feminine women are naturalised. The heterosexual lifestyle of monogamy, marriage and procreation is regarded as superior to all other sexual orientations. Promiscuity, heterosexuality and having sex in public are sometimes regarded as deviant and undesirable sexual manifestations.

1.1.11 Gender Continuum

◆ *Disclosing identity*

Gender identities that go beyond the two conventional gender categories of male and female are taken into consideration by the concept of a gender continuum. The gender continuum notion refers to the differences that people have in terms of gender, gender identity and sexual orientation in terms of what they experience biologically, feel emotionally and express outwardly. The idea of the gender continuum may be seen in popular culture when singers and actors challenge traditional gender roles with their hairstyles, cosmetics, clothing choices and intimate relationship choices. A person's gender is determined by factors other than biological anatomy. The way a person thinks, feels and expresses themselves, as well as how they interact with and are attracted to others, all contribute to their gender. The gender continuum allows people to present their gender however they feel, regardless of the presence of stereotypes

or norms.

1.1.12 Gender Division of Labour

◆ *Separate tasks* The process of assigning duties based on sex is known as the gender division of labour. One of the most fundamental ways that sex distinctions are manifested in social institutions is through this division of labour. Age and sex are frequently cited as the two most ancient forms of labour division. But even at the start of the twenty-first century, the division of labour is still largely based on gender.

◆ *Responsibility* There are numerous theories as to why societies separate labour based on sex. Some people believe that traditionally women have been primarily responsible for child care and it is where the sexual division of labour first emerged. Children's dependence on their mother's care shapes the type of labour women can perform.

◆ *Paid and Unpaid work* The relative contribution of women's and men's labour to survival influence the degree to which each sex is socially valued – and hence the degree of gender inequality. Gender differences in the responsibility for children are an important component of family as a gendered institution, and shape many aspects of women's and men's work and family lives. In the paid labour force, the sexual division of labour is expressed in the sex segregation of employment at all levels.

1.1.13 Transgender: LGBTQIA+, Trans Sexual

◆ *Ambiguous gender* Transgender is an umbrella term that incorporates differences in gender identity wherein one's assigned biological sex does not match the felt identity. This umbrella term includes persons who do not feel they fit into a dichotomous sex structure through which they are identified as male or female. Individuals in this category may feel as if they are in the wrong gender, but this perception may or may not correlate with a desire for surgical or hormonal reassignment.

◆ *Third gender* There are roughly 1.4 million transgender people in the United States, who fall into several categories, according to the studies of National Centre for Transgender Equality. A transgender person might be assigned a particular gender at birth, but might identify biologically with a different one. Some transgender people might not solely identify with one gender. For instance, their gender identification may

have both male and female components, or they may not identify with any gender. These transgender individuals are frequently referred as “non-binary.” Gender queer is a term that is occasionally used to refer to individuals in this group. Heterosexuality, Homosexuality, and Bisexuality are the three main categories used to group sexual orientations.

◆ *Gender affirmation*

The term “transgender” encompasses a wide range of identities. People whose gender identity differs from their assigned sex are referred to as transsexuals. Transgender people frequently change or seek to change their bodies through hormones, surgery and other ways to make them as consistent with their gender identities as possible. Although more lately it has also been referred to as gender affirmation, this process of transition through medical intervention is frequently referred to as sex or gender reassignment. Some people who change from one gender to another would rather be called a man or a woman than transgender.

a. LGBTQIA+

◆ *Complete forms of gender*

LGBTQ is often erroneously used as a synonym for ‘non-heterosexual’ which incorrectly implies that transgender is a sexual orientation. Except Heterosexuality others like Homosexuality and Bisexuality, Demisexuality, Pansexuality, Asexual, Intersex and Transgender are called sexual minorities and is labelled as LGBTQIA. ‘L’ stands for Lesbian which means a woman who is primarily attracted to women; ‘G’ stands for Gay which implies a man who is primarily attracted to man. These two categories commonly known as homosexuals. ‘B’ stands for Bisexual which refers to an individual attracted to people of their own and the opposite gender. ‘T’ stands for Transgender which implies that a person whose gender identity is different from their assigned sex at birth. The ‘Q’ stands for ‘Queer’ or ‘Questioning. Queer refers to an adjective used by some people whose sexual orientation is not exclusively heterosexual.

◆ *Identity*

Lesbian, gay and bisexual are frequently seen as excessively restrictive and / or loaded with cultural connotations that queer people believe do not relate to them. When describing their gender expression or gender identity, some people use the terms queer or gender queer. Some LGBTQ individuals have reclaimed the term queer, which was once derogatory, to identify themselves. Despite this, the term is not widely accepted, even within the LGBTQ community. A person who is questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity is



referred to as questioning. Intersex is a term used to describe people whose sexual anatomy does not fit the traditional definitions of male and female. "A" stands for "asexual," which denotes a person.

b. Transsexual

Transgender people who have had hormonal or surgical changes to their bodies to make them more consistent with their gender identity than the sex they were assigned at birth are referred to as transsexuals.

The term "transsexuality," which was coined in the early to mid-20th century through a variety of mental and medical procedures, refers to the experience of someone who wants to "change sex." This phrase has a special meaning for persons who are transitioning from male to female or female to male. Transmen or transsexual men are people who were regarded as female but who now identify as male, live as males and have undergone or plan to undergo medical treatment to change their body to more closely fit their gender identification (also known as female - to male or FTM). Contrarily, those who were assigned male gender, but who now identify as female and want to undergo medical treatment to change their bodies so that they more closely reflect their gender identity are referred to as transsexual women or transwomen (also known as male -to-female MTF).

◆ *Dimensions of gender*

Summarised Overview

Being aware about the evolving gender terminology is an opportunity to interact with cutting-edge ideas and research in the field of gender and sexuality. The current scenario hopes to create a diverse and inclusive environment where people can learn from one another. Gender is a powerful principle of social life. It is a multi-level system of social practices that produces distinction between women and men, and organise inequality on the basis of those distinctions. Gender operates at the individual, interactional and institutional levels. The structure and practices of institutions play a role in the production of gender discrimination. People called 'female' or 'males' are endowed with certain traits defined as feminine or masculine. Gender roles are structured by one set of scripts designed for males and another designed for females. The three main sexual orientations are heterosexuality, homosexuality, and bisexuality. Aside from heterosexuality, there are other sexual minorities such as homosexuality and bisexuality, demisexuality, pansexuality, asexuality, intersex, and transgender,

among others, that are referred to as LGBTQIA. A child who is gender fluid is not constrained by a single gender identification and its gender identity changes throughout time. In terms of gender, gender identity and sexual orientation, the gender continuum idea refers to the variations that persons experience biologically, experience emotionally, and display externally. As learners now you will also be able to add your own perspectives and expertise to the ongoing discussion surrounding the important issues in the field.

Self-Assessment

1. Explain Gender Fluidity.
2. Discuss the gender difference between paid and unpaid work
3. Comment on the difference between LGBTQIA and Transsexuals.
4. Distinguish between Sex and Gender.
5. Describe socialisation of Gender.
6. Difference between gender identity and gender role.
7. Define Gender Stereotypes.

Assignments

1. Write about the major policies and programs introduced by the government for the welfare of transgender people.
2. Discuss the major stereotypes based on gender that existed in family.
3. "Gender is socially constructed". Expand.
4. Explain gender socialization
5. Relate 'gender fluidity' with contemporary examples.
6. 'The term transgender encompasses a wide range of identities.' Explain.



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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

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SGOU





Measures and Approaches of Gender Development

Learning Outcomes

After the end of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- ◆ understand the various measures to analyse gender empowerment
- ◆ explore the approaches to explain the development of women
- ◆ understand the different sectors which address the significance of women empowerment

Background

The UN Secretary General said while outlining priorities for 2023 “Gender equality is a question of power. The patriarchy, with millennia of power behind it, is reasserting itself. The UN is fighting back and standing up for the rights of women and girls everywhere and recognises gender equality as central to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).” This shows the necessity of gender development in the contemporary scenario.

In the coming units you will go through a significant term in gender development called ‘gender mainstreaming’. It is related to all aspects of gender improvement or growth. The achievement of gender equality in all spheres of society is the ultimate goal of gender mainstreaming. It was widely acknowledged that economic prosperity and income growth were important measures of advancement. Although there are various facets to backwardness, gender inequality has also been linked to it. The Gender Related Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) are two new indices that the UNDP proposed in the 1995 Human Development Report. The GDI takes gender disparity into account by using the same variable as the Human Development Index. The gender development index measures were created to show the level of gender equality. Hence, understanding gender mainstreaming will enlighten you to the learning of gender equality and development.



Keywords

Gender disparity, gender gap, social organisation

Discussion

1.2.1 Gender Development Index

◆ *Indicator of measurement*

The Gender Related Development Index (GDI) is an index designed to measure gender equality. The 1995 Human Development Report (HDR) introduced the concept of Gender Development Index (GDI), arguing that without engendering, human development is endangered. The same year HDR introduced the concept Gender Empowerment Measures (GEM).

◆ *Human development*

Although UNDP's HDR has brought the focus on the human aspect of development, the concern for human or social development is not new. Even in the pre-industrial era the rulers made special efforts to provide facilities and amenities for the welfare of the populace. Historically, various concepts and measures of social and human development have emerged. The UNDP's GDI and GEM are the latest additions to the measures of social / human development series.

◆ *Gender-sensitivity*

The aim of these measurements was to add a gender-sensitive dimension to the Human Development Index (HDI). The first measurement that they created as a result was the Gender-related Development Index (GDI). The Gender Development Index is defined as a "distribution - sensitive measure that accounts for the human development impact of existing gender gaps in the three components of the Human Development Index". Distribution sensitivity measures mean that the Gender Development Index takes into account not only the average or general level of well-being and wealth within a given country, but focuses also on how this wealth and well-being are distributed between different groups within society. The Gender Development Index is often considered as "gender-sensitive extension of the Human Development Index." It addresses gender-gaps in life expectancy education and income. In terms of life expectancy, the Gender Development Index assumes that

women will live an average of five years longer than men. In terms of income, the Gender Development Index considers the income gaps in terms of actual income.

◆ *Measuring progress*

The Gender Development Index, unlike all the other concepts which introduced in UNDP, defines human development as a process (of widening choices) and not merely as a stock of achievements. It also ended the era of the development paradigm that stressed only economic growth. The Gender Development Index recommends a human centered development paradigm where human development is seen as the ultimate goal of development and not a by-product of economic growth.

◆ *Differing gender achievements*

The Gender Development Index cannot be used independently of the Human Development Index (HDI) score and so, it cannot be used on its own as an indicator of gender-gaps. Only the gap between the Human Development Index and the Gender Development Index can actually be accurately considered; the Gender Development Index on its own is not an independent measure of gender-gaps. In 1994, Halis Akder suggested that one alternative to the Gender Development Index would be the calculation of a separate male and female Human Development Index. Another suggested alternative is the Gender Gap measure which could be interpreted directly as a measure of gender inequality, instead of having to be compared to the Human Development Index as the Gender Development Index is. It would average the female - male gaps in human development and use a gender - gap in labour force participation instead of earned income.

1.2.2 Gender Empowerment Measures (GEM)

The Human Development Report, 1995 focusing on women's opportunities rather than their capabilities introduced 'Gender Empowerment Measures'. GEM is an attempt of the United Nations Development Programmes to measure the extent of gender inequality across the globe's countries, based on estimates of women's relative economic income, participations in high-paying positions with economic power and access to professional and parliamentary positions. The Gender Empowerment Measures was designed to measure "whether women and men are able to actively participate in economic and political life and take-part in decision making" (UNDP, 1995). The

◆ *Equal participation*

GEM is determined using three basic indicators: proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments, percentage of women in economic decision making positions and female share of income.

◆ *Measuring unequal distribution*

Gender is a set of social and cultural constructs used to distinguish between male and female entities; while the term empowerment is defined as a process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. According to World bank; Gender Empowerment Measures can be understood as both the means and ends of narrowing the gender gap.

1.2.3 Approaches to Gender and Development

◆ *Expansion*

The use of the term 'development' implies a notion of historical change derived from western European secular and scientific thought. It assumes that change is more linear than cyclical. Thus, the term development can be defined as a historical process; so one presumes direction in this process. Political scientist Samuel Beer, argues: 'The notion of development recognizes the importance of the time dimension'. In another way, the perception of development is the ability of humans to influence and control the natural and social environment.

Feminist Eva Rathgeber (1990) identifies three distinct theoretical approaches in the field: Women in Development (WID), Women and Development (WAD), and Gender and Development (GAD). Women in Development (WID) is the oldest and most dominant perspective in the field of women and gender development. The 'UN commission on the Status of Women' and the 'US women's movement' were the two important conglomerations which became the impetus for integrating women into development programs.

A. Women In Development (WID)

The term Women In Development was introduced by American liberal feminists after the publication of Ester Boserup's book, '*Women's Role in Economic Development*' in the early 1970s. Till 1970s activists or officials of women's organisation were not interested in economic development, rather they drew on their right to suffrage which they believed to make equality in society. Boserup's book was

◆ *Women empowerment*

embraced widely because her theory legitimized efforts to influence development policy with a combined argument for justice and efficiency. Women In Development contributes to the assumptions of modernization theory; its programmes generally stress western values and target individuals as the catalysts for social change. Modernization theory considers traditional societies as authoritarian and male - dominated and modern one as democratic and egalitarian.

◆ *Inclusion of women*

Women In Development had been linked with the modernization theory of 1950s to 1970s. Modernization theory thus appears to show compassion to the oppression faced by women. Mainly, liberal feminists have accepted this world view. Modernisation theory of Women In Development mainly focused on the need of the integration of women in economic systems through necessary legal and administrative changes. It also emphasized the women's role in productive sector and the strategies that should be developed to minimise disadvantages of women in the productive sector.

◆ *Productivity*

The perspective of Women In Development enables the questions of women in the ground of development theory and practice more visible. Non-confrontation approach was widely used in the perspective of Women In Development as it was solidly grounded in traditional modernization theory. It did not question the sources of women's subordination and oppression; rather, it accepted the existing social condition. It treated women as an undifferentiated category overlooking the influence of class, race and culture. It focused completely on the productive aspects of women's work, ignoring or minimising the reproductive side of women's lives.

Approaches on Women In Development (WID)

C.O. N. Moser finds distinct Women In Development approaches that reflect policy evolution. Moser tries to evaluate each approach by incorporating concepts on Women In Development developed by M. Molyneux in 1985. Moser assesses each approach on the basis of its ability to meet the practical need of women including employment and health service. On the other side, Moser explains women's strategic needs to change the subordinate status of women in society including legal rights, gender-based division of labour and domestic violence.

a) **Welfare Approach:** is the first category of WID

◆ *Preventive checks*

approach put forward by Moser, according to Boserup. As a practical need, it focuses mainly on women's reproductive roles and programmes to control population growth, because reproduction was considered as the primary cause of increasing of population.

◆ *Equal participation*

b) Equity Approach: it basically focused on gender equality. The UN's backing of women had a lasting impact on social legislation, which enhanced women's civil and political rights in many countries.

◆ *Economic independence*

c) Anti-Poverty: is the third approach which concentrated on enhancing women's productive role through waged work and income generation. Therefore, it is a practical need of women that required urgent attention.

◆ *Monetary benefits*

d) Efficiency: is associated with the IMF structural adjustment programs of the 1980s. It gave importance to women's response to the debt crisis through the participation in the economies. In the reform of economic policies, it could be observed as an urgency of addressing practical problems over strategic needs which have overburdened women.

◆ *Legal rights*

e) Empowerment: addresses women's strategic need to transform laws and structures that oppress them through a bottom-up process of organising around practical needs.

◆ *Equal pay*

f) Economic Development: was the primary focus of Women In Development. Previously, attempts to engage women in economic development had been ignored or undercut due to gender bias. The growing number of women who headed households were particularly disadvantaged, a trend encapsulated in the phrase 'the feminization of poverty.' The Women In Development argued that women were over overworked and unproductive in their economic activities.

◆ *Strategy for empowering women*

Early development programmes had ignored women as economic actors and considered women in their reproductive role only, and only as mothers, not as women. The health programmes also gave importance for children health; they werenot concerned about the health of women to bear a healthy child. In contrast, Women In Development supports income activities to help poor women since they consider economic activity as the key to improving women's status. Support and contributions of NGOs did help in enhancing income activities of women.



B. Women And Development (WAD)

◆ *Progressiveness*

Women And Development (WAD) emerged from a critique of the modernisation theory and the Women In Development approach in the second half of 1970s. Progressive feminists criticized modernisation theory as it was implicitly gendered and its characterisation of the third world women was distorted and detrimental.

◆ *Participation other than household activities*

Women And Development draws from the dependency theory and views that women have always been part of the development process; hence, integrating women in development is considered a myth. It focuses more on the relationship between women and the development process. Its point of departure is that women always have been “integrated” in to their societies and that the work they do in both inside and outside the household is central to the maintenance of those societies, but that this integration serves primarily to sustain existing international structure of inequality.

◆ *Inclusion of women*

Contribution of Women And Development on the field is in such a way that they accept women as an important economic actor in their societies. It believes women’s work in the public and private domain is central to the maintenance of their societal structures. Women And Development looks at the nature of integration of women in development which they believe, endorses the existing inequality in the society. The Women And Development approach grew out of a concern with the explanatory limitations of modernization theory and its promotion of the idea that exclusion of women from earlier development strategies had been an inadvertent oversight.

◆ *Critical view on womens position*

Theoretically the Women And Development perspective recognizes the impact of class, but in terms of practical project design and implementation, it tends, like Women In Development, to group women together without taking strong analytical note of class, race or ethnicity, all of may exercise powerful influence on women’s actual status. Women And Development offers a more critical view of women’s position than Women In Development but it fails to undertake a full-scale analysis of the relationship between patriarchy, differing modes of production and women’s subordination and oppression.

The Women And Development perspective assumes that

◆ *Under representation of women*

women's position will improve if and when international structures become more equitable. In the meantime, the under-representation of women in economic, political and social structures still is identified primarily as a problem which can be solved by carefully designed intervention strategies rather than by more fundamental shifts in the social relations of gender.

◆ *Economic aspects*

Since the Women And Development perspective does not give detailed attention to the overriding influence of the ideology of patriarchy, women's condition primarily is seen within the structure of international and class inequalities. Women In Development / Women And Development intervention strategies have tended to concentrate on the development of income generating activities without taking into account the time burdens that such strategies place on women.

C. Gender And Development (GAD)

◆ *Men -women interactions*

The 1980s saw the development of this strategy as an alternative to Women In Development. Gender relations, or the interactions between men and women in social contexts, are the focus of gender and development rather than women. In addition to modernization theory and dependence theory, socialist feminist thought also inspired Gender And Development. The socialist feminists have taken into account the limits of Women And Development and the shortcomings of Women In Development.

◆ *Inclusion of male in WAD*

Gender And Development places a strong emphasis on gender dynamics in both the workplace and the realm of reproduction. Gender And Development embraces the involvement of men as well, rather than focusing just on female solidarity. In addition, it acknowledges the contribution that women make both within and outside the home, including non-commodity production.

◆ *Unbiased interactions*

Researcher Kate Young claims that Gender and Development focuses on social interactions between men and women in the workplace as well as in other contexts, rather than solely on women. Men are seen as possible allies of women by Gender and Development, which analyses gender relations rather than "women" as a category. The Gender and Development model takes a comprehensive stance and views development as a difficult process driven by political and socioeconomic forces. It challenges



the rationale behind designating particular gender roles for the two sexes. Gender And Development supporters acknowledge that generational and gender disparities both contribute to domestic disputes.

◆ *State's responsibility*

The public / private divide is rejected by Gender and Development. By intruding into the so-called "private realm," it focuses in particular on how oppression of women occurs in the family. It emphasises that the state has a responsibility to offer social services to further the emancipation of women. Gender And Development sees women as active participants in development rather than as passive beneficiaries.

◆ *Need for rehabilitation*

Gender And Development emphasises the necessity for women to band together in order to have a stronger political voice. It acknowledges that patriarchy targets women for oppression both within and between classes. The power imbalance between men and women that now exists in society is something that Gender And Development discusses.

◆ *'No hatred to men'*

According to Kate Young, the Gender and Development method does not presuppose that woman are infallibly correct in all manners of behaviour. It does not presuppose that mankind are always stupid or evil. Instead, it assumes that most men are unlikely to support the cause of women's advancement without strong persuasion because of their status as men.

◆ *Inclusion of family in uplifting women*

The Gender and Development adopts a comprehensive viewpoint on society. Gender And Development examines all facets of social organisation, economics, and politics in an attempt to comprehend how specific facets of society are shaped. Gender And Development does not just concentrate on the reproductive side of social life, such as maternity and child care, in order to comprehend the specific patterning of women's lives. Instead, it emphasises how family, home and domestic life fit together.

The social, economic, political and cultural improvement of individuals and of society as a whole is not considered to be a part of development, which is seen as a multifaceted process. Welfare, anti-poverty, and equity approaches are not seen by the Gender and Development approach as three competing possibilities. Instead, it acknowledges that welfare and anti-poverty strategies are frequently necessary prerequisites for equity. In contrast to Women in Development, Gender and

◆ *Multifaced approach*

Development lays equal emphasis on the state's imperative function in advancing women's emancipation. It emphasises how important it is for the state to invest in social capital to support and maintain the next generation. Strategies for Gender and Development must address both the need for political independence and concerns with economic self-sufficiency. According to Gender and Development, as political and economic power are intertwined, creating the environment for both men and women to overcome poverty is the first step in advancing women.

Summarised Overview

To conclude, the feminist approach for understanding and addressing the disparate effects that economic development and globalisation have on people based upon their location, gender, class background and other socio-political identities is applied in the interdisciplinary field of gender, development research and applied study. This economic approach to development sees progress in terms of quantitative measures like high employment, job creation and inflation control, all of which are intended to enhance a nation's "economic wellbeing" and, in turn, the standard of living for its citizens.

The 'UN commission on the Status of Women' and the 'US women's movement' were the two important conglomerations which became impetus for integrating women into development programmes. Women in development support income activities to help poor women since they consider economic activity as the key to improving women's status. Modernization theory of WID mainly focused on the need of the integration of women in economic systems through necessary legal and administrative changes. It also emphasized women's role in the productive sector and the strategies that should be developed to minimize disadvantages of women in the productive sector.

Self-Assessment

1. Explain gender development index
2. Describe the gender empowerment measures
3. Discuss the major approaches to gender and development.
4. Differentiate between WID and WAD.
5. What do you mean by gender inclusiveness in development ?

Assignments

1. Critically evaluate major gender development index to analyse the intensity of gender gap in the contemporary Kerala society
2. How important is GDI in gender equality?
3. WID, WAD and GAD are important aspects of gender development. Elaborate.
4. Gender and development method does not assume that men or manhood as always oppressive. Critically substantiate the statement.

Suggested Reading

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SGOU



THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER

BLOCK-02



Types of Feminism

Learning Outcomes

After the end of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- ◆ understand the theoretical background of feminism and its development
- ◆ explore the major types of feminism
- ◆ be aware about the characteristics of Liberal, Socialist, Marxist and Radical feminism.

Background

As said in the previous block, one of the most significant developments in the field of sociology in the 20th century was the study of gender. The research and theory related to the study of gender issues accelerated sociology of gender from the margins to become a core component of the discipline sociology. You are now aware that, sometimes language used in the study of gender and knowledge connected to it may be unfamiliar or have distinct meanings from languages used in daily life. Whether you comprehend them or not, terminology and jargon are the same thing. We are unable to think of people as neutral; instead, we categorise them as either males or women and behave toward them accordingly. Although there are many different ways that group-life is structured, gender is a crucial aspect of the ordering. An emergence of gender issues shows that gender is a factor in all social interactions and the structures that facilitate them.

Feminist theories provide a conceptual framework for comprehending and evaluating research of any kind, whether it be in the social sciences or interdisciplinary areas. When attempting to explain a gender phenomenon, theories are crucial. These theories offer condensed explanations for the gender complexity of the real world. Through this block, you will understand the radical dimensions of gender theories which would help you to gain a different approach towards gender.



Keywords

Empowerment, Hegemony, Marginalization, Androcentric, Feminism

Discussion

◆ *Perspectives*

Theoretical perspectives on gender implies approaches to the study of gender. Let us make it simple with examples; a sociologist, studies the higher rate of girl students' failure and drop outs when compared to boys. Here, the researcher uses a feminist perspective to frame the research. If the study is on the under-representation of women in a working sector, it has a conflict perspective. The interactionist perspective in gender may have an example of a research which examines how women in a political party is treated by fellow members in terms of priority and representation.

2.1.1 Feminist Sociological Theory

◆ *Reshaping notions*

The 1970s witnessed the significant growth of feminist theory, which focused on the vital role of gender in modifying and influencing every aspect of human social experience. The initial phase saw the birth of feminist radicalism; with a focus on the works of feminist thinker and legal scholar Catharine MacKinnon. There is a very powerful impact of gender on social life. First, in a micro-level, that is in the personal and social relationships of humans; second, in a macro-level, that is in the ordering of social institutions. These notions have definitely reshaped the stereotyped visions on gender. The feminist sociological theory bridges the micro level-macro level gap and it strongly revealed the androcentric (male-oriented) partiality in society. In short, for using a perspective or theory as feminist, the minimum pre-requisite is its eligibility to be used as a challenge to the patriarchal or stereotyped status quo.

The background of liberal, socialist politics and urban industrialism gave rise to the first wave of feminism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in the western world. This wave aimed at providing women more possibilities, primarily through suffrage.

◆ *Gender disparity*

Feminist theory uses gender disparity as a prism through which to view society. The emphasis is on the “power” of men and women. The roles that women play in society and the continual struggles that women experience are covered in feminist thought. The rights of women, including their economic, sexual, reproductive, property and voting rights, are the primary focus of this style of thinking about society.

◆ *Fundamental tenets*

Scientific presumptions are unquestionable truths about the world that are taken for granted. The foundation of theories is comprised on assumptions. Despite the diversity of feminist theory, several fundamental tenets remain constant. Three are listed by Denise Riley. a) Every society’s organizing basis is gender, which is a social construction. b) The politics of inequality is a necessary component of gender theory. Another supposition is added by Janet Saltzman Chafetz-“The way men and women think is different”.

2.1.2 Fundamental Concepts in Feminist Theory

While feminism is frequently linked to social movements and protests, there are other, more fundamental ideas at play, such as gender, politics, power, violence, and the division of labour. Below, we go over each of these in turn.

a) Gender

Consider this example. Men who show vulnerabilities and emotions are stigmatised as being weak and are judged to have feminine traits. Women who exhibit tenacity or stubbornness, on the other hand, are viewed as masculine. Feminist thinkers opine that, women and men who transcend gender boundaries are met with different reactions. Women who succeed are celebrated, but men who participate in traditionally female arenas are frequently viewed with suspicion. Women are shattering the stereotype of women by dressing like men or acting like them since they are thought to be following an impossible ideal. They are considered as ‘moving up’ and aiming for something valuable in an effort to better their status. Similarly, social status is “moving down” for males who behave like women.

◆ *Social stigma*

Men and women must be studied separately from one another when studying gender because of their interdependence. Gender, unlike sex, is learnt. Both masculine and feminine identities exhibit gender. The

◆ *Identity exhibition*

different definitions of masculinity and femininity across cultures show how these identities are socially formed and acquired. These traits are defined in connection to one another in opposition.

b) Politics

Politics is one area where women are not entirely underrepresented but are seldom ever seen. Though they do appear to be raising their participation rates in several nations, women are still typically underrepresented in political institutions. However, even when they do enter politics, women are more often found in lower-ranking jobs with less prestige and power. This is indicative of the glass ceiling effect, which basically contends that women rarely rise to the top of social hierarchies because they run into an unspoken barrier (a glass ceiling) that prevents them from achieving the highest levels of authority.

◆ *Under-representations*

Studies that show a significant association between the proportion of women in legislative bodies and cabinet positions support this. Women are often found at the bottom of the hierarchy, not the top, of those professions. Peterson and Runyon claim that the discrimination against women in political office is a result of a complex interaction between situational limitations, structural barriers and gender socialisation. In the past, countries have formally restricted the participation of women in politics. For example, some states restrict citizenship to people who serve in the armed forces and / or own property. These limitations were said to stem from biological variations between men and women; however it is now known that these statements are completely unfounded.

◆ *Complex interactions*

c) Military

The traditional definitions of power emphasise the need for particular resources in order to possess power and exert influence over others. In a society where men predominate, that means being strong. Aggressive actions, such as military action, give the impression that the individual engaging in them is powerful to observers. There is currently a gendered division of labour in the U.S. military; women are not permitted to serve on the front lines but are instead assigned to support in auxiliary positions. Many times, justifications for this gendered division of labour include the following: Women are often thought of as "life-givers," thus it can be

◆ *Power and influence*

difficult to imagine them as life-takers. According to this viewpoint, women are not inherently violent.

◆ *Gendered work*

A further argument for the gendered division of labour in the military is that men will become distracted by women on the battlefield and turn their attention away from military victory and towards sexual conquest. This rationale essentially implies that men are the ones with the issue – a lack of emphasis on the war effort – while ultimately harming women by taking away their power. Men are compelled to safeguard women both on and off the battlefield, which is a third argument in favour of this division of labour. Men will be less effective as soldiers if they are intent on defending women at any costs. Women are thus barred from engaging in actual combat, even though they serve in the military to support the troops and work for defence contractors to create weapons of war. Because they are unable to genuinely exert influence over others, women are disempowered.

d) Division of labour

◆ *Division of work*

The difference in the ability of men and women to bear children biologically underlies the gendered division of labour in society. It is considered that women are more caring than men since they are more likely to be able to bear children and provide the major share of child care in most communities. Men, on the other hand, are viewed as the “providers” for women and children, and are only deemed to be “working” when doing “productive labour.” While many people today regard the gendered division of labour as a given, it has not always been this way. In fact, in today’s mostly agrarian economy, women still work side by side with men on farms.

◆ *Nurturing aspects*

Given that ladies have historically been the main source of nutrition for newborn children (via breastfeeding), it is not surprising that women have assumed most of the childcare responsibilities early in a child’s life. While pediatricians and dietitians currently strongly recommend nursing, and many women try to follow these recommendations, it appears that a gendered division of labour will likely persist in the future.

e) Religion

For epochs, religion has played a key role in the sexism of women. God is typically pictured as a male and referred to as “Father” in most religions, especially monotheistic ones.



Eve is created from Adam's body in the biblical creation myth, implying the dominance of men. Because she caved in to temptation and convinced Adam to sin as well, Eve is frequently held responsible for the "original sin" (other cultures share this belief; see Pandora's Box). According to Christianity, rather than a daughter, God sent a "Son" to earth to save humanity.

◆ *Religious support to patriarchy*

Including Moses and Muhammad, a large number of the prophets of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam are male. Males predominate among religious leaders and some religions, like Roman Catholicism, forbid women from becoming priests. The ideals and structures of religion have influenced patriarchal societies throughout the world. While some religions (such Unitarian Universalists) are moving away from such patriarchy, many religions still oppress women.

2.1.3 Feminism and its Branches

◆ *End of Sexism*

Feminism gained a theoretical base in the beginning of 18th century taking power from Mary Wollstonecraft's publication of 'A Vindication of the Rights of Woman'. The feminist notions have gained their form and types according to the needs and necessities of the respective social system and culture. Feminists anticipate to end sexism and patriarchal domination by empowering women; but the 'way and process' of empowering is complicated. Feminist movement is inclusive and diverse and hence one solution to all gender inequalities is impossible.

- ◆ The birthplace of American Feminism is The Seneca Falls Convention.
- ◆ It was held at the Wesleyan Chapel in Seneca Falls, New York, on July 19 and 20, 1848.
- ◆ The first wave of the feminist movement is traced back to the first formal Women's Rights Convention that was held in 1848.
- ◆ First wave feminism was inclined by the collective activism of women in various other reform movements.

◆ *Empowerment*

But global social changes and worldwide debates have generated the most innovative, creative and realistic strategies for women's empowerment. Even though the problem and the goal remain the same, there can never be a common strategy or agenda be fixed. Hence, the difficulty in setting one solution for the patriarchal problem generated different branches to feminism. The important feature of

these branches / types is that they are not in water-tight compartments; they are fluid-like, mutually exclusive, but continue to create different waves within themselves and outside.

The major branches / types of feminism are: Liberal, Socialist, Marxist and Radical. This unit deals with the detailing of these.

2.1.3.1 Liberal Feminism

◆ *Judiciary and rights*

Liberal feminism is a major subset of feminism that focuses on achieving gender equality through judicial and political change within a liberal democratic framework while also taking human rights into consideration. It is frequently regarded as economically centrist and culturally progressive. Liberal feminism, the first-wave feminist movement that sought women's suffrage and equal access to education in the 19th century, is the oldest of the "Big Three" schools of feminist thought. This movement was linked to 19th-century liberalism and progressivism.

◆ *Inequality*

In order to incorporate women into mainstream society, liberal feminism "works within that existing structure." The lack of equal legal and political rights is seen as the main barrier to equality by liberal feminism, which focuses a strong emphasis on the public sphere, including laws, political institutions, education and the workplace. Liberal feminists have therefore pushed to advance women's participation in politics.

◆ *Reformism*

Liberal feminism is related to centrism and reformism, which is inclusive and socially progressive, and broadly supports the institutions of power that now exist in liberal democratic states. Both women and men have always been active members of the movement; since the movement's founding in the 19th century, progressive men have played a significant role alongside women in the fight for equal political rights. Liberal feminism actively encourages men to participate in feminism. Historically, liberal feminism is connected to social liberalism.

◆ *Social liberalism*

The historical roots of liberal feminism could be traced back to the social liberalism in the late 19th century Europe. Social liberals are of the opinion that the common good is always associated with the freedom of the individual. The thought is different from that of classical liberalism, which appeals the state to address economic and social issues.



The main goal of Liberal feminists was to gain suffrage for women and hence they will be able to gain social liberty.

◆ *Mainstream feminism*

Another name of Liberal feminism is 'egalitarian or mainstream feminism.' It is considered as the most moderate branch. If all people are created equal there should never be any denial of equal opportunity in terms of gender. Liberal feminism offers an interesting proposition that all genders benefit from the eradication of sexism. Liberal Feminism has its base in the Enlightenment aspects, rationality, scientific reasoning, education and natural rights in Europe.

◆ *Women's rights*

Although "liberal feminism" as a word is relatively recent, its political heritage is considerably older. Around a century after the organised liberal women's rights movement first emerged, the word "feminism" started to dominate English usage to describe the fight for women's rights. However, most of the feminist historians in the west argue that all movements pursuing women's rights should be categorised as feminist movements, even if they did not use the term to describe themselves.

In the past, liberal feminism was referred to as "bourgeois feminism". It was primarily contrasted with working-class or "proletarian" women's groups, which later evolved into socialist and Marxist feminism. Since the 1960s, radical feminism had been contrasted with both liberal feminism and the "proletarian" or socialist / Marxist women's movements. One of the two, three or four primary traditions in the history of feminism typically includes liberal feminism.

◆ *Compelled subordination*

Let us draw your attention to a quote from a renowned feminist work. John Stuart Mill, well-known English philosopher, economist and civil servant, with his partner Harriet Taylor Mill jointly published the work 'The Subjection of Women' in 1869; which articulates the view: "what is now called the nature of women is an eminently artificial thing – the result of forced oppression in some directions, unnatural stimulation in others." What does it imply? It meant that the current notion of women's nature is remarkably artificial, stemming from compelled subordination in certain aspects and artificial stimulation in others.

The work, 'Subjection of Women' argues that women should be treated that the same way as men with equal status. The work condemned the marginalization of Victorian

◆ *Equal Status*

women and commented it as irrational and unethical. Mill disregards the common misconceptions about women. Mill opined that positive and effective mobilization would bring productive social changes.

◆ *Functional rules*

The social belief of the Liberal Feminists surrounds the following notion that society does not have to be totally restructured for women to achieve empowerment and incorporation into meaningful and functional roles. This view was much welcomed and adopted by professional / working women and middle-class women who consider education and employment as the first priority. This category of women possesses economic resources, good social positions and employment opportunities. The highlighting point is that Liberal feminism appeals to the 'mainstream' women who have no deviation or disagreement with the whole social structure; the only demand or call is that the system should be 'non-sexist.'

The National Organisation for Women (NOW) is the formal group representing Liberal Feminism. This feminist group in the United States is officially a 501(c)(4) social welfare organization founded in 1966. The statement of this organisation is to call for an end to restrictive gender roles that cause opportunities for both women and men to diminish.

◆ *Antagonistic views*

In the 1970s and 80s liberal feminists initially expressed scepticism towards the term 'feminism'. For example, the liberal feminist Norwegian Association for Women's Rights expressed uncertainty or doubt towards the term "feminism" as late as 1980 because it could raise "unnecessary antagonism towards men." But later they accepted the term as it increasingly became the general term for the women's rights struggle in the era.

As a large philosophical movement and dominant tradition in feminism, liberal feminism encompasses a wide range of ideologies, including equality, social, equity and difference feminisms. Particularly in Western nations, state feminism and liberal feminism are frequently equated. A few variations within Liberal feminism are described here:

◆ *Right to decision making*

In the 2010s, neoliberal feminism first appeared. Neoliberalism is described by Rottenberg as a "new form of selfhood, which encourages people as individual subjects

responsible for their own well-being” and “ensures the individual’s right to their own autonomous decision making”.

◆ *Deviations*

Individualist or libertarian feminism frequently deviates greatly from liberal feminism on a number of important topics. Libertarian feminism does not require social measures to reduce material inequality; in fact, it rejects such actions. Liberal feminists typically give less attention to sexual politics, whereas libertarian feminists frequently do. Contrary to libertarian and radical feminists, mainstream liberal feminists, such as the National Organisation for Women, tend to reject prostitution but are not entirely united in their views.

◆ *Variations of femininity*

Hillary Clinton is frequently referred to be a liberal feminist and has defined “feminist” as someone who supports equal rights in accordance with this concept. But Hillary’s policy and her white privilege ignore many women, such as women of colour, low-income women and immigrants.

Since the 1980s, Equity feminism, a variety of liberal feminism, has been discussed. It is a type of traditionally liberal or libertarian feminism that places a greater emphasis on equality before the law, equal liberties and rights than significant social upheavals.

Liberal Feminists

- ◆ First wave feminists: Mary Wollstonecraft, John Stuart Mill, Helen Taylor, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Gina Krog
- ◆ Second Wave feminists: Betty Friedan, Gloria Steinem, Simone de Beauvoir
- ◆ Third Wave feminists: Rebecca Walker, Eve Ensler, Kimberle Crenshaw

◆ *Positive qualities*

Cultural feminism is a branch embraced by Liberal Feminists. Judith Worell opined that cultural feminism focuses on empowering women by focusing on the positive qualities related to women’s roles like cooperation, caring and nurturing. This approach analyses the range of similarity and dissimilarity of women. In a way, Cultural feminism is part of every type of feminism as the essence of culture is incorporated into every field. The level or degree of gender

differences and similarities is the primary matter of concern in this regard.

◆ *Socialist and cultural feminism*

Although there are some similarities, socialist feminism and cultural feminism are very different movements. Cultural feminism places a heavy emphasis on the distinctive qualities and achievements of the feminine gender as opposed to those of the masculine. A major subject is separation, which socialist feminism rejects. Socialist feminism aims to create an equal playing field for men and women by collaborating with them. Socialism-affiliated feminists have labelled cultural feminism as “pretentious.”

In 1989, gender, race and critical academic Kimberle Crenshaw first used the term “intersectionality.” The phrase describes the ways in which various forms of oppression, such as those based on race and gender, interact with one another.

It is important to pay close attention to the unique ways that autonomy deficits are created in the lives of different women to recognise these enabling circumstances. Procedural accounts refrain from making straightforward judgements about the nature of women’s decisions or the arrangements that result. The list of enabling circumstances is shown below.

◆ *Freedom*

a) Being free from violence and its threat: Women’s dignity is violated by violence and the threat of violence; they are forced to do what others desire or have their range of action limited to protecting themselves. Violence can sometimes cause self-destructiveness and rob women of their sense of self-respect. The specific role that violence and the threat of violence play in unfairly limiting and disempowering women is described in feminist literature on violence against women.

◆ *Choices*

b) Have adequate options: According to the egalitarian, liberal feminist perspective, women should have access to choices. Due to economic hardship, particularly due to the “feminization of poverty,” women’s access to options is frequently and unfairly limited. Stereotyping and sex discrimination in the workplace and in schools are some factors that unfairly limit the possibilities available to women.

Some racial, ethnic, and cultural groups are negatively impacted by such stereotyping and discrimination in particularly nefarious ways.

◆ *No moral policing*

c) Being unrestricted by moralistic, paternalistic and patriarchal laws and regulations: Patriarchal, paternalistic laws and policies limit the choices available to women under the justification that doing so is in their best interests. Consider the regulations that restrict women's work opportunities on the justification that doing some tasks is not in their best interests. Patriarchal moralistic laws and regulations limit the options accessible to women on the basis that morality precludes women from selecting particular options. Consider regulations that forbid abortion or favour particular forms of sexual expression or family structure.

2.1.3.2 Socialist Feminism

◆ *End of oppression*

When the feminist ideas began in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, there had been immense dissatisfaction of women because of their second-class citizenship. Many women called up for an end to the social and political oppression. Women wanted to demolish patriarchy and access the right to vote, property and education. Thus, the first wave of feminism which began by early 20th century and lasted till 1960s pointed to the call for freedom from political oppression. The feminist movement and the New Left gave rise to Socialist feminism in the 1960s and 1970s, which emphasises the connection between capitalism and patriarchy.

◆ *Second wave*

Feminism gained its thrust through its second wave. The wave began in 1960-s and its existence was as a response to World War II. Weaker sections of women like lower-income earners were compulsively made victims of brutal sterilizations. Thus, the focus of the second wave Socialist feminism shifted to the public and private injustices. Eventually socialist feminism gained momentum while women actively participated in politics and as they gained education, property rights *etc.*

Eleanor Marx (1855–1898), Karl Marx's daughter, is credited with helping to define and advance socialist feminism.

- In fact, in the 1960s and '70s there had been an outgrowth of feminist movement and the New Left that focused on the interconnections of capitalism and patriarchal notions. This has literally accelerated Socialist feminism. Women's private, domestic and public roles were already made a matter of discussion in Mary Wollstonecraft's work 'A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1792). Carol Hanisch initiated the idea of building up group collectives of females to talk about personal problems to bring solutions for them. An essay of the same name by Carol Hanisch, published in 1969 coined the term 'the personal is political'. Socialist feminists argue for a liberation that is the result of terminating economic and cultural sources of women's oppression.
- ◆ *The 'new left'*
 - ◆ *production*
 - ◆ *Expanded version*
- Stabilising patriarchy, through production and consumption, relations of production *etc.* are the study areas of Socialist feminism. They observe that theories of patriarchal capitalism produce new sites for feminist revolutionary revolt.
- Marxist feminism's 'defence of the involvement of capitalism in women's exploitation' and radical feminism's 'thesis of the influence of gender and the patriarchy' are both expanded upon by socialist feminism. Socialist feminists contest the central concept of radical feminism, which holds that patriarchy is the sole or major cause of female oppression.

Socialist Feminists

- ◆ Ueno Chizuko
- ◆ He Zhen
- ◆ Anna Wheeler
- ◆ William Thompson
- ◆ Flora Tristian
- ◆ Charlotte Perkins Gilman
- ◆ Clara Zetkin
- ◆ Eleanor Marx

Major Issues of Socialist Feminism

a) Intersectionality

In the 1930s, socialist feminist Claudia Jones fought for

◆ *Racial aspects*

Black women's inclusion in the Communist Party as well as the inclusion of other working women of colour and their concerns. This is due to the Communist Party's inclination to focus on problems facing the white, masculine proletariat. Jones is credited with theorising triple oppression, the idea that Black and Brown women face oppression based on race, class and gender. Her theoretical foundation is in the junction of Marxism, Black Nationalism, and Feminism. Jones contends further that Black Nationalism and the abolition of colonialism are necessary for the liberation of working-class white women, much less Black and Brown women. According to feminist historian Linda Gordon, socialist feminism is intrinsically intersectional because it considers both gender and class, at least to a certain extent.

◆ *Domestic aspects*

b) Parenting and the private realm

Authors Anna Wheeler and William Thompson explain how women's labour keeps capitalism alive. They say that all domestic tasks, including cleaning, doing laundry, and cooking, qualify as real work. According to Wheeler and Thompson, women are essential to capitalism because they bear children and take care of the home and without them, capitalism would not be able to function.

◆ *Family and parenthood*

Socialist feminists draw attention to how parenthood and the gendered division of labour result "naturally" from women's roles as mothers, which causes women to be socially and economically dependent on men. They claim that the gendered division of labour is unnatural and demonstrate how it prevents women from fully participating in economic activity outside the home because they are expected to carry out all or most of reproductive labour, which includes not only the labour involved in giving birth and raising children but also the cleaning, cooking, and other tasks required to support human life.

◆ *Active roles of masculinity*

c) Toxic masculinity

According to socialist feminists, toxic masculinity harms not only men but also women and non-binary individuals. The notion that males should act in a certain way is known as toxic masculinity; these actions are typically forceful and devoid of emotion. Men are maintained in their assigned active masculine positions, while women are assigned the submissive role.

d) Gender pay gap

◆ *Wage discrimination*

The global gender economic divide has been brought to light by socialist feminism theories. Modern socialist feminists are now more concerned about the inadequate pay women receive for work done outside the home than they are about unpaid domestic work. Although some women have managed to land well-paying positions in industries dominated by males, the majority works in service, clerical, agriculture and light industry. The three main causes of the gender wage gap, according to feminist philosopher Rosemarie Tong are: a large percentage of women work part-time rather than full-time, female-dominated jobs face visible wage discrimination.

◆ *Devaluation*

The patriarchal and capitalist systems that prevail have contributed to and maintained the gender pay gap. Women have been subjected to low pay due to the feminization and devaluation of service-based occupations. The wage gap has grown as a result of women's limited access to alternative employment that would offer higher compensation.

◆ *Secondary wage*

The number of hours that women can work outside the home is limited by households who are unable to hire additional help; having to perform both outside and inside work leads to the unpaid "second shift," which widens the divide. Under patriarchy, women's labour is seen as "secondary wages." Even full-time working women who perform the same jobs as men are not paid equally. Tong asserts that women are paid less merely because they are women, which is a fairly frightening argument to make.

◆ *Humane approach*

As mentioned above, Socialist feminism is obviously connected to Marxist theory. But it can not be ignored that there are key differences between both. Marxist theory emphasizes on property and economic conditions for building an ideology, whereas the ideas of socialist feminism concentrate on sexuality and gender. According to Hartmann, "men and women retain interest in their own gender group, so it is unclear if the socialism being struggled for is the same for both men and women." A gentle and humane socialist approach to feminism necessitates consent on what the new society should be and would require men to reject or discard their privileges as men.

2.1.3.3 Marxist Feminism

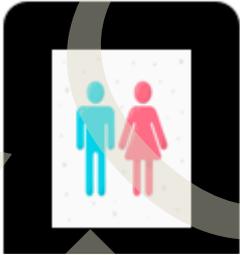
◆ *Marxian ideology*

Marxist feminism is an ideological type which incorporates ideas of Marxism. It began in the 19th century Europe with the realization that under the Capitalist system, women were exploited through unequal payment for reproductive and emotional labour. Marxist feminists historicise women's exploitations and find relation between reproduction and relations of production.

◆ *Labour*

Charlotte Parkins Gilman's work *Women and Economics*, written in 1898 contributed to the first-wave feminism. It provides a substantial analysis of women's labour in the 19th century. There are several ways through which women are exploited in capitalism. The individual ownership of private property is also a major matter of discussion.

Marxist Feminism

An icon showing a blue male figure and a red female figure standing side-by-side, enclosed in a black square frame.

Marxist feminism focuses on the oppression upon women generated by the unequal division of labour based on gender.

◆ *Capitalism*

Under the Capitalist system both men and women are subjected to dilemmas, and while women's perspective is considered, the amount of work they have to put in is not honoured or accounted. They are forced in labour for longer, strict periods and neglected on the case of wages. The working conditions are toxic and the remedy to this situation is the liberation from the clutches of Capitalism. Marxist feminism focuses on the following aspects:

a) Classless society

◆ *Equality*

The most important objective of Marxist feminism is to make a classless society with no divisions of upper and lower classes. Problems experienced by upper class and lower class women were very different. Upper class women enjoyed economic privileges but they were denied liberation in many other aspects. Same is the case of lower class women.

They faced economic issues entailed to limited freedom which later affected their life decisions. When the goal of a classless society is achieved the ideas of Marx and Engels would ensure collective ownership which results in primary dignity of every woman member in society.

b) Equal pay

◆ *Labour aspects*

If labour input of men and women are same, so should be wages for both. Women labour was often an unrecognised aspect and they were denied equivalent wages. They had to perform manual labour for hours and pass through physical turmoil. Women were regarded as the 'reserve army of labour.' Hence the importance of equal pay.

c) Reproductive labour

◆ *Capitalism and female body*

Women are involved in the unpaid reproductive labour including domestic chores and bearing children. The physical and mental tantrums experienced by women during the process of procreation help to carry forward the future generations. This is non-materialistic labour and hence it is ignored and neglected. Women are denied an equal opportunity to carry out productive labour. Marx and Friedrich Engels theorised these aspects and became highly critical of capitalism. They opined that Capitalism plays an important role in making the State to control women's sexuality and body integrity. Family became a place where women was oppressed and made subordinate to men, thus producing gender gap in payment and status.

d) Social wages

◆ *Denial of amenities*

Marxist Feminists study the social wages which denote the amenities that are specified to the social members of a society. Majority of women all around the world, regardless of their social or familial contribution, are denied respectable social participation. This leads to two outcomes:

1. Labour of women in the farms or land is similar to reproductive labour, as they don't get deserving payment for either.
2. Rural household is an economic unit which erases the value and labour of rural women.

e) Wages for household work

Marxist feminism demanded the inclusion of household



work as paid labour and the fixing of wages. Private property and economic domination were the core reasons for the exploitation of women and the improvement of working conditions is very crucial for their emancipation.

f) Inter-sectionality

◆ *Interactions and inter relations*

The term intersectionality refers to the interrelation between or among the different sections of society based on gender, race, caste *etc.* Marxist feminism organises women from varied backgrounds of caste, communities, regions *etc.* It helps in the widespread interaction of people with different identities. This intersectional organising focuses on the oppression and exploitation in recent times and it has played an important role in promoting social movements with labour movements. This helps in the enhanced cooperation among labourers in agriculture and industry.

g) Emotional labour

◆ *Emotional stability*

Though non-materialistic, this type of labour is important in keeping the emotional balance of family members stable. Women members have to put complete involvement to ensure the well-being of the entire family. The same expectation comes in the employment field. Women are expected to fulfil emotional labour and peace at the workplace; however, it is not often noticed.

h) Affective labour

◆ *Settlement of issues*

Marxist feminists like Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, Shiloh Whitney *etc.* are of the opinion that Affective labour distinguishes the fine line between personal and economic lives of women. Work done with the intention of eliciting or modifying people's emotional experiences is referred to as affective labour. Emotional labour, on the other hand, aims to create or alter one's own emotional experiences. The domestic labour contributed by women should be economically appreciated as it adds up to the overall production. Marxian feminists hope that affective labour would bring equality and settle a few of the issues faced by women.

◆ *Analysis of labour*

Marxism has been analysing unpaid, reproductive "women's work" as a crucial component of capitalism since the 1840s. To better understand how reproduction and production have changed through time, Marxist feminism looks at the relationship between the two; and theorised revolutionary subjectivity and opportunities

for an anti-capitalist future by Marxist feminism. The notions of imperialism and the primitive accumulation, or robbery, of land, resources and women's unpaid labour to the reproduction of lives and generations are particularly significant to Marxist feminism.

A FEW MARXIST FEMINISTS

- ◆ Karol Cariola
- ◆ Angela Davis
- ◆ Raya Dunayevskaya
- ◆ Silvia Federici
- ◆ Shulamith Firestone
- ◆ Clara Fraser
- ◆ Anuradha Ghandy
- ◆ Claudia Jones

◆ *Systematic racism*

Marxist feminism in the U. S. began to call for more focus on the political and economic aspects of systemic racism in addition to sexism and class exploitation in the 1930s. In anticolonial uprisings, feudal patterns of gender oppression were mobilised by imperialism to seize markets, lands, and populations. These ideas gave rise to various forms of socialist feminism all around the world. They attempted to increase official support for women's equal access to rights and resources in state socialist nations including the People's Republic of China, the U. S. S. R. and Eastern Europe.

◆ *Patriarchal power*

They also tried to demolish "gender" as a significant site of various social values. Socialist feminism focused on "patriarchy" as a position of power that oppressively influenced women's lives in the U. S. and Western Europe. Patriarchy overlapped but contrasted with the Marxist emphasis on the supremacy of capitalism and class exploitation for socialist feminism. In socialist feminism, considerations of gender inequity, social reproduction and economic reproduction were combined.

◆ *Domination*

2.1.3.4 Radical Feminism

As mentioned earlier, the second wave feminism that developed in the 1960-s approached and analysed patriarchy as a 'trans historical phenomenon'. It defines patriarchy as the oldest, universal and primary form of domination. It is rather regarded as a 'model of domination.' There were

women working or involving along with men in the civil rights movements and Anti-Vietnam wars.

◆ *Rejection and disregard*

Disappointingly, women were not allowed to manifest or possess their positions in the war phase. The male cohorts typically ignored them and disregarded their contributions. Later they realised the insult and ridicule from the part of the males whom they regarded as allies. The self-realisation and the empowerment gained by women in the United States in the 20th century was a rebirth to the women's movements.

◆ *Challenges*

Similarly, American feminism in the 19th century saw the spirits of women who were marginalised and dishonoured by men with whom they worked in anti-slavery movement. There was a constant tendency to patronize attitudes of men and it catalysed women to recognize and challenge gender-based oppression.

◆ *'Roots'*

Etymologically the term 'radical' means 'relating to the roots.' Radical feminists aim to demolish the whole system of patriarchy. Their solution to oppression of women is not through legal or social efforts; but the complete reconstruction of the existing system,

According to Shelton and Agger:

- ◆ Liberal feminists emphasise the workplace and legal changes as the base of gender inequality
- ◆ Radical feminists focus on the patriarchal family as the key site of domination and oppression

◆ *destruction of patriarchy*

Radical feminists typically take a more militant perspective than other feminists (radical being defined as "getting to the root"). More than adjusting the system through legal changes, a radical feminist seeks to destroy patriarchy. Additionally, radical feminists reject the tendency of socialist or Marxist feminism to minimise oppression as a matter of economics or class.

◆ *Urge for equality*

Patriarchy is what radical feminism attacks, not men. To link radical feminism with man-hatred is to presume that men and patriarchy are philosophically and politically intertwined. The larger radical current movement served as the foundation for radical feminism. Despite the movements' theoretically empowering underlying principles, women who took part in the anti-war and New Left political movements

of the 1960s found themselves blocked from equal power by the men within the movement. While maintaining many of their initial political radical beliefs and strategies, many of these women broke off into distinctive feminist groups. The phrase “radical feminism” came to describe the more extreme side of feminism.

◆ *Alternative for domination*

Moving on to the contemporary radical feminism perspective, feminists believe that the core of patriarchal society is sexism. Sexism is reflected in all social institutions. As all social institutions are intertwined, how can sexism be attacked and eradicated in a meaningful way? Male domination results in female oppression, and here men and patriarchy are the ‘problems.’ In such a condition capitalism, socialism or male-dominated system will solve the difficulties. Then what are the solutions for the situation? Radical feminists are of the opinion that women must make or mould separate institutions that are women-centred. The only alternative for male domination is the path that is different from men’s notions.

◆ *Women-identity*

There are a few values for the world anticipated by women; they are features of care, nurturance and sharing. This ‘woman-identified world’ is encouraged by radical feminists at local levels and neighbourhoods *etc.* to facilitate women serving other women who are victims of patriarchy and domestic violence. They pledge for small scale business, day care facilities, counselling, safe houses *etc.* These alternative institutions are very much different from feminist organisations. They are unique in their structure, ideology and strategies. They are designed in empathetic and functional ways to attain challenging goals.

Some Key Radical Feminists

Ti-Grace Atkinson, Susan Brownmiller, Phyllis Chester, Corrine Grad Coleman, Mary Daly, Andrea Dworkin, Shulamith Firestone, Germaine Greer, Carol Hanisch, Jill Johnston, Catherine MacKinnon, Kate Millett, Robin Morgan, Ellen Willis, and Monique Wittig.

Redstockings, New York Radical Women (NYRW), the Chicago Women’s Liberation Union (CWLU), Ann Arbor Feminist House, The Feminists, WITCH, Seattle Radical Women, and Cell 16 are a few organisations that belonged to the radical feminist wing of feminism.



Radical feminists' primary concerns include:

- ◆ Reproductive freedom for women, including the choice to conceive, to abort, to use birth control or to have sex freely
- ◆ Assessing and then dismantling conventional gender roles in personal interactions and public policies
- ◆ Recognising that pornography is a business and a practice that harms women, even though some radical feminists disagree with this view
- ◆ Seeing rape as a manifestation of patriarchal power rather than a sexually motivated act
- ◆ Recognising prostitution as the sexual and financial exploitation of women under patriarchy
- ◆ An examination of motherhood, marriage, the nuclear family and sexuality that raises the question of how much of our culture is founded on patriarchal presumptions.
- ◆ A critique of other institutions that have historically been based on patriarchal power, such as the government and the church.

◆ *Solutions*

Radical women's organisations employed a variety of tactics, such as awareness-raising organisations, active service delivery, public protest planning and the organisation of cultural and artistic events. Both more liberal and socialist feminists as well as radical feminists frequently support women's studies programmes at universities.

◆ *Homosexuality and other diversions*

Within a larger patriarchal culture, some radical feminists advocated political lesbianism (Viewing lesbianism as an act of political choice) or celibacy as alternatives to heterosexual sex. The radical feminist movement is still divided on transsexual identity. Some radical feminists have advocated for the rights of transgender people because they regard it as another battle for gender liberation; others, particularly transgender women, have opposed the existence of transpeople because they believe trans-women represent and uphold patriarchal gender norms.

◆ *Violent international movement*

The latter group, often known as “gender critical” and “rad fem,” refers to their ideology and serves as Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminism / Feminists (TERFs). Many feminists no longer identify as radical feminists because of the link with TERFs. Though many feminists no longer identify with the word since they are trans-inclusive, some of their beliefs may be comparable to the radical feminism’s founding principles. TERF is a violent international movement with the aim of endangering and eliminating trans-persons, especially transfeminine people. It is not simply transphobic feminism. TERF frequently compromises its feminist principles to work with conservatives.

◆ *Revolution*

At its height, radical feminism was revolutionary, but because it prioritises gender as the primary form of oppression, it lacks an intersectional perspective. It was predominately made up of white women, like many feminist movements before and after, and lacked a focus on racial justice. Since Kimberle Crenshaw first used the term intersectionality, feminism has been working towards a movement to eradicate all forms of oppression by providing a name to the actions and writings of Black women before her. Intersectional feminism is becoming more and more popular among feminists.

◆ *Individual notions*

Comparatively, Radical feminism is considered as the branch with much more ‘individuality.’ Their activities keep the imprints of the ‘women-identified society’ that are admirable and welcoming to the whole female population. When male supremacy and oppression are the main characteristics of a society, there arises the alternative notions put forward by Radical feminism. To increase awareness of women’s oppression, radical feminism is attributed with using consciousness-raising organisations. The focus on sexuality was occasionally added later by radical feminists, some of whom transitioned to radical political lesbianism.

Summarised Overview

Social existence of feminism stays in the fact that in the last 200 years there have been constant struggles to uphold the rights of women all over the world. The Suffragette movement of 1789 introduced a fight for the rights of women. Thereafter, the feminist movements gained prominence and paved way to the current feminist movements. The beginning of 20th century saw the growth of industrialisation and the need to protect the women workers. Different socio-economic and cultural structures laid down distinctive theories of feminism. The major aspects of Marxist feminist theories play a significant position in shaping modern feminist ideologies despite their limitations. According to Breines, women's movement before thirty years faded because it could not address the intersecting categories of oppression that divide women. United Nations and Women's Conferences have been initiating women networks across the world, which pave the path for other forms of feminism like Black and Dalit feminism. Feminism did not, however, become an organised movement or provide a consistent theory of female empowerment until after World War II, with the second wave of feminism. The expanding body of research on women's variety places doubt on the idea that women have a common identity. Lesbians, women of colour, and women worldwide questioned the idea of a homogeneous category of "women" with the advent of second-wave feminism. Even though the definition of liberalism has evolved over the first few decades of the twenty-first century, socialist feminism differs significantly from liberal feminism in other ways as well. Socialist feminists do not agree that gender equality is totally achievable given the limitations of the current social structure, despite liberal feminists' desire for it. Radical feminists tend to concentrate more on the underlying reasons of existing inequities. They frequently hold the view that the only cause of women's oppression is sexual discrimination. However, radical feminism and socialist feminism may be more closely related than certain other types of feminism. Of course, all these forms of feminism have comparable and frequently identical issues, but they differ in their treatments and solutions.

Self-Assessment

1. Explain the fundamental concepts in Feminist theory.
2. What are the major aspects of Liberal Feminism?
3. Describe the thoughts put forward by Socialist Feminists.
4. Bring out the major focus points of Marxist Feminism.
5. Which branch of feminism aims to demolish the whole system of patriarchy? Elaborate.



6. What are the alternative methods initiated by Radical feminists to prevent gender oppression?

Assignments

1. Relevance of feminist theory in the academic sphere
2. Elaborate on Feminism and its branches
3. Bring out the major issues discussed by Socialist feminism
4. Discuss the branch of feminism that discusses unpaid 'women's work'

Suggested Reading

1. Anna C. F. & Wendy W., Pam S., and Joan K. (2003). *Gender Studies: Terms and Debates*. UK: Palgrave MacMillan
2. Bhasin, K. (2003) *Understanding Gender. Women Unlimited*. New Delhi. Sage
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1. Jaquette J. S. and Gale S. (eds.). (2006). *Women and Gender Equity in Development Theory and Practice*. US: Duke University Press.
2. Momsen, J. (2009). *Gender and development*. U. S.; Routledge.
3. Seth M. (2001). *Women and Development: The Indian Experience*. Delhi: Sage Publications
4. Veltmeyer H. (ed.), (2011). *The Critical Development Studies Handbook: Tools for Change*. Columbia: Fernwood Publishing.
5. <https://blog.ipleaders.in/marxist-feminism/>
6. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-liberal/>



Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU



Subaltern Feminism

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- ◆ understand the theoretical background of subaltern feminism
- ◆ explore the major characteristics of Black feminism and Dalit feminism
- ◆ be tuned to the relevance of Black feminism, Dalit feminism and indigenous feminism

Background

Who speaks for the suppressed and oppressed under-class in a society? Just reflect on it. Feminism is already the medium for speaking out about equality; and then contemplate about it focusing on more precise issues of the sub-categories of Dalit women or Black women. The patriarchal authority keeps on exerting authoritarian pressure and women are marginalised and subjected to exploitation. Marxist scholar Antonio Gramsci introduced the post-modern term 'Sub-altern' in his notes on Italian history. The notion that, the oppressed class - tribals, peasants and women are not objects of history - is the core of subaltern approach. The sub-altern or inferior class was denied the access to the 'hegemonic power' (dominance). Their social agency is stagnant and they are often denied their role in socio-economic institutions. When colonial studies expanded, sub-altern perspective became an integral matter of discussion for theoreticians. It helped to uncover the histories and culture of the marginalised, sub-altern groups which were shut down by the colonial and nationalist archives.

Keywords

Subaltern, Marginalised, Colonisation, Hierarchy, Oppression



Discussion

◆ *Politics of the marginalised*

The subaltern historiographers draw a vital observation on the politics of subaltern classes. Their ideology and politics are autonomous. It is not dependent on the 'elite or upper-class politics. In any social or nationalist movement the subaltern classes maintain their own politics parallel to the dominant elites. Subaltern feminism takes up an integral position in the feminist sphere as it discusses the inferior rank or identity of women in relation to socio-economic status, caste, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation *etc.*

◆ *Colonised objects*

According to Simon de Beauvoir, women all over the world are colonised subjects. They are characterised as 'other', 'marginalised' and 'colonised'. Patriarchy dissects them as a conquered land. Women's body and agency are subjected to severe politics of oppression. While discussing the issues related to women, it is important to understand that problems of women in different cultures vary accordingly. The two main choices spreading out as the liberation force of feminism are, firstly, Dalit feminism and secondly, Black feminism. Dalit women in India and Black women in America have been experiencing extreme subjugation of caste, race, gender and class. Researchers have observed this as 'Triple subjugation' - that is oppression due to their sex, colour and class. Black feminism and Dalit feminism accelerated the empowerment of these subaltern women groups.

2.2.1 Black Feminism

Sojourner Truth, renowned African-American activist and feminist delivered her speech "Ain't I a woman?" in 1851 at the Women's Convention at Ohio. The speech explained the unlike ways through which Black women faced slavery and oppression. Black feminism, the branch of feminism otherwise called Afro-feminism (known outside U. S.) focuses black women and racist aspects of inequality.



SOJOURNER TRUTH (1797-1883)

Sojourner Truth was a former slave and a keen supporter of abolition, temperance, civil rights and women's rights in the nineteenth century. Her contributions to the Civil War won her a meeting with President Abraham Lincoln in 1864. She endured cruel punishments, hard physical labour and was sold many times by the masters. She married another slave when she was in her teens and they had five children together starting in 1815. Truth met Frederick Douglass and William Lloyd Garrison while working as a travelling preacher. Truth was urged to give talks about the consequences of slavery by Garrison's anti-slavery group. She never picked up a pen or a paper. She gave Olive Gilbert her autobiography, *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth*, in 1850, and she helped with its publication. Truth relied on the book's revenues to support herself and gain national attention. She was introduced to temperance advocates as well as women's rights activists like Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, all of which she instantly championed.

◆ *Empowerment*

Black feminism is a manner of empowerment that generates new viewpoints on the issues that black women face, as well as their social problems and inequities. These problems are a result of oppressive systems that have been mutually created. Ms. Truth and other women like her were important role models for black feminism in the nineteenth century.

Black feminists critically evaluate the whole system of hierarchy. American author Gloria Jean Watkins called this hierarchy as "imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy." When the inter-dependency of these dominant forces happens, it creates enlarged versions of racism and sexism. A Black woman suffers two traumas- one is being

◆ *Questioning hierarchy*

'Black' and the second is being a 'woman.' Hence the problems could be solved only by seeing the feminist perspective in an intersectional way. This intersectionality evaluates 'Black identity and 'Female identity' independently. When both of these identities intersect, the identity deepens, reinforces strongly and it potentially leads to greater and violent forms of inequality.

◆ *The issues of 'Black'*

In the U. S., Black feminist paradigm was used by Black women to observe the interaction of 'white domination' and patriarchy. NACW (National Association of Coloured women) was formed along with NCNW (National council of Negro women) by the Black feminists and activists. The Women's Movement and the Black Liberation Movement influenced and gave rise to the Black Feminist Movement. Black women felt sexually and racially oppressed by the Black Liberation Movement and by the Women's demonstrations, which led to the emergence of the Black Feminist Movement. The term "black" was widely used to refer to black males, whereas the phrase "women" was frequently used to refer to white women.

◆ *Invisibility*

Black women perceived themselves as being disregarded and invisible for this reason. Their wants and existence were not taken into consideration. The goal of the black feminist movement was to find a means to effectively meet the needs of black women and address how race, class and gender interacted in their daily lives. It was necessary to take action to stop the oppressive racism, sexism and classism these women endured.

◆ *Black community*

Another black woman, Anna Julia Cooper, published "A Voice from the South" in 1892. This book emphasised the importance of hearing Black women's voices and paying attention to them in order to affect social change. Ida B. Wells, a journalist and activist, launched a campaign against the assassinations that took place in the 1980s. Efforts of Ms. Truth, Cooper and Wells together with a large number of others, demonstrated how the Black community established a strong foundation for social justice in the face of sexism, a masculine privilege enjoyed by White males, and prejudice and marginalisation from White feminists of the time. Intersectionality is a key idea in black feminist theory.

2.2.1.1 Intersectionality

In the previous part you may have come across the term

◆ 'Double' suffering

'intersectionality.' Let us now apprehend the prominence of intersectionality through an incident. A black woman who owns a business may experience discrimination in society on account of both her race and gender. The Combahee River Collective was established in the 1970s by several Black women. Intersectionality was crucial to their movement. As they believed that their fight was for a wide spectrum of oppressions rather than just one or two, it set their movement apart from White Feminism. For a Black woman, double is the suffering; one from patriarchy and the other from racism.

◆ Social media campaigns

Gender, race, and other social categories often intersect and interact in ways that have an impact on an individual's life and consequences. This is known as intersectionality. A person's socio-political identities and other areas of their life are examined using this theoretical framework. Gender, race, class, caste, religion and physical appearance are some of them. These elements could all interact to produce various forms of privilege and discrimination in a person's life. In the 20th century, the movement became more prevalent in political and academic discourse. Even in the twenty-first century, intersectionality is crucial to Black feminism. Intersectionality served as the foundation for the #BlackLivesMatter movement, an anti-racist social movement that was launched to confront police brutality.

◆ Types of violence

As you know, Kimberle William Crenshaw, a Black feminist scholar, first used the term "intersectionality" in 1989. It was not widely embraced by feminists until the 2000s. In her essay for the University of Chicago Legal Forum, she used this phrase. The paper was titled as *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics*. She discusses different types of violence and how non-White women experience it differently. The paper also discusses the invisibility that Black women experience and the necessity for representation. She distinguishes between two types of violence experienced by women: domestic abuse and rape. She notes how structural intersectionality causes women of colour to experience both these forms of abuse in qualitatively different ways. Political intersectionality, structural intersectionality, and representative intersectionality were some of the sub-themes she investigated.

2.2.1.2 Womanist

There are numerous definitions of the Black Feminist

◆ *Love for women*

Movement offered by various authors. Among these, the definition offered by Alice Walker and the assertion made by organisation Combahee River Collective are the most well-known and noteworthy. Alice Walker created the term “Womanist” to refer to the Black Feminist Movement. She defined a womanist as someone who was bold, brave and accountable. Womanists are feminists who have a sexual or non-sexual love for other women and identify as such.

◆ *Social challenges*

For the fundamental reason that it expanded a woman’s personal boundaries while also urging them to maintain their connection to the rest of mankind, this definition was exceedingly difficult for women to accept. Black women communicated their message through literature. They wrote to analyse the complicated social challenges that they had to deal with as black women. They described the misery of slavery, their unfathomable suffering and injustices they had experienced. They hold both white and black males responsible for the injustice they endure. However, black women’s literary contributions were purposefully left out of literary analysis and other critical studies by white female professors and writers. Thus, in literary history, black women writers have been marginalised and misunderstood.

◆ *Discrimination*

2.2.1.3 Sexism, Racism And Class Oppression

This movement was started by black women to tackle sexism in society. However, they soon discovered that white women were barely there for them or even caring about the issues that black women faced. The racial segregation was so pronounced that “blacks” denoted black men and “women” denoted white women. Due to this heinous kind of racial discrimination, the Black Feminist movement was born, initially with the sole purpose of putting an end to racism. The intersectionality and interconnectedness of sexism, racism and class oppression were emphasised by the movement. Black feminists aimed to foster camaraderie and cooperation among themselves, which would have a profound impact on American culture.

Black women were seen by white people as being sexually immoral and ill-mannered. They were viewed as violent, malicious, stubborn, dishonest and resentful. It was necessary to change this perception. Black women were expected to rise beyond their inferior status (in comparison to black males) and take on leadership roles in the fight against racism. The fundamental objective of this Movement was to give black

◆ *Racism*

women the mental, spiritual and economic resources they needed to combat tyranny. Black women were made fun of at voting booths and given reasons not to vote even when women were first given the chance to do so. All these things required improvement. The Black ladies needed to reclaim who they really were.

2.2.1.4 Black Feminism Identity Politics

◆ *Identity issues*

The identity of Black Feminist Politics may be summed up as knowing and comprehending one's own identity while taking into account both one's own experiences and those of others in history, in order to spur the creation of a group of like-minded individuals who desired to alter the political structure of the society. The rejection of repressive measures (in terms of political injustice) against a person's group is another way to define it.

◆ *Social groups*

Another identity politics debate involves the creation of groups and safe spaces for black women. In the 1970s, as literacy levels rose, writing and scholarship were encouraged as venues for black women to have their voices heard. Because of this, the women were able to talk freely about significant subjects like oppression and segregation in the safe spaces and found peace and solace there. This aided in fostering togetherness and served as a tool for achieving social justice.

◆ *Unique movements*

Black women who took part in the Women's Movement and the Liberation Movement for the Blacks experienced racial as well as sexual discrimination. Although not all Black men or White women involved in these campaigns were sexist or racist, a sufficient number of those with power in the community made an effort to make it difficult for Black women to live. The way Black women are treated in these two movements demonstrates how unable Black men and White women are to admit to and condemn their oppression of Black women.

◆ *Ownership on movements*

These movements did not in any way address the problems of Black women, which led them to create their own movement, the Black Feminist Movement. The National Feminist Organisation was established in New York only in 1973, and the movement had been gaining strength for some time. Florynce Kennedy, Michele Wallace, Faith Ringgold, Doris Wright, and Margaret Solan-Hunter were among the group's early members.

◆ *Social barriers*

There are currently writings and histories of black women in the women's study department of colleges and other academic institutions in the U. S. A. In retrospect, the Black Liberation Movement continues to overlook problems affecting Black women. Although the Black academic community is more conscious of the sexism that women encounter, pop culture, which includes singers and rappers, still perpetuates these attitudes in their music. The Black Feminist Movement still has many barriers to overcome. The first is to overcome its unpopularity and develop its appeal among the Black and Third World women and winning their support. For individuals who are unaware of this movement or its necessity even in the modern period, education and awareness are essential. The formation of effective mentor-mentee ties between Black academics and young Black students is necessary.

◆ *Freedom*

In addition to working with the Liberation Movement to abolish black oppression in all its forms, the Black Feminist Movement must hold the Liberation Movement responsible for the sexism it experienced. In order to address both the unique and shared problems of sexism, there should be ongoing discussion between the White feminist movement and the Black feminist movement. To be truly freed from the repressive system dominated by men, women must ultimately lift up, rather than tear down, other women. It is impossible to overlook Black Feminism's influence or power. It has to be acknowledged and supported. To impact change, a woman's personal battle needs to be linked to the broader feminist movements.

2.2.2 Dalit Feminism

The ways through which Dalit feminism emphasises the overall development of women are unique. The influence of families, communities, political entities *etc.* affect the empowerment pattern. As Dalit feminism underscores the colonial history in the Indian national front, the timeline of male hegemony is the main matter of discussion. Tamil writer and feminist Bama Faustina Soosairaj, who showcased the atrocities faced by Dalit Christian women in Tamil Nadu, manifests the material reality of the women groups and their political struggles. Dalit feminism is essentially an offshoot of the social structure possessed by the caste system. The spatial locations of Dalit women are South Asia, mainly countries like Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan. Dalit women face atrocities and they are confronted with non-

◆ *Overall development*

humanitarian practices by the oppressor castes. The Dalit communities were economically poor, uneducated and socially marginalised. Dalit feminism stood for the equal rights of Dalit women based on gender and caste. Political participation of Dalit feminists was very crucial for their liberation. In India B. R. Ambedkar took great initiative to ensure this.



Scheduled caste delegates with Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar at the Conference of the Federation on July 8, 1942 at Nagpur.

◆ *Authoritarian pressure*

The authoritarian pressure of the upper caste is so brutal that it is insufferable for the men and women of the Dalit community. In such a context, the condition of Dalit women was even worse and under such circumstances Dalit feminism proclaimed its existence. All types of feminism have fixed their pace through the respective literature of the culture. Dalit feminism has flourished with the nuances to the socio-economic and cultural life of Dalit women.

◆ *Social malpractices*

According to the Indian and Pakistani constitutions, Dalits are classified as Scheduled Castes. Statistically, Dalit women represents 2 percent of the world's population. Violence against Dalit women was higher in the 18th and 19th centuries. Devadasi system or forced prostitution was reserved specifically for Dalit women in some areas. Dalit women were completely unaware of their rights; rather they were not informed of their rights. Kiran Kumar Boddu and Siva Nagaiah Bolleddu opined that sexual violence against Dalit women is "a regular and routine phenomenon of oppression." They observed that Dalit women bodies were regarded as always 'sexually available' for British colonists. A study was conducted in 2013, by National Campaign on Dalit Human rights and it showed that half of the Dalit

women community face severe daily forms of violence. They confront kidnappings and religious conversions.

2.2.2.1 Dalit Women Movements

◆ Resistance

In the beginning of the 20th century, there were several anti-caste and anti-untouchability movements. In the 1930s the Non-Brahman movement came up. Child marriage, dowries and enforced widowhood were taken up for protest and resolutions were passed. In the year 1942, almost 25,000 joined together for the All India Depressed Classes Women Conference in Nagpur. The conference discussed the matters related to divorce rights, polygamy, labour conditions and education. Sulochanabai Dongre insisted on their reproductive rights and advocated birth control.

◆ Cultural problems

In the 1970s and in the early 1980s Dalit women took the courage to reveal themselves and wrote autobiographies. They were inspired by Ambedkar. In the years after the 1980s, society began to recognise and admit the crucial role played by caste in relation to Dalit women's problems. Before 1970s not even Dalit women identified that their problems needed solutions in relation to their caste and cultural conditions. In 1987 the first National meeting of Dalit women happened in Bangalore. By the 1990s National Federation of Dalit Women and the All India Dalit Women's Forum were formed at different regional levels.

Dalit feminism is not a divisive or separatist branch of feminism. They ensure continuing alliances with Dalit and non-Dalit women. They attempt to reach equality by addressing their issues in the Dalit context and identify the need for speaking for themselves.

After the 1990s Dalit feminism gained thrust and delegates were sent to the World conference on Racism held in 1993 and to World Conference on women held in 1995. The World conference against racism held in 2001 highlighted the need for erasing racism and casteism, and this gained global recognition. In March 2006, National Conference on 'violence against Dalit women' took place in New Delhi and it passed the Delhi declaration, which discussed the ways through which dominant castes create disparities among the Dalits. An International Conference held at Hague commented that Dalit identity is forged in multiple struggles. The Conference demanded laws and rights for Dalit women and their effective enforcement. The idea of 'Dalit Womanism' came in 2006.

First newspaper by Dalit women named as 'Khabar Lahariya' came out in 2002. This won the UNESCO literacy prize in 2009.

◆ *Academic ventures*

Moving on to the current scenario, activists like Ruth Manorama, an activist from Bangalore, work towards the legal and political empowerment of Dalit women. Manorama commented on the S. C. and S. T. laws as the most poorly implemented ones. Police and the Government do not take any necessary action when the complaint is from the Dalit community, especially women. All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch (AIDMAM) and Krantijyoti Savitribai Phule Women's Studies Center (KSPWSC) conducted a 2017 conference called "Dalit Women Speak Out" which had the participation of 450 delegates. In 2018, the first report on caste-based violence against women was given to the U. N. by the AIDMAM.

◆ *Organisations*

Countries like Nepal and Pakistan also witnessed the same issues of Dalits as in India. One important name among the Nepali feminists is Durga Sob who organised the Feminist Dalit organisation (FEDO) in 1994. The 2014 Dalit Conference held at Kathmandu collected thousands of Dalit women from all around the country. The social conditions in Pakistan are different as it is based on religiosity and Dalit women are undergoing less caste issues. But as they are part of a minority religion they are persecuted due to their background.

◆ *Dalit literature*

Dalit feminist literature is rich with the subjects of caste identity. Tamil writer Meena Kandaswamy and Telugu writers like Joopaka Subhadra, Jajula Gowri, Gogu Shyamala *etc.* highlighted Dalit issues. Dalit literature represents experiences of oppression connected to disadvantages faced exclusively by Dalit women which were different from Dalit men and upper caste men. Dalit women's autobiographies strengthened Dalit feminism in a big way.

2.2.3 Indigenous Feminism

The era of post-colonial feminism acknowledges the drastic effects of colonialism on native or Indigenous women population. Hence the origin of Indigenous feminism. The devastations faced by men are very different when compared to women in the matter of sexuality, inhabited land, property *etc.* during the colonial period. Decolonisation has enabled

◆ *Decolonisation*

the dismantling of oppressive systems introduced during the process of colonisation. As environmental struggles and land rights are connected to feminism, it gets directed to ecofeminism.

◆ *Ethnicity*

It is crucial to distinguish between Indigenous feminism and mainstream white feminism, as well as its related movements (such as liberal feminism and Orientalist feminism), because “Indigenous women will have different concrete experiences that shape our relations to core themes” from non-Indigenous women. Indigenous feminisms are fundamentally interested in how gender and gendered ideas have affected Indigenous peoples’ lives throughout history and in the present. In politics, society, and the media, for example, preconceptions about Indigenous peoples, gender and sexuality are challenged by indigenous feminist perceptions. Regardless of one’s gender or ethnicity, indigenous feminisms provide frameworks for comprehending these and related concerns.

◆ *Relativism*

In certain Indigenous cultures, the use of the term “Indigenous feminism” might be troubling. But it is not the case always. We frequently link it to mainstream feminism, an out-of-date white world view that discredits reproductive labour, or “women’s work,” and supports capitalism and white supremacy. Indigenous women who were brought up by matriarchs and grandmothers gave importance to creating and maintaining a home. Every culture gives values to household chores and family as a part of stereotyped and effective socialisation.

◆ *Revival of customs*

If given the chance, indigenous feminism can alter the course of history. The names themselves do not matter, so if others would rather call themselves “matriarch” or “matriarch-in-training” or another term from their Indigenous language that has greater meaning for them, let them, by all means. However, Indigenous feminism, like other solutions to the problems in India, is about decolonizing rather than engaging in word debates or forcing everyone to use the same ones. It is about recognising, admitting and rejecting the worldview of the colonial experiment injected by the United States of America and imposed, reinforced, and enforced. This type of feminism is also about recovering the teachings and customs of our ancestors.

Indigenous feminism, broadly speaking, can be described as an intersectional theory and practice of feminism that

◆ *Intersectionality*

prioritises decolonization, indigenous sovereignty, and human rights for indigenous women and their families. However, definitions and theorising are not enough; there is consistent feminist action taking place in indigenous communities.

Summarised Overview

Subaltern feminism is a dynamic way of including all diversities of womanhood. It is a feminist perspective that includes questioning caste and gender roles among the Dalit population within feminism and the larger women's movement. From a historical perspective, Dalit men's narratives and recordings were always kept accessible to researches, which unintentionally affected the existence of Dalit women. Thus, Dalit women's issues were largely ignored by mainstream feminism. The larger Indian women's movements were managed by middle and upper-class women and they were not aware about the specific issues of Dalit women. Naturally, they ignored the caste and racial issues faced by lower caste women. Challapalli Swarupa Rani, the first Generation Telugu Dalit feminist, observed that Indian feminism saw just one problem for all Indian women. Dalit feminism saw caste and gender as two mutually exclusive intersectional categories. Racism, sexism and classism are all issues that are addressed by the Black Feminist Movement. This movement is supported by a number of organisations dedicated to eliminating women's fights against all types of oppression. Due to this movement, numerous white women have confronted their racism by setting up anti-racist workshops. The effectiveness, however, has not been the same in the black and white feminist communities. Although the feminist theories have expanded their breadth and scope to include race, class, sexuality *etc.*, the movement was not very successful in the Black community.

Self-Assessment

1. Explain the scope and significance of Subaltern feminism.
2. Describe the historical background of Black feminism.
3. How relevant is 'intersectionality' in feminism?
4. Describe the crucial role played by Dalit feminism in addressing the problems of Dalit women.
5. Prepare a brief note on Dalit movements.
6. What is the historical significance of Indigenous feminism?



Assignments

1. Elaborate the relevance of Indigenous feminism.
2. #Blacklivesmatter is the hashtag of an ongoing virtual campaign. Relate it to the gender perspective.
3. Differentiate and compare Dalit Feminism and Black Feminism.

Suggested Reading

1. Anna C. F. & Wendy W., Pam S., and Joan K. (2003). *Gender Studies: Terms and Debates*. UK: Palgrave MacMillan
2. Bhasin, K. (2003) *Understanding Gender. Women Unlimited*. New Delhi. Sage
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1. Jaquette J. S. and Gale S. (eds.). (2006). *Women and Gender Equity in Development Theory and Practice*. US: Duke University Press.
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5. <https://blog.ipleaders.in/black-feminism-historical-overview-context-unit-ed-states/>

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU





Feminism: Contemporary Debates

Learning Outcomes

After the end of this unit, the learner will be able to

- ◆ understand the need for contemporary debates on feminism
- ◆ explore the contributions of Raewyn Connell and Michel Foucault
- ◆ be watchful about the necessity of evolving trajectory of feminism

Background

Contemporary feminist discussions are relevant to the point that the feminist arguments have developed to the level of studying gender as a concept of plurality and fluidity. The 'performative' nature of gender and sexuality has widened the scope of feminist analysis and has gathered valid attention in the psychoanalytic community. Feminist movements and advanced discussions are ongoing; nevertheless, questions related to oppression of women and gender disparities are still relevant. As feminists investigated the more subtle biases that go beyond 'mere sexism' to shape the very frames of theoretical discourse, the 1990s saw a significant reconsideration of the universalizing tendencies in mainstream political social, and cultural theory.

Do women still face oppression? Is gainful employment the secret to freedom? Can pornography be outlawed? Does a woman have a fundamental right to an abortion? Can women in government actually influence policy? *etc.* are important matters of discussion. The associations between concerns of gender, race and sexuality appropriate the principles of Black and Queer feminist views. Contemporary feminism anticipates that the success in improving the lives of society's most marginalised people would result in gains for the global advancement of gender equality. As this unit discusses the perceptions of Raewyn Connell and Michel Foucault, it enables a completely reformed portrait of gender discernments. Connell's theory offers a critical feminist analysis of historically particular masculinities while simultaneously acknowledging the diverse roles that different men play in its reproduction is a key component of its ongoing appeal. Some feminists have drawn on Foucault's work on power to



create a deeper understanding of the connections between gender and power. An interesting fact is that it does not start with the assumption that men's power is directly responsible for women's oppression. We shall discuss such thoughts in this unit.

Keywords

Queer Feminism, Hegemony, Hegemonic Masculinity, Body

Discussion

◆ *Voice of the marginalised*

The Suffrage movement of the mid 1880s which commenced the first wave feminism, has widely changed and it has taken a different conversion in the contemporary society. Currently feminism has turned out to be the fight for the benefit of the marginalised section; everyone, irrespective of gender, race or caste. A diverse set of voices are collected and been addressed by the feminists in the fourth wave feminism. The entry of technology in activism and the co-existence of multiple feminist branches along with alternative feminist ideologies contribute to the paradigm shift in feminism. The modern feminist approach is defined and explained in terms of intersectionality.

2.3.1 Modern Feminism

◆ *All-inclusiveness*

Dismantling gender inequality and patriarchal structures that uphold them are the core of feminism, whereas equality of all genders is also taken up by modern feminism to round up the goal. Gender based violence has been a much researched or debated topic, whereas inequalities in payment to labour, inaccessible gender based health facility, stereotyped gender expectations, scrutiny and conditioning *etc.* are not given the deserved research exposure. Modern feminists take up the initiatives to erase research gaps. All inclusive strategies for understanding gender issues are their major matter of concerns.

After the 2000s the whole feminist scenario has deliberately started to include the uplifted voices of people



◆ *Personal and political*

who suffer from patriarchy, even though they may not have direct belonging to the feminist pathway. These people were left out from the mainstream feminist movements. Gender diverse people make a large proportion of it. According to Diana Duarte, Director of Policy and Strategic Engagement of feminist group MADRE, the quality of inclusiveness is the most powerful vision of modern feminism. She observes: “Our gender, our race, disability, class, sexuality and more – all of these pieces of ourselves generate different lived experiences and also help us understand that no one of us is just one thing.” She critically says that in feminism ‘the personal is political.’ It means that our personal experiences are shaped by the political realities that are situated far away or nearest to us. Our personal or subjective experiences can inform and lead to political solutions.

◆ *Overall progress*

As discussed in the previous unit, the Black feminism and Dalit feminism have their unique identity which is rather all-inclusive and modern. Co-opting the modern feministic ideas of Black and Queer feminisms helps in the better understanding and update of gender, race and sexuality. These aspects are interconnected and inter-influential. Modern feminists believe that uplifting the marginalised groups will lead to the overall advancement of global gender equality.

The vital point to be noted is that mainstream feminism has not been an inclusive one. For instance, the right to vote or suffrage movement focuses only the upper class white women. Wasn't the right to vote for Black women a necessity? A critical perception on this matter put forward by feminist Christian F Nunes is that Black suffragists who associated in the 19th amendment were gradually erased from all historical records. They faced barriers of voting. She says: “Even though there are women of color who were very instrumental in these movements and shifting it, and making sure that these rights were won, they just were not talked about. They were not mentioned, they were unsung heroes.”

Feminist Christian F Nunes says “The fourth wave feminism release focuses on: How do we be inclusive? How do we have allies? How do we really focus on true equality for all women? Because we know other waves of feminism have left women out.”

◆ *Social momentum*

The women's March and racial reckoning which took place a few years back in 2020, in the U. S. made remarkable momentum to contemporary Feminism. Women are represented in different strata and occupational sectors. Achievements of Vice-President Kamala Harris and Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson are distinguished. More women leaders, scholars, activists, writers with their own authenticity and identities in an authentic way; this trajectory is buoyant, but not complete.

◆ *Dismantling patriarchy*

You may now have developed a question: How far has feminism to go? This is a critical question. In the contemporary times, the U. S. feminist activists face setbacks, when a wave of laws restricting reproductive health care, transgender health care, certain curriculum in education, laws restricting voting rights and more came up. They argued that these laws create a "patriarchal world." Black Queer Feminist Paris Hatcher believes these laws completely support "a world where white men are in control, where the history that's told is upholding the history and the legacies of white men, and also where white men are able to control who was elected and who is not."

As the social media and technology advance, they optimistically affect feminist movements around the world to connect, grow and spread the message. One explicit example is Zikora Akanegbu, the creator of youth-led female empowerment group GenZHer. She uses social media as a tool to converse with women and feminists.

A Pew Research Centre survey (2020), claims America has the following insights on Feminism

- ◆ 64% - say feminism is empowering
- ◆ 42% say it's inclusive
- ◆ 45% say it is polarizing
- ◆ 30% say it's outdated.

Source : Survey on US adults conducted from March 18 - April 1 2020

2.3.2 Raewyn Connell

"Of course, some transsexual women want to tell their stories – autobiographies are the main genre of transsexual writing. These stories can be helpful, especially to young people having a hard time in terrible isolation. Finding that other people have been through a similar experience, and come out alive – and even joyful – is not a bad thing," said



◆ *Trans-activism*

Australian left-intellect and Sociologist Raewyn Connell. She had been working on gender issues for a long time and met trans-activist groups in five countries to collect their experience. Her papers on transsexuality shed light on the large scale class dynamics and the remaking of gender hierarchies in the everyday life of schools.



RAEWYN CONNELL

Raewyn, who was born in 1944, spent most of her childhood in Sydney during the Cold War. She attended Dee Why Public School before moving on to Manly and North Sydney High Schools. At the University of Melbourne, Raewyn earned a B. A. with honours, and at the University of Sydney, she earned a Ph. D. She participated actively in the 1960s New Left and student movements before going on to work as a university researcher and teacher. Raewyn is a transgender lady who underwent an official transition in her later years.

Raewyn comes from a lineage that connects rural settlers with Melbourne's professional bourgeoisie. Her Irish, Scot, and Welsh forebears participated in the British colonisation of Aboriginal territory in southeast Australia during the nineteenth century. Pam Benton, Raewyn's partner, was a psychologist, social researcher, public servant, writer and member of the women's movement. Most of her earlier works were published under the gender neutral name R. W. Connell. On July 31, 2014, Raewyn gave up her University Chair position at the University of Sydney. She uses feminist Sociology to deal with transsexual problems in her book 'Gender: In World Perspective' and in the article 'Transsexual women and feminist thought: toward new understanding and new politics,' published in the feminist journal 'Signs'.

Major books of Raewyn Connell

- ◆ *Ruling Class, Ruling Culture* (1977)
- ◆ *Class Structure in Australian History* (1980),
- ◆ *Making the Difference* (1982) (*This book describes how class and gender hierarchies are re-made in the everyday life of schools*)

◆ *Fixed typology*

It was in 1987 that Connell made the social theory of gender relations through her book *Gender and Power*. She describes that gender is not a matter of personal identity; gender is a large scale, complex structure. She proposed that gender could be discussed in relation to three structures, namely power / production, labour, emotion and sexual relations. There came a response to the scepticism in her theory. Critics opined that her theory creates a fixed typology. '*Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept*,' published in 2005 was the response to those criticisms.

◆ *Masculinity and emotions*

Connell emphasizes the inter-connection between emotions and masculinity. In contemporary society, men are so emotionally disconnected that they are not conscious about their emotional states like depression. Socialization teaches males not to show emotion, because vulnerability has a stereotyped analogy to weakness. Parents, peers and colleagues teach men to develop the ability to suppress emotional responses like sadness, crying, facial expressions etc. This puts the males in developing a stigma from the awareness of the emotions.

◆ *Heterogeneous masculinity*

One gender cannot be separated from the other. Examining one gender completely in isolation from the others is not an unbiased way of research. Connell focuses on the heterogeneous nature of masculinity. One of the interesting aspects of masculinity is that masculine politics can never evolve to be a political movement. Feminist consistently identifies the positive evaluation of marginalised women, whereas authors and researches focus on masculinity and they critically evaluate the benefits and privileges they presume of 'being a man'.

2.3.2.1. Concept of Hegemonic Masculinity

◆ *Hegemonic masculinity*

Connell is well acclaimed for the studies on 'social construction of masculinity.' She is considered one of the important pioneers in this research. Her book *Masculinities* (1995, 2005) is a remarkable work which developed the idea of Hegemonic masculinity. This theory had a significant impact on Feminist Sociology. The emphasis on the internalization of social norms, attitudes and behaviour, structural inequalities and power structure that society promotes. Society misrepresents the process of gendering. The multiple masculinities that Connell identifies vary across time, society, culture and individual, has two levels of understanding. One

is hegemonic masculinity, which is a practice that legitimises patriarchy and justifies subordination of common and trans-men population and women. the second is that Hegemonic masculinity helps in explaining how and why men maintain their patriarchal social roles over women and other 'feminine' identities.

◆ *Dominance*

A term by term dissection of the concept will help in a better understanding. The concept of hegemonic masculinity takes inspiration from Antonio Gramsci's 'Cultural Hegemony,' which studies the power relations between social classes. The adjective 'hegemonic' refers to the cultural dynamics through which a social group claims, inserts and sustains the dominant position in social hierarchy. Thus, Hegemonic masculinity includes a form of social organisation that should be sociologically challenged and transformed.

◆ *Idealized manhood*

Hegemonic masculinity implies a culturally idealised form of manhood which is socially and hierarchically exclusive. It is related to bread winning or economic domination which is brutal, pseudo-natural, crisis prone and socially sustainable. Hegemonic masculinity would not have a fixed character type because the firmness leads to the exclusion of research on complex, different, competing types of masculinity. Maintaining Hegemonic masculinity as a dynamic concept helps in including psycho-social dynamics of masculinity, gender hierarchy, masculine configurations *etc.*

◆ *Body and gender*

2.3.3 Michel Foucault

Michel Foucault is a French philosopher, critic and political activist. his writings have had a significant impact on feminist scholars; his reflections on discipline, power, sexuality and subjectivity are especially relevant to feminist analysis. But despite his interest in strength and how it affects the body, Foucault's own analysis was gender-neutral. Surprisingly, the extent to which gender influences the methods and levels of discipline applied to the body is not investigated or even acknowledged. Although this reveals significant weaknesses in Foucault's work, it does not completely invalidate his theoretical approach. Instead, it can be accepted and modified; his obvious errors can be productively discovered, investigated and corrected.



MICHEL FOUCAULT

Paul-Michel Foucault, also known as Michel Foucault, was a French philosopher and historian who was one of the most well-known and divisive figures of the post-World War II era. He was born on October 15, 1926, in Poitiers, France, and passed away on June 25, 1984, in Paris. After earning his degree in 1952, Foucault started a career that was characterised by continual intellectual and professional travel. He began his career as a professor at the University of Lille. In 1961, Foucault presented his doctoral work for defence at the ENS.

Foucault produced a number of books between 1971 and 1984, notably *Discipline and Punish*, a monograph on the development of the contemporary prison, three volumes of a history of Western sexuality, and several essays. Foucault travelled more widely and stayed for extended periods of time in countries including Brazil, Japan, Italy, Canada and the United States. He spent several years as a visiting lecturer at the University of California, Berkeley and grew particularly connected to Berkeley, California, and the San Francisco Bay area. In 1984 Foucault passed away from an AIDS-related septicemia, leaving the fourth volume of his history of sexuality unfinished.

You may now start thinking, how can Foucault evaluate power dynamics, sexuality and the body without addressing gender? Despite being notable by its absence, the female body serves as an example of Foucault's claims concerning discipline; a field of study that creates bodies / identities and serves as an effective method of social control.

Have you ever thought on how women's bodies become more submissive than men's bodies through disciplinary actions? Foucault's work 'Discipline and Punish', has an indirect yet good illustration of his perceptions on gender, women's body and feminism. Despite the evident relevance of his writing, he failed to acknowledge the importance of

◆ *Disciplining the female body*

gender in the game of power. To further demonstrate this, it is important to analyse Foucault's work in two ways. The first is to recognise the legitimacy of his framework and the second is to check the satire, *i.e.*, to highlight how the female body characterizes his points about discipline while also making its absence evident.

◆ *Control and power*

The argument for understanding the female body as a specific target of disciplinary authority is in "The Body of the Condemned," which explores the polarisation of the sexes and the discursive creation of gender. Foucault says that gender blindness is problematic and there exists a disciplinary authority in the contemporary culture. In the work "The Spectacle of the Scaffold," Foucault studies the power and control in social structures. He makes the case that punishment has evolved from being a 'mere show' to a 'tool' for the systematic exploitation of people in society – not just of our bodies but also of our souls. In the context of gender, he uses specific fashion and beauty practises as examples of how to manipulate, train and label the female body. Gender, and particularly femininity, is a discipline that creates bodies and identities as well as serving as a potent social control.

◆ *Power structure*

He is accused of interpreting the gendered power structures, neglecting how disciplinary techniques are gendered, and treating the body as a whole entity. This is done by treating the bodily experiences of men and women as being the same and as having similar relationships to the institutions that define modern life. He does not seem interested in investigating how or why power invests in, instils and produces gendered bodies, and he also does not seem to recognise how gender affects the methods and levels of discipline used to the body.

◆ *Body and power*

Many of the disciplinary practises Foucault mentions apply to both men and women. But he is unaware of the disciplines that give rise to a particularly feminine mode of embodiment. For both feminists and Foucault, the body is an overly predetermined site of power; a surface imprinted with historically and culturally specific practises and subject to political and economic pressures.

2.3.3.1 Human Physicality / Body

According to American Philosopher Susan Bordo, feminism was the movement that first used the term "body politic," to refer to the politics of the body. The human

◆ *Body politics*

body is a politically inscribed entity, with its physiology and morphology influenced by containment and control practises throughout history. Feminists have shown how gender ideologies and sexist thinking originate from perceived biological differences between the sexes and are supported by dualistic paradigms that have characterised western thought from the ancient Greek philosophers to the Enlightenment and beyond. Women have been dominated primarily through their bodies, according to feminists.

◆ *Polarization*

Polarised categories like mind / body, culture / nature, and spirit / matter that have been infused with gender ideologies support the notion that men and women are opposites. According to the mind / body dualism, the body only serves as the mind's basic vessel while the mind and body are seen as quite distinct entities. The mind and reason are apart from each other and superior to the emotions and senses. Woman is flesh and represents nature, which is illogical, emotional and motivated by instinct and physical need; man is mind and represents culture, which is the rational, cohesive, thinking subject. This potentially rogue body / nature / woman must be harnessed and controlled by mind / culture / man through knowledge and willpower.

2.3.3.2 Woman Body

◆ *Submissive body*

The biological essentialist and determinist perspectives, which describe woman in terms of her reproductive physiology, emphasise the connection between woman and her body and nature. She is therefore weak and submissive, literally the male's vessel for desires and the mother of his kids, a creature driven by instinct and emotion and a slave to her reproductive systems and hormones. Man may be able to transcend his biological materiality, but women are "a thing sunk deeply in its own immanence" and cannot escape their physicality.

◆ *Examination of body*

In addition to being inferior, she is also unknowable, mysterious and unsettling. She stands for that which needs to be examined until her secrets are revealed. As a result, the female body has been examined by the human sciences much more than the male body. Numerous 'experts' anxious to offer unquestionable proof of its underlying sickness have exhaustively and enthusiastically classified every sign of irregularity. Given that it is basically a reproductive body, its unbridled sexuality must be restrained and its fundamental weakness of character exposed.

◆ *Womanliness*

Medical and scientific discourse, which in the past prescribed what activities women should engage in, what clothes they should wear to preserve appropriate “womanliness,” their moral obligation to preserve their energy for childbirth and other things, has confirmed the pathology of female biology and legitimised women’s subjugation.

◆ *Labels*

According to Catherine Kohler Riessman, since the middle of the nineteenth century, there has been an increase in the ‘medicalization’ of women’s lives, with more and more female ‘conditions’ being labelled in ways that imply departure from some ideal biological standard. In contrast to today’s women, who deal with vaginismus, premenstrual stress, infertility, pre and post-natal depression, eating disorders and other issues, nineteenth-century women were labelled as frigid, hysterical, or neurasthenic with mental problems attributed to “disturbances” in the womb.

The function of speech in shaping social identity and serving as a tool of social control are central to Foucault’s theoretical framework. In fact, he briefly mentions some of these problems when he talks about “the hysterization of women’s bodies.” The feminist account of power and the body and Foucault’s have a lot in common. Hysteria is the manifestation of suffering associated with the violation of one’s desires or imagination.

The hysterization of women’s bodies, according to Foucault, involves three processes: First, it is determined that the female body is completely saturated with sexuality; next, it is established that the body is integrated into organic connection with the social body, finally the female body is connected to the family unit and children’s lives.

2.3.3.3 Relating Foucault To Feminist Approach

◆ *Deconstruction*

Theorising how power works, particularly between the sexes, has long been a focus of feminism. Many feminists, like Foucault, had experimented with Marxism but felt its framework was inadequate. Particularly despised by Foucault were “totalizing” ideas that asserted to provide the “truth” through “scientific” justifications. In a similar vein, feminism attacked the idea of science, as well as its claims to objectivity and the notion of unquestionable truth (especially with reference to how they “pathologized” the female body). Both of their initiatives appear to be largely deconstructive, anxious to reveal the “discursive practise” that lies behind

the obvious and natural.

◆ *Cohesiveness*

In their challenge to western philosophical paradigms that have been taken for granted since the Enlightenment, Foucault's theories have been helpful to feminism. Nothing about man, not even his body, is sufficiently stable to serve as a foundation for self-recognition or for comprehending other men. According to him, challenging the traditional ways of thinking about the subject as a logical, cohesive person with a definite core or essence is vital. No 'natural' body or pre-discourse, essential human subject is severed, repressed, or transformed by our social order; rather, each individual is meticulously created within it *via* a complex system of forces and bodies.

Simone de Beauvoir's now-famous statement that "One is not born a woman, but rather becomes, one" becomes more crucial when considering Foucault's comments on how subjectivity of female body is generated.

◆ *Modern notions*

It appears that Foucault did regard something as a "natural given" because he did not discuss gender as a "technique." Even though they may seem radical and unimportant, the discourses have influenced modern thought in fields like philosophy, medicine, law, the arts, and more. They have also entered the common awareness as examples of self-evident truth.

◆ *Male / female binary*

We live in a culture that is far from gender neutral and continuously attempting to reinforce the polarisation of the sexes through these "techniques of gender," which makes Foucault's apparent gender neutrality problematic. Lack of specificity regarding the kind of bodies (whether discursively manufactured or not) Foucault is referring to suggests that gender has no bearing. The social dependence on a male / female binary that discredits the female body in comparison to the male ultimately results in more aggressive body policing and targeted control mechanisms. Treating the body "as one" is therefore impractical; his conception of power cries out for a gender specific analysis, and in that analysis, gender needs to be acknowledged as a technology of the body in its own right; a key component of scientific bio-power that creates the body as an intelligible object.

Many feminists have interpreted his gender-neutrality as androcentrism; he does not differentiate between the sexes, especially in *Discipline and Punish*, because he is treating the

◆ *'Genderless' body*

body as male rather than treating it "as one," and there is no need for distinction when dealing with the "genderless" body of man, the fundamental human subject. He appears to revert to the very ways of thinking he set out to discredit. Researcher Anne Balsamo contends that Foucault ultimately writes from a place of power—a male-centred discourse—while Bartky contends that his work perpetuates the sexism that is widespread in western political thought.

◆ *Torture*

However, Foucault classified torture as a pre-modern practise, but women have been subjected to this spectacular type of punishment far into the modern era. Men's clothing exhibits some of the 'reasons' that mark the birth of modernity, which is marked by rationality; women, on the other hand, are not seen as rational agents but rather as instinctive, diseased bodies who are unaffected by culture and outside of modernity. These characteristically "pre-modern" bodies are primitive and "uncivilisable," therefore they require pre-modern containment and control techniques that simultaneously stamp them with the "infamy" of their gender and the "irrational" exhibition that is perceived as an intrinsically feminine trait.

◆ *Femaleness*

Women have historically been associated with the body, which has led to them being valued and appraised for their beauty more than men, frequently beyond all else. It has also caused women to fear and dread being different from men. Femaleness is still upsetting enough to demand oversight and confinement through means of discipline that males are not subject to, even in this apparently equal, liberated and modern society. The persistence of constrictive conceptions of womanhood that, according to Myra Macdonald, 'defensively reinvent' themselves in opposition to the cultural and social changes in women's lives, casts doubt on the myth of women's emancipation and growing self-determination.

◆ *Struggle*

Foucault, in his later writings insists on resistance. He said resistance is feasible, and is advocating for all women to strive to uphold the standards of femininity. According to Foucault, where there is normalisation and dominance, resistance also exists. There is "no single locus of great Refusal," but rather a "plurality of resistances," and power is never absolute, uniform, or smooth; it is instead shifting and unstable. If it is exercised on micro levels of femininity, it can be resisted on micro levels of femininity as well.

Summarised Overview

To denote the all inclusivity of modern feminism Author Audre Lorde and Paris Hatcher observes that “we do not live single issue lives!” It means that we do not have the luxury just to say, ‘I’m only going to fight on this one issue,’ because that’s actually not possible. This literally shows the updated and dynamic version of feminism. Raewyn Connell, along with her contributions in gender studies, made her contributions to applied fields like poverty and education, sexuality, AIDS prevention, and labour movement strategy. Feminists around the globe have made major strides to call attention and address the multifaceted issues related to women and girls. This has made the discipline more inclusive. In terms of feminism or gender concerns, Foucault himself never demonstrated any interest. His accounts are oddly gender neutral, which is surprising for someone whose goal was to explain how power produces subjectivity by focusing on the ways it invests the body. He has received harsh criticism for failing to address or perhaps even acknowledge the significance of gender in the play of power. Nevertheless his observations on ‘female body’ provide diverse aspects on feminism.

We are ending this unit with a quote from Diana Duarte: “It’s important not to lose sight of the community, the political grounding that feminism has offered to so many, where feminism actually has a great reputation that comes from the positive and meaningful reality of it that people have experienced all around the world. We should not let our opponents define the identity of feminism for us. Often negative perceptions on feminism are proposed by people who benefit from patriarchy.

Self-Assessment

1. Explain the need for modern feminism and elaborate its characteristics.
2. What does Raewyn Connell mean by ‘hegemonic masculinity’?
3. Foucault’s analysis on sexuality was gender neutral. Then how is Foucault’s theory connected to Feminism?
4. What do you mean by ‘hysterization of women’s bodies’?
5. Bring out the relevance of contemporary gender debates.



Assignments

1. Modern feminism has the updated versions of all diverse streams of feminism. Expand.
2. Bring out the inter-connections between emotions and masculinity put forward by Connell.
3. Expand 'social construction of masculinity.'
4. Role of 'physicality' in Foucault's interpretation of feminism.
5. 'Subjectivity of female body is generated'. Validate the statement.

Suggested Reading

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5. <https://abcnews.go.com/US/examining-modern-feminism-wave-now/story?id=97617121><http://www.raewynconnell.net/2012/07/transsexual-women.html>



Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

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SGOU



GENDER: SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DISCOURSE

BLOCK-03



Gender in Social Institutions

Learning Outcomes

After the end of this unit, the learner will be able to

- ◆ explain how sociologists approach the study of gender
- ◆ define 'gender' and identify the socio-political-economic frameworks related to it
- ◆ understand the gender mainstreaming in international development.

Background

After going through the earlier blocks you may now know that gender is one of the central consolidating principles around which social life evolves. The social institutions of our world - workplace, family, school and politics are also gendered institutions / sites where the dominant definitions are reinforced and reproduced and where "deviants" are disciplined. We become gendered 'selves' in a gendered society. When we say that we live in a gendered society we imply that the organisations of our society have evolved in ways that reproduce both the differences between women and men and the domination of men over women. Institutionally, we can see how the structure of the workplace is organized around demonstrating and reproducing masculinity / patriarchy. Consequently, a discourse on gender can be mostly described as a way of talking about gender as an issue or practice. Our ways of talking about gender are also our ways of thinking about issues and further, they tend to determine how we act in a society. So, discourses are part of who we are (how we experience ourselves in any gender) and how we think, speak and act (how we experience the world). Here is an elaboration on gender construction through social institutions.

Keywords

Gender mainstreaming, Gender construction, socialization, gender policy, Equality



Discussion

3.1.1 Perspectives on Gender in Social Institutions

Have you ever found yourself as the only woman or man in a group of people? Now, think about situations where you were surrounded by others just like you – all women or all men. Did you feel differently in each situation? How did being a member of the majority or the minority (with respect to sex category) affect how you behaved and how others behaved towards you? Have you felt the 'gender' consciousness within yourself?

◆ *Social practices*

Recall what you have studied. Gender is a system of social practices that constitutes people as different based on social expectations. Thus far, we have looked at gender from the point of view of individuals and have focused on the social practices that produce the gendered person. But the social practices that constitute gender do not operate strictly at the individual level. These social practices also shape social relations and interaction patterns, and they operate as part of larger entities, such as organisations and institutions.

◆ *Social membership*

Much of social life is organised and routinised. People are employed by various organisations, such as business firms or the government, organised or unorganised sector. They attend educational institutions; beginning from kindergarten to preschool to high school to college; and then do graduation or professional education. Parallel to this, they are members of churches or voluntary associations, such as neighborhood groups. In fact, many of the interactions people experience are within organisations.

◆ *Social approval of gender*

Knowingly or unknowingly, every individual is part of some type of organisation. You may have learned that an organisation is a social unit established to pursue a particular goal. Organisations have boundaries, rules, procedures, and means of communication. The social practices that are associated with organisations play an especially important role in the production and reproduction of gender and gender inequality. A socially approved system of values, norms, and roles exist to accomplish specific societal gender goals.

Gender is “the psychological, social, and cultural aspects of maleness and femaleness” - Kessler and McKenna (1978).

Social institutions are enduring relationships that have resulted from human interaction. Over time, these relationships have established predictable patterns that allow the member of society to pursue life, their dreams, and happiness.

Just go through the following characteristics of social Institutions

1. Social institutions are patterns of behaviour grouped about the central needs of human beings in society.
2. In all societies, the institution of the family plays a central role.
3. Social institutions are, therefore, social patterns directing the ordered behaviour of human beings in the performance of their basic activities.
4. The continuity of institutional practices is further assured by the development of rituals.
5. The central aspects of institutions are the functions they perform and the pattern, established to carry out the functions.
6. The claim of institutions upon the members is also known as loyalties.
7. The institutions of a society are connected in a close-end interdependent pattern.

Institutions are connected through status and role of the members.

What does these features imply? It shows that social institutions have the power to influence each and every member inside it. So, when a social institution is patriarchal, what gender-prominence would it highlight? Definitely, it would be the ideologies of patriarchy. The patriarchal ideologies are oppressive and exploitative to women and minorities as they contain the elements of exploitation.



Now let us examine the development of gender in the major social institutions.

a) Family

Just contemplate for a moment what the word 'family' is for you? The word family means different perceptions to different people. As you are aware it is an intimate domestic group made up of people related to one another by the bond of blood, sexual mating or legal ties. According to MacIver, "family is a group defined by the sexual relationship, sufficiently precise and enduring to provide for the procreation and upbringing of children." When people refer to "the family," they often have a modern, nuclear family in mind, consisting of wife, husband, and children. No matter what the structure is, family is perhaps the most taken-for-granted of all social institutions because of its evolved nature, and natural, biological, or somehow "functional" role in society. It is seen as a social construction whose configurations vary historically and culturally. In most cases, the institution of family provokes anxieties and concerns at a time because of its patriarchal nature.

◆ *Patriarchal nature*

Family is a unique social institution that has no passable or sufficient substitute. It is the basic unit of social organisation. It plays a very important role in the development of the personality of an individual and in the process of socialisation.

Let us now identify family and gender with its characteristics:

◆ *Universality*

In every human society, the family appears in some form or the other. The irresistible sex need, the urge for reproduction and the common economic needs have contributed to this universality. If family becomes patriarchal, so would be the superiority of males in it.

◆ *Emotional Basis*

The family is grounded in emotions and sentiments. It is based on our impulses of mating, procreation, maternal devotion, fraternal love and parental care. It is built upon sentiments of love, affection, sympathy, cooperation and friendship. The patriarchal notions are often maintained within a family through the norms, religious practices, beliefs etc.

◆ *Limited size*

The family is usually smaller in size. As a primary group, its size is necessarily limited. As family is the smallest social unit, it is understood that the manifestation of a group of

families would become a society. So, the nature of each unit would form the nature of the whole society.

◆ *Formative influence*

The family links an environment that surrounds, educates and trains the child. It shapes the personality and moulds the character of its members. When patriarchy is practiced within family, the influence exerted by it also will possess nuances of patriarchy.

◆ *Social Regulation*

The family is guarded both by social taboos and by legal relations. Society takes precautions to safeguard this organisation from any possible breakdown. Unfortunately, most societies hold patriarchal regulation techniques, which are rather perilous to the co-existence of gender of other groups.

◆ *Responsibility of the Members*

The members of the family have certain responsibilities, duties and obligations. In patriarchal societies passiveness, submissiveness, sacrifice *etc.* are considered as functional deeds with virtue. Passiveness and non-critical perceptions of the female members of the family is the part of patriarchal conditioning.

◆ *Sexual aspects*

Furthermore, the sexual attitudes and patterns of behaviour we learn in the family reflect social norms and regulate our sexual behaviour. That is the reason why women learn to control / suppress their sexual desires. In patriarchal societies explicit sexual tendencies from the part of a women are considered as 'sin.' French thinkers like Michel Foucault had studied this aspect in much deeper levels.

◆ *Social approval*

Family membership in religious, political, economic, recreational and other kinds of organisations typically gives individuals an opportunity to participate in activities that might otherwise be closed to them. The family carries out the serious responsibility of socialising each child. Family tells children to conform to socially approved patterns of behaviour. Family serves society as an instrument for the transmission of cultures, membership replacement and physical maintenance.

Implicitly, the family is assumed to be a heterosexual unit, containing one woman and one man, who reproduce biologically. Within the family, the roles of women and men are carefully divided. Women are mothers and family caretakers, and men are fathers and breadwinners. These assumptions are reinforced by the practices and beliefs of other

◆ *Institutional forces*

institutions, such as religion, work and law. More important, these assumptions about families and family roles form the context in which people make choices about their lives. As we have seen, institutions provide people with scripts that may guide their behaviour and beliefs. No one can really escape these institutional forces. Even families that do not conform to the dominant cultural views must nevertheless respond to them as they organize their lives. Sociologists often focus on gender differences in the experiences associated with family life – such as childhood socialization practices, marriage or cohabitation, parenting and household work.

◆ *Social expectations*

Boy or girl? This is probably the first – and most often – question asked when a baby is born. The simplest explanation for why this is true is that a child's gender gives us important clues about him or her. Specifically, a child's gender conveys information, expectations for behaviours and personality and offers some guidelines to him / her / others for interaction. The fact that people rely on gender, even in a new born to provide these clues reaffirms the power of gender as an important social category.

◆ *Gender schema*

How do researchers study the gender stereotyping in social institutions? They demonstrate the way parents treat their male and female infants and very young children in a different way. Parental socialization is the primary source of most gender differences in traits and personality dispositions. To gain support for this view, these researchers propose studies to examine whether and in what areas parents relate differently to their daughters and sons. Even as infants, children live in a gendered social world and these experiences shape their development as females and males. Though infants and very young children have not yet developed a gender identity, the foundations of their gender schemas are being established. Males are given priority and more consideration than females in all walks of socialisation.

◆ *Self-socialisation*

Although parents play a critical role in shaping their children's experience of gender, children themselves become increasingly skilled at decoding gender messages in the world around them. This "self-socialization" starts in infancy, and once they acquire gender identity, children become even more active participants in the socialization process. By the time they are three, most children can correctly identify

themselves as female or male and can identify others as the same or different with respect to gender.

◆ *Self-identity*

Children's ability to self-identify as female or male influences their preferences for playmates – children who are aware of their gender are more likely than those whose gender identity is not developed to prefer same sex playmates and gender typed toys. Gender stereotypes can refer to characteristics associated with each gender, such as the belief that girls are soft and they include beliefs about gender- appropriate activities, such as the belief that trucks are for boys. Once children assign gender labels to objects and activities, they use these labels to guide their preferences and their expectations of others.

b) Marriage

◆ *Social recognition*

Marriage represents an observable bond between man and woman. Marriage is an institution that has developed in many different cultures. The ceremonial tying together of a mated pair in a socially recognizable way has been an intrinsic part of life throughout history. Marriage is not, however, universally practiced and the line between married and unmarried can be indistinct. Marriage is one of the most important and universal social institutions of society. From the viewpoint of function and structure, marriage and family are interdependent.

◆ *Institutional mechanism*

According to Mark and Young, "Marriage is the institution or set of norms which determine the particular relation of harmony to each other and their children." Marriage is the institution of satisfying the biological needs, especially the sexual needs of the individual in a legal and customary manner. Marriage is thus, primarily a way of regulating human behaviour. The nature, structure and function of marriage have changed during the long existence of society. The type and function of marriage cannot be the same in different cultures. In spite of this, the institution of marriage is universal like that of a family. In all cultures, marriage is the accepted means of institutionally satisfying sexual and procreative urges. We can see that marriage has historically provided the institutional mechanisms which have been necessary for the replacement of social members and thereby has been meeting the important pre-requisites of human survival and society's continuance.

◆ *Marital disintegration*

The norms of man and woman relationships developed by medieval social values have weakened because of modern values. Marriage is based on love and mutual attraction. The control of the family and parents has weakened. Sociologists have tried to express the increasing tension in marital relationships by calling it marital disintegration, marital instability and so on. According to Johnson, “at the root of the increasing number of divorces are religious and legal tolerance towards divorce, growth of industrialisation, urbanisation, birth control facilities, increasing social and physical mobility and the diversity of population.”

c) Peer Group

◆ *Stereotyping*

Think back once more to your own early childhood. Do you fit the patterns described here? If you are female, were your close friends mostly girls? Did you play with dolls more than with trucks? If you are male, do your memories of early childhood friendships mostly contain boys, with whom you played games such as baseball or other sports? Some of you will answer “yes” to these questions. Moreover, regardless of our own experiences, we probably all remember some childhood peers who preferred to play with the other gender and who had little interest in what were considered gender “appropriate” activities. In fact, it is likely that all of us at one time or the other did not conform to what was expected of us as boys or girls. How can we account for these atypical socialization experiences? What explains why some children behave in what parents and peers consider “gender appropriate” ways, while others reject at least some of this socialization? Addressing these questions helps remove one of the most common misconceptions about the socialization process.

◆ *Sex-segregation*

As children move out of infancy and into their preschool and school-age years, a greater proportion of their play and interactions involve other children, such as siblings or peers. Parents are still important, of course, as they influence their children’s choice of playmates, but their direct roles in the socialization process become somewhat less important. One of the most widely studied aspects of children’s relations with peers is their sex-segregated nature. By about age three, both girls and boys prefer same sex playmates, though girls’ preferences are the first to emerge. This preference for same sex peers continues when children enter school, generally lasting until adolescence. The segregation of children’s peer groups adds another layer of complexity to our understanding

of the socialization process, and it challenges us to consider the broader set of social relations within which children are embedded.

◆ *Preferences*

Because of sex segregation, much of what children learn from peers is acquired in a same sex context. Boys are socialized by and with other boys, while girls' socialization is by and with other girls. This implies that the content of what is learned also varies by gender. Why children prefer same sex peers has been explained in several ways. Perhaps these choices reflect gender differences in play styles, with children choosing to interact with those whose styles of play are similar to their own.

◆ *Influence of media and peer*

Socialization is neither completely consistent, nor is it total or all-encompassing. Children may receive different kinds of messages from different agents of socialization in their lives. Saturday morning cartoons may present children with different images of how girls or boys are supposed to behave than those received from a parent. In addition, children are not blank slates; temperament – which many believe is partially shaped by genetic factors – may shape what children learn and how they interpret gender messages. Peer group influence begins in preschool and continues as children progress through school and expand their social world. This influence reinforces activities involved in the play, academic success, popularity, body image and dress and continues throughout the life cycle.

◆ *Role of schools*

It may be possible to resist or inhibit peer group influence in gender socialization. Research by Thorne (1993) has documented how schools can inhibit gender-stereotypical behaviour and attitudes in their students. The ways in which minority in the youth might have their own standards of gender-appropriate behaviour deserve the attention of researchers who want to understand the dynamic intersection of race and gender.

c) Education

◆ *Fundamental base*

The educational system is an important mechanism for the selection and allocation of individuals in their future roles and societies. According to Emile Durkheim, “no society can survive without a common base of a certain number of ideas, sentiments, and practice which education must inculcate in all children indiscriminately, to whatever social category they belong”.



Unisex uniform of students in Balussery Government Higher Secondary School, Kozhikode is a respectable example of gender neutrality

◆ *Unequal status*

The reality of gender inequality in India is very complex and diversified because it is present in many ways, in many fields, and in many classes. Over the past decade, gender equality and women empowerment have been explicitly recognized as key to the social and economic development of the nation. Additionally, the promotion of gender equality and empowering of women was one of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDG) to which India was a signatory. In ancient India, women were held in high esteem and the position of a woman in the Vedas and the Upanishads was that of a mother (maata) or goddess (Devi). In the early Vedic age, girls were looked after with care. Then the practice of polygamy denigrated the status of women in the medieval period, and the practices of the purdah system, dowry, and sati came into being.

◆ *Atrocities*

With the passage of time, the status of women lowered. The advancements made in relevant science and technology led to misuse by practicing female foeticide on a large scale. This has led to a drop in the female ratio. According to the census 2001, the sex ratio in India is 927 females to 1,000 males. In many parts of India, women are viewed as an economic liability despite contributing in several ways to our society and economy. The crime graph against women is increasing at an alarming rate. The condition of an Indian widow is quite deplorable. At home, the woman's contribution to the

home as a housewife is not recognized. The major reasons for this inequality are identified as the need for a male heir for the family, huge dowry, continued financial support to a girl child, poverty, domestic violence, farming as a major job for the poor and the caste system.

◆ *Adult images*

We observe many differences between boys and girls in the family, on the street, inside the classroom and in the playfield. For instance, in general, boys are active, playful, confident, bold, loud and difficult to control. Girls are passive, gentle, quiet, accepting, complacent and easy to control. It is important for those who are in the education sector to appreciate how infants and toddlers learn to see themselves as girls and boys in the adult images of women and men in their cultures.

◆ *Sex-role identity*

It is equally important to understand how this process of sex role identity formation is based on differential and discriminatory treatment, which leads to the formation of low self-concept in girls. This low self-concept among girls inhibits self-expression and achievement. It is also transmitted inter-generationally. There are some general perceptions regarding gender roles. One, we not only observe the differences between girls and boys but also believe that these are natural and inherent in the two sexes. We conclude that they are biological and hence unchangeable. Two, the social roles of men and women, being cultural artifacts, vary across space and time. Three, these differences are a result of ages of social experiences of the two sexes are socially created and determined and therefore, changeable. Four, the present-day human civilization both demands and creates new possibilities for the social roles of the two sexes as complementary and equal, globally. Now it is beyond doubt that women have proved to be equally competent in all fields.

◆ *Focus on gender*

It is important to deal with the concern that even though India has a clear policy on undifferentiated curricula for both sexes, biases and stereotypes creep through the learning materials as well as through those who handle them. India has the second largest educational system in the world after China with a total enrolment of 191.63 million out of whom 80.54 million (42%) are girls (MHRD, 2000-01). Due to the strong gender focus of the government initiatives during the 1990s as also the pro-girl child, pro-women policies and programs during this decade, girls' education has progressed and the gender gaps have narrowed.



e) Religion

◆ Religion and patriarchy

At the simplest level, religion is the belief in the power of the supernatural. Religion is not a phenomenon of recent emergence, it is dateless, and it is also considered by social thinkers that a human being was a religious creature long before history began. Though religion is a universal phenomenon it is understood differently by different people. Emile Durkheim, in his book *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, defines religion as “a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden”. In many religions all across the world, patriarchal notions have seeped into religion which prohibit women from some religious activities. For example, prohibitions on women were based on their menstruation. Therefore, in order to ensure opportunities for women to participate in every sphere of life, whether spiritual or material, the link between religion and patriarchy needs to be thoroughly discussed.

There are several ways in which religion can promote patriarchy:

◆ Social reinforcement

a) Through Religious Scripture / Teachings: In many religious teachings across a wide range of religions, women are given the role of nurturing, caring and giving birth. While these roles are presented positively and as essential, they reinforce the gender norms in society and the patriarchal power structures. If women choose not to conform to gender stereotypes, they are not only deviating from gender norms and family expectations but deviating from God’s will too. Men have been dominant as recipients, interpreters, and transmitters of divine messages, while women have largely remained passive receivers of teachings and ardent practitioners of religious rituals.

◆ Customary practices

b) Through Religious Practices: In many religions both menstruation and pregnancy are treated as impure or ungodly. For example, in Islam women who are menstruating are not allowed to touch the Koran. Similarly, in Hinduism, menstruating women are not allowed to enter temples. The practice of Sati, or self-immolation by widows on the funeral pyres of their husbands, thrived for centuries because it was rooted in the belief in the futility of a woman’s existence without her husband.

c) Through the Structure of Religious Organisations:

◆ *Marginalisation* Although some religious organisations do have women in senior positions, they are certainly the exception rather than the rule. This exclusion of women from priesthood or leadership of a religious group exemplified women's marginalisation in religious and social life.

◆ *One god* d) Through Monotheistic Religions: The development of monotheistic religions, with their all-powerful male Gods (such as Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Sikhism) which imbued religion with a patriarchal and sexist core.

By now you may be aware of the impact of religion and the reinforcement of patriarchy on women. Here are some details

◆ *Manipulation* If patriarchy is the social norm, it is largely because it derives its legitimacy from religion, the most important rule book pertaining to social do's and don'ts in any community. Due to patriarchal notions in religion, women are painted as physically, mentally, emotionally and sexually inferior to men. Patriarchy penetrates every single sphere of a person's life, and it hurts / bothers men as much as it impacts women. Politics uses religion as a tool to manipulate the masses and women bear the brunt of the consequences of cultural attitudes.

Isn't it important to find solutions for the authority of religion which promotes patriarchy? Let us explore more in the context of India.

◆ *Demystification* One solution is Demystifying True Essence of Religion. Many religions in the world do not explicitly suppress the role of women in religion. Thus, there is a need to unravel the true essence of religion. One solution is implementing *Uniform Civil Code: Article 44*. One law for all of India is to be formulated according to the Uniform Civil Code (UCC). That would apply to all religious communities regarding issues like adoption, divorce, inheritance, and marriage. This civil code of the Constitution lays down that the state shall endeavour to secure a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) for the citizens throughout the territory of India. Although discourses and debates on the same persists, some gender researchers opine that implementing UCC will be a step in the right direction in extending the narrative of gender equality.

Another solution is Codification of Personal Laws. The



◆ *Fundamental rights*

need of the hour is the codification of all personal laws so that prejudices and stereotypes in every one of them would come to light and can be tested on the anvil of fundamental rights of the Constitution. All world religions are inherently patriarchal. The scriptures offer justification for exploitation and the rituals keep the women subordinate in the structure. But due to the secularisation of religions and modernisation, religion is becoming more accommodating.

f) *Law*

◆ *Human conduct*

Every society has its own legal system. Law is a body of principles recognised and applied by the state in the administration of justice. Law is a body of rules, it guides human conduct in society and is a means of social control; law is imposed by authority. Those who deviate from the law are usually given punishment based on the severity of their conduct. According to Duguit, "law is essentially and exclusively social fact."

◆ *Legal rights*

The reality of gender inequality in India is very complex and diversified. Gender equality and women's empowerment have been recognized as key not only to the health of nations but also to their social and economic development. Toward this, Article 14 and Article 15 of the Indian Constitution envision equality to women, 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments have provided 33% reservation for women in Panchayati Elections and many schemes and initiatives were launched by the government. Various initiatives are taken so far by the Government toward gender equality in India. Here is a briefing on the Legal provisions:

◆ *Payment*

a) Equal Remuneration Act, 1973 provides for payment of equal remuneration to men and women workers for the same work of similar nature without any discrimination. In order to ensure social security for the workers, including women in the unorganised sector, the Government has enacted the Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act 2008.

◆ *Reproductive rights*

b) The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 regulates the employment of women in certain establishments for a certain period before and after childbirth and provides for maternity and other benefits.

◆ *Abuses*

c) The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 has been enacted, which covers all women, irrespective of their age

or employment status, and protects them against sexual harassment at all workplaces both in the public and private sector, whether organised or unorganised.

◆ *Property*

d) Section 14 of the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, makes women absolute owners of their properties. The Act was amended in 2005 to give equal rights to women regarding the inheritance of family property.

g) Media

◆ *Frameworks*

Media today, from traditional legacy media to online media, still hugely influence our perceptions and ideas about the role of girls and women in society. What we have unfortunately seen until now is that media tend to perpetuate gender inequality. From a young age, children are influenced by the gendered stereotypes that media presents to them. Media play important roles in society. They report on current events, provide frameworks for interpretation, mobilise citizens on various issues, reproduce predominant culture and society and entertain. As such, the media can be an important factor in the promotion of gender equality, both within the working environment (in terms of employment and promotion of female staff at all levels) and in the representation of women and men (in terms of fair gender portrayal and the use of neutral and non-gender specific language).

◆ *Gender stereotypes*

Fair gender portrayal in the media should be a professional and ethical aspiration, similar to respect for accuracy, fairness, and honesty. Yet, unbalanced gender portrayal is widespread. Stereotypes are also prevalent in everyday medium. Women are often portrayed solely as homemakers and caretakers of the family, dependent on men, or as objects of male attention. Stories by female reporters are more likely to challenge stereotypes than those filed by male reporters. As such, there is a link between the participation of women in the media and improvements in the representation of women.

Men are also subjected to stereotyping in the media such portrayals can influence perceptions in terms of what society may expect from men and women, but also what they may expect from themselves. They promote an unbalanced vision of the roles of women and men in society. Media research often suggests that the media simultaneously reflects and reshapes the social world. In a media-driven society, where

◆ *Influential roles*

media permeate most aspects of social and political life, the news media are not only influential vehicles for circulating and negotiating gender conceptions; the media in general, and the news media in particular, are essential for political participation and freedom of expression for women and men. Despite this, we know very little about the factors that promote or oppress gender equality in the news media in different countries. We know even less about how gender equality in the media is related to social development and outcomes in other areas. How does gender equality in the media matter for the development of a “good society” – a society that provides quality of life for its citizens and quality of government in political and social institutions?

3.1.2 Gender Mainstreaming in International Development

◆ *Policy making*

Gender mainstreaming is an approach to policy making that takes into account the interests and concerns of both men and women. The concept of gender mainstreaming was first introduced at the 1985 Nairobi World Conference on Women. It was established as a strategy in international gender equality policy through the Beijing Platform for Action adopted at the 1995 Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing, and subsequently adopted as a tool to promote gender equality at all levels. In 1998, the *Council of Europe* defined gender mainstreaming as: “The (re) organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy making.”

◆ *Gender equality*

Gender mainstreaming means integrating a gender equality perspective at all stages and levels of policies, programs and projects. Women and men have different needs and living conditions and circumstances, including unequal access to and control over power, resources, human rights and institutions, including the justice system. The situations of women and men also differ according to country, region, age, ethnic or social origin or other factors. The aim of gender mainstreaming is to take into account these differences when designing, implementing and evaluating policies, programs and projects so that they benefit both women and men and do not increase inequality but enhance gender equality. Gender mainstreaming aims to solve – sometimes hidden-gender inequalities. It is therefore a tool for achieving gender

equality.

◆ *Gender impact assessments*

Gender equality issues need to be mainstreamed at all stages of policy-making or project programming, but it is especially important to take it into account at the planning stage when the problems, concerns and needs of the beneficiaries are identified and the ways to address them are defined. Therefore, gender analysis and gender impact assessments are crucial tools for gender mainstreaming. These tools support the practical implementation of gender mainstreaming. Other factors are equally important to ensure proper gender mainstreaming, such as political will, commitment to and awareness of gender equality issues, knowledge, resources (including expertise) and availability of information. Gender mainstreaming is the responsibility of all actors and is relevant to all policy areas that deal with the needs of people at all levels. Policy areas which at first sight do not seem relevant might contain (hidden) aspects of gender inequality. When properly addressed and implemented, gender mainstreaming is a transformative approach with a great potential for social change. It is a long-term strategy: every step counts towards this change of approach, but it will require some time until it is fully and automatically integrated into policy making. There is wide consensus about the effectiveness of a dual approach towards gender equality, combining gender mainstreaming and specific measures for the advancement of women, to ensure better policy making and better use of resources.

Summarised Overview

A key component of most social norms and orders is gender. Religions, in turn, have a big influence on gendered relations. Numerous methodologies have been developed for the study of gender and religion. An early method investigates the ways in which religious practice affects the behavior of both men and women. Research in this vein examines how gender norms are changing in relation to religious conversion or how religious practice shapes and limits the roles of men and women. Recent research examines the ways in which religious and spiritual ethics and practices are shaped by gender. Although many world religions place a strong emphasis on patriarchal relationships, this is not a universal idea. Certain religious groups place more emphasis on female respect and cooperation than on hierarchy. While some may place a higher priority on

male leadership, others give women access to spiritual roles and ethical identities that allow them to exercise their own agency and power in different ways. Family also plays an important role in promoting patriarchy, as it keeps a subordinate status for women. Equality of gender in social institutions shall ensure proper gender socialization.

Self-Assessment

1. Explain the role of social institutions in modifying gender perceptions.
2. Discuss gender construction in children.
3. Discuss the aspect of gender socialization.
4. Evaluate the efficiency of law in the establishment of gender equality.

Assignments

1. Critically evaluate gender mainstreaming in international development.
2. Relate patriarchy and religion.
3. Peer group and gender socialization. Expand.

Suggested Reading

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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.



SGOU



Gender Division of Labour

Learning Outcomes

After you have read this unit you will be able to:

- ◆ recognize the key concept of gender division of labour
- ◆ identify contemporary work relations and work spaces within the family
- ◆ relate globalization and female labour

Background

Let us begin with an interesting note on the gender division of labour. Sexual / gender division of labour is prevalent in most cultures and is observed worldwide. The breadwinner-homemaker model has been a stable feature in many societies. The division is more noticeable in some professions than in others. In general, men are more likely to work in hazardous, outdoor and highly technical fields (mostly STEM fields, with the exception of those related to health care), while women are more likely to work in caring and interpersonal roles. The boundaries of the division are not always constant; for example, the proportions in some fields, like medicine, are reversed. The gender equality paradox refers to some fields where rising levels of segregation are positively correlated with nations' levels of egalitarian policies. This unit will reveal more aspects on gender division of labour.

Keywords

Production, Feminization, Labour, workforce, market, reproduction, Informalisation, Globalisation



Discussion

◆ Allocation of goods

To know how gender could be connected to labour, it is rather important to ensure an awareness on what an economy is. An economy is mainly a subsystem in a wider social system. It is possible to view the economy as the parent system and analyse its constituent divisions of activities - production, investment, innovation and so on. Thus, within the economy, we could take a more concrete structure, such as a bank or a corporation and analyse it in terms of the basic functional necessities of social systems. Kingsley Davis says that “economic institutions are those basic ideas, norms and statutes which govern the allocation of scarce goods in any society, whether society is premature or civilized.” The concept of Economic System states that man is not only a social animal, he is also an economic being.

◆ Commodity matters

Among the social sciences, Economics studies economic activities such as the system of production, distribution and consumption; sociology also has interests in this field. The produced commodity is important for economics; economists consider economic activities as their complete fields of study. Sociology emphasises the study of human interaction in production, distribution and consumption.

◆ Jobs for men and women

The way work is divided between men and women according to their gender roles is usually referred to as the ‘gender division of labour.’ This does not necessarily concern only paid employment, but more generally the work, tasks and responsibilities that are assigned to women and men in their daily lives and which may, on their turn, also determine certain patterns in the labour market. It is often argued that the gender division of labour is a result of biological traits. However, if we notice that in some societies women perform tasks and jobs that in some other societies are traditionally considered as men’s jobs and *vice versa*, we see that the division of labour has much to do with what each society perceives as appropriate for both sexes. In most countries, house chores - like cleaning, cooking and washing clothes - and everything that relates to sustaining the household - like fetching water or fuel, small scale agriculture for self-sustainment - are typically women’s or girls’ tasks, even when they have a paid job outside the home. On the other hand, more technical house tasks, like dealing with electrical or mechanical equipment, are traditionally a man’s job.

British primatologist Richard Wrangham wrote the book *Catching Fire: How Cooking Made Us Human*. It says that division of labour between sexes may have begun when cooking evolved, which is estimated to have happened between 1 and 2 million years ago, simultaneously with humans learning to use fire. The same idea was first proposed by Friedrich Engels in an unfinished essay from 1876.

◆ *Job segregation*

The labour market (as well as education and training) is heavily segregated along gender lines, with differences between regions and cultures. Also, some generalizations about gender divisions in the labour force are quite truthful, as men dominate certain sectors and occupations and women in others. For example, there is a concentration of women in services and of men in manufacturing. By sub-sector there is also a gender division: in manufacturing, for instance, there are more women concentrated in the electronics and garments industries and men in the car industry. This is called 'occupational segregation, which is commonly split into a horizontal and a vertical dimension.

◆ *Vertical and horizontal segregation*

In the context of gender, horizontal segregation refers to the extent to which men and women are located in different occupational sectors. Women are usually highly concentrated in the sectors that require lesser skills (e.g. agriculture), that promise little chance for career advancements (e.g. services) and that are related to care caregiving (nursing), which often coincides also with low wages. On the other hand, vertical segregation refers to the extent to which men and women occupy different hierarchical positions within the same occupational sector. Within the same sector, women tend to occupy the lower ranks of the hierarchical ladder (and consequently the lower salary ranges).

Statistics show that the higher the position the wider the gender gap, so that on an average, women hold less than 5% of the top jobs in corporations. The gender division of labour is not fixed for all time; it changes in response to wider economic, political and social changes. For example, men and women follow different migration patterns and engage in different occupations when they migrate. Migration may also result in men taking on tasks that they would not

normally consider within their socially ascribed role, like having to cook for themselves. Some migrants often have to accept occupations for which they are overqualified. The employment of immigrant women in industrialized countries, as maids or care providers, may not make it possible for them to advance their professional area of work.

Here are some examples of the Gender Division of Labour:

a) In parts of Asia it is common to see women working as labourers constructing roads, while in Europe this road construction is generally a men's job.

b) In some cultures, purchasing items for household use, is a men's task, and in others, women control household purchases.

c) In some Buddhist cultures it is considered 'lowly' to handle money. Because of their lower social status, handling money is often women's responsibility. In some Islamic cultures, on the other hand, men may control household finances and purchase all items for household use.

3.2.1 Production and Re Production

Re production is one of the central concepts of Marx's political economy. The major part of his analysis is devoted to understanding how it takes place in the capitalist mode of production specifically. In general, Marx means, by re production, an ongoing process of production by which a society each day, simultaneously: (a) replaces the material goods which it has consumed; (b) puts back into its stock of productive capital (that is, means of production) at least as much as has been depreciated; and (c) reinforces or recreates the institutional structure (relations of production) by once again perpetuating the work role experiences of the past into the present.

Marxist Political Economy in Gender Studies

For Marxist political economy (before it began to address the question of household work), all social production was 'social re production'—of the material necessities of life, the means of production and the relations of production. Reproduction is one of the central concepts of Marx's political economy. The major part of his analysis is devoted to understand how it takes place in the capitalist mode of production specifically.

◆ *Social reproduction*

◆ *Material necessities*

In general, Marx means, by reproduction, an ongoing process of production by which a society each day, simultaneously: (a) replaces the material goods which it has consumed; (b) put back into its stock of productive capital (that is, means of production) at least as much as has been depreciated; and (c) reinforces or recreates the institutional structure (relations of production) by once again perpetuating the work role experiences of the past into the present. For Marxist political economy, before it began to address the question of household work, all social production was at the same time social reproduction of the material necessities of life, of the means of production and the relations of production.

◆ *Labour as ultimate resource*

Marxist economists thus define labour as the ultimate resource, and labour is seen to create either use value or exchange value. For them, production refers to labour used to create exchange value in the market and reproduction refers to labour used to create use value in the home. Here, the term reproduction refers to biological reproduction as well as the reproduction of maintenance of the labour force and includes household 'production' of use value, that is, goods and services for immediate consumption in the home. So, the home is considered both a unit of consumption and reproduction.

◆ *Power relations*

The following part shows how gender / sexual division of labour is connected to power structure:

The sexual division of labour is connected to power hierarchy and domestic labour. Its significance and connection to the undervaluation of women and control of women's labour is, in turn, related to the interplay between production systems that generate the means of subsistence for human beings and reproduction systems – that govern the reproduction of human beings and the reproduction of systems of production. In this analysis, feminist scholars have drawn heavily from the Marxian framework, anthropology and from a radical feminist analysis of power relations.

This facilitates the grasp of the complex interplay between systems of stratification in society and gender relations. Theories of social reproduction can be based on two major classifications. In the first instance, in terms of control over the women's labour and fertility, that is, in materialist terms; and in the second instance, as ideological relations, which are

centrally involved in the transformation of sex into gender. In each case, of course, priority is given to the social relations of reproduction in defining women's oppression. These may be seen to have consequences for the organisations of production, or as functionally related to it, but the specificity of the position of women is primarily perceived in terms of reproduction relations.

◆ *Weak claims by women*

You may now develop a question like, why should all activities be included within the sphere of productive activities and why has production become the central theme of discussion? This question can be linked with developmental issues. If development is measured in economic terms and the development goals focus on increased production, then national resources are directed to producers, to increase their productivity. Women have weak claims over these resources since they are not characterised as producers. Gender based differentiation of the labour market has led to inflexibility in integrating women in the development process.

◆ *Restructure of economy*

Social realities determine that the majority of women in economically developing societies engage in arduous occupations for family survival. Despite this reality, women are perceived as passive beneficiaries of welfare programmes, rather than as active participants in development which includes access to assets, knowledge, skills and a social climate that will enable them to develop their potential for individual and national development. The entire development process needs to be restructured in this context. Their claims can be improved by either making women do what is defined as productive work or changing the definition of productive work to include what women do. The linkage between the prevailing paradigm in the context of socio-economic production and the structural presence of women needs serious examination.

◆ *Public policy*

What impact has globalisation had on gender equality? What are the impacts of economic integration, technical change and access to information on gender inequality? It argues that not everyone is benefiting from globalisation. Women, for whom existing constraints are most binding, are often left behind. While the forces unleashed by globalisation have lifted some of the barriers to greater gender equality,

3.2.2 Female Labour in The Era of Globalisation

public action is needed to lift these further. In particular, public policy needs to address gender gaps in endowments, agency and access to economic opportunities.

◆ *Economic transformations*

The world has witnessed an enormous economic transformation over the past three decades, fostered by increasing global flows of goods and services technology and information. These changes have transformed the way domestic and global markets and institutions function and have thus changed the economic landscape for individuals, households, firms and governments.

◆ *Economic opportunities*

Globalisation has brought increased access to economic opportunities. Trade openness and the spread of information and communication technologies (I. C. T.s) have increased women's access to economic opportunities and in some cases increased their wages relative to men's. Growth in export and I. C. T.-enabled sectors, together with a decline in the importance of physical strength and a rise in the importance of cognitive skills, has increased the demand for female labour. I. C. T. has also increased access to markets among female farmers and entrepreneurs by easing time and mobility constraints.

Several factors associated with a more global world strengthen the incentives for action toward greater gender equality:

◆ *Maternal authority*

1. Gender inequality is costlier in an integrated world because it diminishes a country's ability to compete internationally – particularly if the country specialises in female intensive goods and services.
2. International peer pressure has also led countries more than ever to ratify treaties against discrimination.
3. Growing media exposure and consumers' demands for better treatment of workers have pushed multinationals toward fairer wages and better working conditions for women.

Globalisation is shifting gender roles and norms:

1. Increased access to information, primarily through television and the Internet, allows countries to learn about social mores in other places, which can change perceptions and promote the adoption of more egalitarian attitudes.

2. Economic empowerment for women reinforces this process by promoting changes in gender roles and allowing women to influence time allocation, shift relative power within the household, and exercise agency more broadly.

◆ *Public action*

Globalisation has the potential to contribute to greater gender equality. However, in the absence of public policy, globalisation alone cannot end gender inequality. Despite significant increases in agency and in access to economic opportunities for many women in many countries, large gender gaps remain in some areas. Public action is needed to close gender gaps in endowments, agency and access to economic opportunities. Only then will countries be able to capitalise on the potential of globalization as a force for greater gender equality.

Informalisation of Female Labour

◆ *Unorganised labour*

Women's education has increased over the last two decades, and fertility rates have fallen – both have contributed to the increasing participation of women in the paid labour force in the world. However, this is not the case in India. When the percentage of workers in the unorganised sector of the labour force rises, this is referred to as “informalization of the workforce.”

◆ *Less females in labour*

According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey, 2018-19, the female labour force participation rates (LFPR) among women aged above 15 years are as low as 26.4% in rural areas and 20.4% in urban areas in India. The pandemic is already worsening the deep inequalities facing women and girls, erasing years of progress towards gender equality. Both supply and demand factors contribute to the low levels of employment among women – especially the burden of domestic responsibilities, including the reproductive roles played by women, coupled with the lack of adequate and appropriate job opportunities.

Women's Workforce Participation

Currently, the participation of women in the workforce in India is one of the lowest globally. The female labour force participation rate (LFPR) in India fell from around 31% in 2011-2012 to close to 23% in 2017-2018. This decline has been sharper in rural areas, where the female LFPR fell by more than 11 percentage points.

Women's Reduced Participation in Workforce

The limitations to participation in work arise from a complex set of factors including -

1. low social acceptability of women working outside the household
2. lack of access to safe and secure workspaces
3. the widespread prevalence of poor and unequal wages
4. a shortage of decent and suitable jobs

So, most women in India are engaged in subsistence-level work in agriculture in rural areas. In urban areas, it is low-paying jobs such as domestic service and petty home-based manufacturing.

3.2.3 Feminisation of Poverty

“The feminization of poverty is the term given to the phenomenon in which women experience poverty at far higher rates than men,” claim Thibos, Lavin-Loucks, and Martin. The term “feminization of poverty,” according to the J. McDonalds William Institute, is debatable and susceptible to different interpretations. However, Diana Pearce, an American researcher, coined the phrase in 1978 after learning about the vast number of women affected by poverty not just in her nation but also globally. Thus, the 1970s are when the idea originated.

Now let us analyse the Causes of ‘feminization of poverty.’

There are multiple reasons that can be given as the causes leading to the poverty of women. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNWOMEN) has identified some key dimensions which can possibly explain a higher rate of poverty for women.

1. Labour of women is often primarily in terms of family care and household duties—work for which they receive no wages. Women living in developing nations may also be relied upon to participate in agricultural labour on the household land to help support the livelihoods of their families and villages. With such responsibilities, women have less time to devote to paid employment as compared to men, and thus earn a smaller income, even though they may actually be doing more work than their male counterparts. The

◆ *Effects of poverty*

◆ *Domestic matters*



nature of the work they do in households is also different.

◆ *Migration*

2. When employment opportunities are limited, women may have to migrate to other areas to find work. If a woman has children, however, she may be unable to pursue a job which is far from her residence. Thus, she faces reduced accessibility to opportunities and this, in turn, leads to less education for her children and deprivation of adequate nourishment and health care and further diminished opportunities for her children. Usually, a cycle of poverty is thus perpetuated.

◆ *Informal jobs*

3. Women's jobs are more likely than men's to be forms of informal employment, which takes place in small, unregistered enterprises and are not protected by government regulation. Women have often been associated with specific kinds of work, such as teaching, caring for children and the elderly, domestic service etc. These kinds of jobs lack stability and security and the possibility of working at higher salaries. They are open to exploitation and the women, due to fear of losing the job, even if it is exploitative and with poor pay, remain silent and continue to work in these conditions.

◆ *Unworthy jobs*

4. In the same vein, the unpaid labour that women perform in taking care of family members and other household chores is considered of far less worth (at least economically) than positions that require formal education or training. If the women do take up jobs outside the homes, there is usually no family support.

◆ *Single-mothers*

5. One of the long-time causes of increased numbers of single-mother families was a higher rate of male mortality after wars and periods of conflict. In Western countries today, with divorce common and / or women choosing not to marry, many women are single mothers who must support a household on only their income.

◆ *Social barriers*

6. In countries where a school is not compulsory or where girls encounter various barriers to education, upward economic mobility through higher skilled employment is nearly impossible. Most doors remain closed to women and girls, even if they desire to upgrade their skills or improve their expertise.

7. Women may be subject to inequalities in wages, benefits, property rights and so forth. The feminisation of poverty is not only a consequence of lack of income, but is also the result of the deprivation of opportunities and gender biases present in both societies and governments. Poverty has many dimensions and comes under the purview of not only economics but disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, history and demographics. Unless significant progress is made in restructuring the factors that result in acute disparities, the problem will likely only worsen as the economic divide between the wealthy and the poor widens.

◆ *Inequalities*

3.2.4 Gender Based Segregation of Jobs

This term refers to the unequal distribution of men and women in the occupational structure – sometimes also (and more accurately) called ‘occupational segregation by sex.’ There are two forms: ‘vertical segregation’ describes the clustering of men at the top of occupational hierarchies and of women at the bottom; ‘horizontal segregation’ describes the fact that at the same occupational level (that is within occupational classes, or even occupations themselves) men and women have different job tasks.

◆ *Occupational hierarchy*

Work in the home, as well as in the labour market, has changed considerably and family dependence on the earnings of the man (with possible additions from older children) has greatly declined. The dominance of the ‘male bread winner model’ was increasingly challenged, during the latter part of the twentieth century. Looking at changes in education, family lifestyles and health, in conjunction with the transformation of the occupational structure, it is easy to see why there is substantial horizontal segregation. The near disappearance of teenage employment, compared to early in the last century in Britain, has certainly affected male employment patterns, but it has transformed female patterns.

◆ *Employment patterns*

The large decline in domestic service has added to the effect. The family and social circumstances of the women in employment are now quite different from their counterparts a hundred years ago. As different parts of the occupational structure have declined or expanded, women have generally been more readily available in the growth areas, and horizontal segregation has continued. The explanation of

◆ *Occupational structure*



vertical gender segregation is somewhat less obvious.

◆ *Career prospects*

Here we need to recall that in terms of stratification there is no general male advantage. In both manual and non-manual employment, men have been able to hold on to better jobs, at least in comparison with women working part time. However, holding on to old advantages has meant that men have been less successful in entering the expanding non-manual areas. There is a well known tendency for young men to enter occupations that are newer and more desirable – at least in terms of career prospects – than the occupations of their elders. A similar pattern may be observed for the young women (now as well as or better educated than their male counterparts), though it remains to be seen whether this will eventually lead to similar career achievements.

◆ *Predomination of men*

In terms of pay, we would expect men to have an advantage. Even when we characterize occupations by male pay levels, to control for age, length of service, hours worked and gender discrimination effects, we find a substantial difference between 'male' and 'female' occupations. Because women have largely entered the expanding areas, where declining exclusiveness has meant pay levels have declined, their pay is generally below that in occupations where men still predominate. Furthermore, the gender difference in pay is not a new phenomenon; women have been socialized to expect and accept lower levels of pay, and equal pay legislation only provides for equality within their (and comparable) occupations. There may also be a gender element of choice; at least at higher occupational levels with men tending to prioritize peculiar rewards while women may prefer socially worthwhile professions.

Summarised Overview

In short, the unequal distribution of female and male workers across and within job types is known as gender-based employment segregation. It is not that women are simply retreating from the world of work. In contrast, they devote their substantial time to work which is not considered work, but an extension of their duties, and is hence largely unpaid. This includes unpaid care work such as childcare, elderly care, and household work such as collecting water. This burden falls disproportionately on women, especially due to inadequate availability and accessibility of public services. It also encompasses significant chunks of women's contribution to agriculture, animal husbandry and non-

timber forest production. Studies reveal a strong negative relationship existing between a woman's education level and her participation in agricultural and non-agricultural wage work and in family farms. With better education, women are refusing to do casual wage labour or work in family farms and enterprises. There is also a preference among women for salaried jobs as their educational attainment increases. But the challenge is that such jobs remain extremely limited for women. Thus women has less or no visibility in the formalized workforce.

Coming on to the feminization of poverty, one important factor in lowering women's poverty is education. The dropout rate among the few girls enrolled in school in developing nations is higher than that of boys. The high rates of sexual assault and rape, which can result in unintended pregnancies, and men's preference for education are the causes of this. Thus, expanding access to health services for women may help to lessen the feminization of poverty. More opportunities for women to escape poverty and advance in society can be created by educating women and children, particularly girls.

Self-Assessment

1. What do you mean by gender-based segregation of jobs?
2. Reflect on the lesser participation of women in work force.
3. Does globalization influence female labour?
4. Bring out a few causes for the feminization of poverty.

Assignments

1. Relate production and reproduction with Karl Marx's political economy.
2. Female labour and globalization. Elaborate.
3. Evaluate feminization of poverty.

Suggested Reading

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6. Wharton, A. S. (2009). *The sociology of gender: An introduction to theory and research*. John Wiley & Sons.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU





Women and Political Representation

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- ◆ understand the role played by women in political development
- ◆ identify the importance of women's rights in society
- ◆ comprehend various forms of violence against women.

Background

What makes having female representation important? The Power of Representation allows listening to the unsaid. Studies indicate that women legislators are more likely than men to address women's interests, so better representation will guarantee that women's voices are heard and their issues are fairly recognised. The potential and abilities of women, as well as women in leadership roles, are becoming more widely acknowledged. The percentage of women represented in national parliaments worldwide has risen gradually over the past 20 years, rising from 11.8 percent in 1998 to 17.8 percent in 2008 to 23.5 percent in 2018. Sub-Saharan Africa, where the percentage of women in parliaments has increased from 11% to 23.6 percent in the last 20 years and the Arab States region, where the percentage has increased from 3.1 to 17.5%, are two regions that have seen especially notable increases. In addition to falling short of women's representation as half of the world's population, total global representation is still far below the 30% benchmark that is frequently identified as the necessary level of representation to achieve a "critical mass" – a substantial minority of all legislators who have a major impact, rather than a token few individuals.

Ensuring women's leadership and equal participation in politics and public life is crucial to reaching the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. However, statistics indicate that gender parity in politics is still a long way off and that women are underrepresented at all levels of decision making globally. Through this unit, let us go deep into women's political participation and its scope.



Keywords

Empowerment, Reservation, Property, Violence, Abuse, Harassment

Discussion

◆ *Decision-making process*

While numerous political advancements have occurred throughout the world in recent decades, the most important influence has to be on women's involvement and representation in political roles. Circumstances have positively evolved; but disappointingly, they are not always favourable for women. In India, historically women are not given primacy in the decision making process; they face institutional, systemic exclusion in the decision making process. Political under-representation is one of the important causes for the poor developmental outcomes of women. In a country with deplorable levels of women in the workforce and socio-cultural norms that heavily police women's mobility and participation in public life, getting involved in electoral politics is a far-fetched dream for most women. Politics is essentially a public act, and research shows that women's ability to negotiate a space independent of the household is an important factor in deciding if or not they will be politically active. In the recent polls, women made up 8 percent of all candidates in Assam and 11 percent in the other four states. Roughly, one in every 10 individuals who contested the election was a woman.

Factors Responsible for the Poor representation of women in Indian politics

- a) gender stereotypes
- b) lack of political network
- c) financial strains
- d) unavailability of resources
- e) lack of political education amongst women in the country

◆ *Patriarchal mind-set*

Let us now analyse the socio-cultural perspectives that hinder social participation of women. In countries like India, women are considered mothers and housewives and participation in the election is restricted due to the patriarchal mind-set of Indian society. In India women are considered weak and they are restricted only to the boundary of the house. Exclusion of women from religious institutions and religious leaders has impacted negatively on women's status and restricted them in taking the opportunity to participate in politics and public life. Lack of economic resources is the biggest obstacle that prevents their participation in politics and public life. Due to family responsibility women spend far more time in the home than men and so, lesser time participating in politics and public life.

The coming part includes an analysis on the measures required for better political representation of women:

◆ *Gender Equality*

Women should have equal rights with men in the political, social, economic, and cultural spheres. Even though the constitution guarantees women equal rights in all spheres, socio-cultural factors need to be adapted to the modern ethos of equality. Institutions of Governance like courts, police, administrative bodies *etc.* should focus on gender equality.

◆ *Affirmative Action*

Action taken by the government by reserving a certain percentage of seats at the state legislature and parliament for women.

◆ *Women empowerment*

To provide education and equal health access in all spheres of life can empower women to participate in politics and the public sphere. Both education and health are important for women to participate in central, state, and panchayat elections and other public fields.

◆ *Enforcing property rights*

Despite legal rights for women to inherit paternal property women are denied property rights and thus they lack economic resources. There is a need to reinforce within society and women their right to property.

◆ *Social awareness campaigns*

Long-held prejudices against women need to be dismantled through concerted social campaigns with help of educational institutions, media, religious leaders, celebrities, political leaders *etc.*

With the WEF 2021 report data staring in our face, the country must invest and commit towards this for a more promising future to meet its commitments towards achieving

the UN SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals). We surely do not want to wait for 135 years as per the WEF Global Gender Report 2021 to bring equality between men & women.

Special Initiatives For Women

- ◆ **National Commission for Women:** In 1992, the Government set up this statutory body with a specific mandate to study and monitor all matters relating to the constitutional and legal safeguards provided for women, review the existing legislation to suggest amendments wherever necessary *etc.*
- ◆ **Reservation for Women in Local Self-Government:** The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act passed in 1992 by Parliament ensures one-third of the total seats for women in all elected offices in local bodies whether in rural areas or urban areas.
- ◆ **The National Plan of Action for the Girl Child (1991-2000):** The plan of action is to ensure the survival, protection and development of the girl child with the ultimate objective of building up a better future for the girl child.
- ◆ **National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, 2001:** The Department of Women & Child Development in the Ministry of Human Resource Development prepared a “National Policy for the Empowerment of Women” in the year 2001. The goal of this policy is to bring about the advancement, development, and empowerment of women.

Women’s participation has suffered for ages and looking at the grave circumstances we are in, these raw steps are nugatory; therefore, there is an urgent need for policies that can ensure better representation of women in the country such as more strict policies and implementation of girl-child education in the country.

3.3.1 Women’s Reservation Bill

The Constitution (108th Amendment) Bill, 2008, commonly known as the Women’s Reservation Bill, is a bill that seeks to reserve one-third of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies. Introduced in 2008, it also provides for one-third of the total number of reservation seats for Scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes to be reserved for the women of those groups. Similar bills were introduced thrice previously in the late ’90s. During the special session of Parliament on September 19, 2023, the



◆ *Ensuring women representation*

Constitution (One Hundred and Sixth Amendment) Act, also referred to as the Women's Reservation Bill, 2023 (Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam), was introduced in the Lok Sabha. The constitution (one hundred and sixth amendment) act, 2023 – which will come into effect after a delimitation exercise is conducted following the next census – seeks to reserve one-third of seats for women in the Lok Sabha, the upper houses of the state legislatures, and the Delhi legislative assembly.

- ◆ 1996 -the introduction of the First Women Reservation Bill in Parliament.
- ◆ The Bill unsuccessfully proposed by the government four times between 1998 and 2003.
- ◆ 2009: Amid protests, the government presents the bill.
- ◆ 2010: The Bill approved by the Union Cabinet and Rajya Sabha.
- ◆ 2014: It was anticipated that Lok Sabha would table the bill.
- ◆ 2023: Union cabinet approves the tabling of the bill

◆ *Ineffective minority*

The idea of women's empowerment seems to have lost the vigor it had enjoyed during the time of the freedom movement when Mahatma Gandhi mobilized as many women as men during the freedom struggle. Nowadays, there is a need for special political interventions for the inclusion of equal representation of women in Indian politics as even the prominent female political representatives are feeling marginalized within their respective parties. Many women politicians, that is, electoral and party politics are an ineffective minority within their political parties while the male politicians dominate the functioning of the political party. Therefore, political interventions like the Women's Reservation Bill are a need of the hour to address the social shackles that are suppressing the equal representation of women in Indian society.

3.3.2 Property Rights of Women

◆ *Denial of rights*

Women's property rights are restricted in many nations across the world by laws, customs and social norms that limit their economic status and opportunities to escape poverty. Women are routinely denied the right to own the land they cultivate and rely on to raise their families, even in nations where they make up the majority of small farmers and perform more than 75% of the agricultural labour.

◆ *Unequal rights*

Women are empowered and given security and income when they own land and other property. Women have less influence over household decisions when they lack resources like land and they are unable to access the assets in times of need. This is frequently connected to other vulnerabilities like HIV/AIDS and domestic abuse. Much like those of women of any other country, the property rights of Indian women have evolved out of a continuing struggle between the *status quo* and the progressive forces. Pretty much like the property rights of women elsewhere, property rights of Indian women too are unequal and unfair: while they have come a long way ahead in the last century, Indian women still continue to get fewer rights in property than the men, both in terms of quality and quantity. The property rights of the Indian woman get determined depending on which religion and religious school she follows, if she is married or unmarried, which part of the country she comes from if she is a tribal or non-tribal and so on.

3.3.2.1 Hindu Women's Property Rights

◆ *Customary laws*

The property rights of Hindu women have been highly fragmented based on several factors apart from those like religion and the geographical region, which have been already mentioned. Property rights of Hindu women also vary depending on the status of the woman in the family and her marital status: whether the woman is a daughter, married or unmarried or deserted, wife or widow or mother. It also depends on the kind of property one is looking at: whether the property is hereditary / ancestral or self-acquired, land or dwelling house or matrimonial property. Prior to the Hindu Succession Act, 1956 'Shastri' (Hindu Canonical) and customary laws that varied from region to region governed the Hindus. Consequently, in matters of succession also, there were different schools, like Dayabhaga in Bengal in eastern India and the adjoining areas; Mayukha in Bombay, Konkan and Gujarat in the western part and Marumakkattayam or Nambudri in Kerala in the far south, and Mitakshara in other parts of India, with slight variations.

Mitakashara school of Hindu law recognizes a difference between ancestral property and self-acquired property. It also recognizes an entity by the name of "coparcenary." A coparcenary is a legal institution consisting of three generations of male heirs in the family. Every male member, at birth, within three generations, becomes a member of the

◆ *Ancestral property*

coparcenary. This means that no person's share in ancestral property can be determined with certainty. It diminishes on the birth of a male member and enlarges on the death of a male member. Any coparcener has the right to demand partition of the joint family. Once a partition takes place, a new coparcenary would come into existence, namely the partitioned member, and his next two generations of males. For this reason, coparcenary rights do not exist in self-acquired property, which was not thrown into the common hotchpotch of the joint family.

◆ *Inheritance*

The Hindu Succession Act enacted in 1956 was the first law to provide a comprehensive and uniform system of inheritance among Hindus and to address gender inequalities in inheritance – it was therefore a process of codification as well as a reform at the same time. Prior to this; the Hindu Women's Rights to Property Act, 1937 was in operation and though this enactment was itself radical as it conferred rights of succession to the Hindu widow for the first time, it also gave rise to lacunae which were later filled by the Hindu Succession Act (HSA). HSA was the first post-independence enactment of property rights among Hindus – it applies to both the Mitakshara and the Dayabhaga systems, as also to persons in certain parts of South India previously governed by certain matriarchal systems of Hindu Law such as the Marumakkatayam, Aliyasantana and Nambudri systems.

3.3.3.2 Rights of Tribal Women

◆ *Equality*

The tribal women would succeed to the estate of their parent, brother, or husband, as heirs by intestate succession and inherit the property with equal share with male heir with absolute rights as per the general principles of Hindu Succession Act, 1956, as amended and interpreted by the Court and equally of the Indian Succession Act to tribal Christian.

However, in the traditional system, the agricultural family is identified by the male head and because of this, on his death, his dependent family females, such as his mother, widow, daughter, daughter-in-law, grand-daughter and others joined with him have to make way to a male relative within and outside the family of the deceased entitled thereunder, disconnecting them from the land and their means of livelihood. Their right to livelihood in that instance gets affected, a right constitutionally recognized, a right

◆ *Legal assurance*

which the female enjoyed in common with the last male holder of the tenancy. The Madras High Court has ruled unequivocally that tribal women in the state are entitled to inherit family properties because they are not exempt from the Hindu Succession Act's provisions. "The legislature was not intended for any inequality or unconstitutionality in the matter of inheritance as far as the scheduled tribe women are concerned," said Justice S. M. Subramaniam in 2023.

3.3.2.3 Muslim Women's Property Rights

◆ *Inequality*

Indian Muslims broadly belong to two schools of thought in Islamic Law: the Sunnite and the Shiite. Under the Sunnite School which is the preponderant school in India, there are four subcategories; Hanafis, Shafis, Malikis, and Hanbalis. Till 1937 Muslims in India were governed by customary laws which were highly unjust. After the Shariat Act of 1937 Muslims in India came to be governed in their personal matters, including property rights, by Muslim personal law as it "restored" personal law in preference to custom. The main principles of Islamic inheritance law are, (i) the husband or wife was made an heir (ii) females and cognates were made competent to inherit (iii) parents and ascendants were given the right to inherit even when there were male descendants and (iv) as a general rule, a female was given one half the share of a male. Her right, however, is the right of an unsecured creditor; she is not entitled to a charge on the husband's property unless there is an agreement.

The Supreme Court has laid down that the widow has no priority over other creditors, but that mahr as debt has priority over the other heir's claims. This right is known as the widow's right of retention. There is a provision against the destitution of the family members in Islamic law in that it is clearly provided that a Muslim cannot bequeath more than one-third of his property. However, if he registers his existing marriage under the provisions of the Special Marriage Act, 1954 he has all the powers of a testator under the Indian Succession Act, 1925.

3.3.2.4 Property Rights of Christian, Parsi (Zoroastrians) Women

The laws of succession for Christians and Parsis are laid down in the Indian Succession Act, 1925 (ISA). Sections 31 to 49 deal with Christian Succession and Sections 50 to 56 deal with Succession for Parsis. The Indian Christian



◆ *Aid by Indian succession act*

widow's right is not an exclusive right and gets curtailed as the other heirs step in. Only if the intestate has left none who are kindred to him, the whole of his property would belong to his widow. Where the intestate has left a widow and any lineal descendants, one-third of his property devolves to his widow and the remaining two-thirds go to his lineal descendants. If he has left no lineal descendants but has left persons who are kindred to him, one half of his property devolves to his widow and the remaining half goes to those who are of kindred to him.

◆ *Anomaly*

Another anomaly is a peculiar feature that the widow of a pre-deceased son gets no share, but the children whether born or in the womb at the time of the death would be entitled to equal shares. Basically, a Parsi widow and all her children, both sons and daughters, irrespective of their marital status, get equal shares in the property of the intestate while both father and mother, get half of the share of each child. However, on a closer look, there are anomalies: for example, a widow of a predeceased son who died issueless, gets no share at all. However, the challenges are many: social acceptance of women's rights in property leads them. In a country where women continue to be property themselves the road ahead promises to be long and bumpy.

◆ *Multifaceted abuses*

3.3.3 Violence Against Women

Gender based violence against women is among the most egregious and commonly experienced abuses of women's rights. Intimate partner violence, female genital mutilation, early and forced marriage and violence as a weapon of war and sexual and gender-based violence, are major public health concerns across the world, a barrier to women's empowerment and gender equality, and a constraint on individual and social development, with high economic costs.

The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4) suggests that 30 percent of women in India in the age group of 15-49 have experienced physical violence since the age of 15. The report further reveals that 6 percent of women in the same age group have experienced sexual violence at least once in their lifetime. About 31 percent of married women have experienced physical, sexual or emotional violence by their spouses. Violence / Crime against women is increasing every year. According to the NCRB report, it reached a peak in

◆ *Deep patriarchal notions*

2018. Close to 3.78 lakh cases of crimes against women were recorded in 2018, the highest since gender-wise classifications were initiated in 1992 by the NCRB. In recent years, more than 560 cases of rape were reported in Delhi. Violence against Indian women is increasing and has widespread and deep roots in the social psyche. As per World Health Organisation (WHO) findings, about 1 in 3 (35%) women worldwide have experienced either physical or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime. Violence against women – particularly intimate partner violence and sexual violence– is a major public health problem and a violation of women’s human rights. Globally, 38% of murders of women are committed by a male intimate partner. Violence can negatively affect women’s physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health and may increase the risk of acquiring HIV in some settings.

3.3.3.1 Gender Violence

◆ *Adverse health outcomes*

Women who experience violence are more at risk of unwanted pregnancies, maternal and infant mortality, and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. Such violence can cause direct and long-term physical and mental health consequences. Exposure to violence has been linked with a multitude of adverse health outcomes, including acute injuries, chronic pain, gastrointestinal illness, gynecological problems, depression and substance abuse. Mental health consequences include increasing women’s risk of depression, post- traumatic stress disorder and substance abuse. In many societies, women who are raped or sexually abused are stigmatized and isolated, which impacts not only on their well-being but also their social participation, opportunities and quality of life.

◆ *Partner violence*

Women who experience violence from their partners are less likely to earn a living and are less able to care for their children or participate meaningfully in community activities or social interactions that might help end the abuse. Women exposed to partner violence have higher work absenteeism, lower productivity and lower earnings than working women who are not abused. Women in formal wage work and who are exposed to severe partner abuse (both lifetime and current) have 60 percent lower earnings.

3.3.3.2 Forms of Violence

They start with the practice of sex-selective abortion and infanticide and continue through adolescent and adult life



with high levels of female infant mortality, child marriage, teenage pregnancy, lesser wages for women, unsafe workplaces, domestic violence and maternal mortality, sexual assault and neglect of elderly women.

1. Domestic violence

Domestic violence is abuse by one partner against another in an intimate relationship such as dating, marriage, cohabitation or a familial relationship. It is also categorized as domestic abuse, spousal abuse, battering, family violence, dating abuse and intimate partner violence (IPV). It can be physical, emotional, verbal, economic and sexual abuse as well as subtle, coercive or violent.

2. Killings

Female infanticide and sex-selective abortion

Female infanticide is the elected killing of a newborn female child or the termination of a female foetus through sex selective abortion. In India, there is a stereotyped, sexist socio cultural incentive to have a son, because they offer security to the family in old age and are able to conduct rituals for deceased parents and ancestors. In contrast, daughters are considered to be a social and economic burden.

a) Dowry deaths

A dowry death is the murder or suicide of a married woman caused by a dispute over her dowry. In some cases, husbands and in-laws will attempt to extort a greater dowry through continuous harassment and torture which sometimes results in the wife committing suicide.

b) Honor killings

An honor killing is a murder of a family member who has been considered to have brought dishonour and shame upon the family. Reasons for honor killings include the refusal to enter an arranged marriage, committing adultery, choosing a partner that the family disapproves of or becoming a victim of rape. Village caste councils or khap panchayats in certain regions of India regularly pass death sentences on persons who do not follow their diktats on caste or gotra.

c) Witchcraft accusations and related murders

Witchcraft is the practice of what the practitioner believes

to be magical skills and abilities and activities such as spells, incantations and magical rituals. Murders of women accused of witchcraft still occur in India. Poor women, widows, and women from lower castes are most at risk of such killings.

3. Sexual Abuse / Molestation / Rape

Rape is one of the most common crimes in India. According to the National Crime Records Bureau, one woman is raped every 20 minutes in India.

4. Marital Crimes

a) Marital rape

In India, marital rape is not a criminal offense. India is one of the fifty countries that have not yet outlawed marital rape.

b) Forced Marriage

Girls are vulnerable to being forced into marriage at young ages, suffering from a double vulnerability: both for being a child and for being female. Child brides often do not understand the meaning and responsibilities of marriage.

5. Trafficking and forced prostitution

Human trafficking, especially of girls and women, often leads to forced prostitution and sexual slavery.

6. Online abuse

As the internet becomes an increasingly important part of human existence to make their voices heard, a woman's inability to feel safe online is an impediment to her freedom. Women are regularly subject to online rape threats, online harassment, cyber-stalking, blackmail, trolling, slut-shaming and more.

7. Harassment in the workplace

The #MeToo movement is aimed at demonstrating how many women have survived sexual assault and harassment, especially in the workplace. Scores of women, many journalists, came out with accounts of sexual harassment at the workplace, mostly comprising of indecent remarks, unwanted touches, demands for sex and the dissemination of pornography.



Online analytic tool for police called “Investigation Tracking System for Sexual Offences” to monitor and track time-bound investigations in sexual assault cases in accordance with the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2018.

New forms of Gender Violence

1. In India, the National Commission for Women (NCW) has recorded a more than **twofold rise in gender-based violence**.
2. One in 3 women and girls experiences physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, most frequently by an intimate partner.
3. 200 million women and girls have undergone female genital mutilation (FGM).
4. 71% of all human trafficking victims worldwide are women and girls and 3 out of 4 of these women and girls are sexually exploited.
5. As per NCRB data a majority of cases under crime against women under IPC were registered under cruelty by husband or his relatives (30.9%), followed by assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty, kidnapping & abduction of women and rape.
6. 4% of cybercrime cases registered were for the motive of fraud followed by sexual exploitation.

3.3.4 Women’s Movements in India

It is well recognized that women are victims of many domestic crimes from ancient times. To tackle such a situation and enhance the position of women, numerous women’s movements were started. It is said that women’s movements are among the most important crusades of modern social movements. Historical records indicated that from the nineteenth century, Canadian women’s suffrage campaigns to recent direct actions for sustainable development in India, wherever women’s movements have been established, national organisations and local grassroots groups have worked together to support women and girls. Diverse, even conflicting, compassions of women’s interests arise from differences in gender, race, class, culture, religion

and sexuality, as well as from global divisions of wealth and power. However, the ripeness of oppression against women has resulted in the formation of international women's movements with common agendas, linked to struggles for sovereignty, democracy and secure livelihoods around the world.

Women's participation in movements has been in four major forms:

1. For social, economic, and political rights of specific categories of people like tribal, peasants and industrial workers.
2. For improvement in conditions of work and autonomy of women.
3. For equal remuneration for work.
4. In general, social movements on issues affecting men and children like abortions, adoption of children and sexual exploitation.

3.3.4.1 Early Movements

Early movements were largely led by men with little say from the women. Some of the issues raised in these movements were:

◆ *Humanitarian rights*

◆ *Right to learn*

◆ *Right to vote*

1. Discrimination based on traditional practices in society on the grounds of humanitarian and natural rights. For eg.- the practice of Sati, the deplorable treatment of widows raised by reformers like Raja Rammohan Roy and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar.
2. Demand for education, however within the precincts of home and the curriculum included instruction in religious principles, training in the arts of housekeeping and handicrafts and rearing of children. For eg.- Reformers like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and Dayanand Saraswati sought for women's education.
3. Participation of women in the national movement also brought forward issues of equal voting rights, the right to hold public offices *etc.* The issues were inspired by the ideal of the national movement itself. Eg.- In 1931, the Karachi Session of the Indian National Congress issued a declaration on the Fundamental Rights of Citizenship in India whereby it committed itself to



women's equality. Also, the issues of equality, non-discrimination based on sex and employment found their ways into in the Constitution of India.

3.3.4.2 Twentieth Century Women's Movements

◆ *Intersectional aspects*

Starting from the 1970s, these movements were mostly led by middle-class and educated women. The movements largely revolved around the issues of women's control over their own bodies, equal spaces in social institutions like marriage and family and an acknowledgement of the dignity of their identity. Apart from this, movements like Chipko movement, led by women encompassed wider issues like environmental concerns. Law became a major site of reform and legislative changes were demanded in-

- a) Work opportunities - equal pay for equal work, curbing workplace harassment
- b) Political participation - reservation of seats in all levels of governance
- c) Health facilities - abortion rights, maternity leave and creche facilities at the workplace
- d) Distribution of resources - inheritance rights
- e) Against social evils like dowry, female foeticide, domestic violence
- f) Apart from the autonomy of the body, new sites of debate opened up, such as the representation of women in popular media.

3.3.4.3 Women's Movements in the 21st Century

◆ *Inclusiveness*

The contemporary women's movements have become more inclusive and have gone beyond the binary of man and woman. The movements have transformed into the site of demand for dignity by various gender identities and not just women. For example, the demand for rights by LGBT community. Technological advancement and globalisation have brought new spaces of power struggle and the issues raised are-

- a) Expansion in the definition of 'rape' and 'violence' in the legal context, and including marital rape in the context of rape.
- b) Protection against cybercrime

c) Radical changes in the education system, social structures like marriage and parenthood; making them more gender sensitive. Eg.: the demand for recognising women as head of families, increase in paternity leave, sexual autonomy, right to choose one's life partner *etc.*

d) A change in the system of governance to include the equitable allocation of resources and planning based on the perspective of gender, eg.- gender budgeting.

Women's movements in India have affected various segments of society. The major impacts of these movements are reflected in-

a) Various legislations and policies like- Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, Harassment of Women at Work Place (Prevention, Prohibition & Redressal) Act, 2013, Maternity Benefit Act, *etc.*

b) Formation of institutions like the National Commission for Women.

c) Changes in social perception and gender roles. Eg. in the temple entry movement where issues of menstruation and the associated idea of pollution have been questioned. Religious practices like Triple Talaq have been opposed.

d) The contemporary movements are not only led by the victims of subordination themselves but also they target more on bringing the issues from the fringes to the fore. For eg.- discrimination faced by Dalit and Adivasi women, the double burden of home and farmwork faced by rural women due to the feminisation of agriculture *etc.*

Summarised Overview

Women's involvement in politics influences the range of policy issues taken into consideration as well as the kinds of solutions that are put forth, thereby promoting gender equality. Empirical studies reveal that a legislator's gender significantly influences the policies they prioritise. Additionally, there is compelling evidence that a rise in the number of women elected to public office corresponds with a rise in the creation of policies that prioritise quality of life and represent the interests of women, families and racial and ethnic minorities.



As a result, a key area of attention for international development policy is the meaningful involvement of women in leadership positions at the local, national, and community levels. However, some might wonder why it matters if women run for office, are elected to office, or work as civil society activists. Why is there a need for more women to participate in politics on all fronts? Women in politics contribute to concrete improvements for democracy, such as improved responsiveness to public demands, increased inter-party and inter-ethnic cooperation, and a more sustainable future.

In the case of women's movements, the rapid changes in Indian society can give way to movements based on emerging issues like change in existing family structure which is based on male dominance, which can further bring changes in laws and social perception relating to, marriage, divorce, succession and guardianship.

Self-Assessment

1. Reflect on the socio-cultural perspectives hindering the social participation of women.
2. Explain the necessity of women's property rights.
3. How can we control violence against women?
4. Brief on the various forms of gender violence.
5. List out the major women's movement in India.

Assignments

1. Critically evaluate the special initiatives for better social participation of women.
2. Contemporary society and Women reservation Bill.
3. Property rights of Indian women.
4. Social significance of property rights of tribal women.
5. Necessity of women's movements.

Suggested Reading

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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU

GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

BLOCK-04



Kerala Model of Development

Learning Outcomes

After going through this unit, the learner will be able to:

- ◆ understand the development indices of women in the context of Kerala
- ◆ learn the socio-cultural and political movements in relation to gender in Kerala
- ◆ identify women's organisations in Kerala

Background

The experience of India demonstrates how male-centric our development strategies were. Undoubtedly, an examination of diverse socio-economic development indicators demonstrates this uneven economic progress, which is detrimental to the nation's female population. Evidence of this gender imbalance can be found in the low literacy rate among women, the unfavourable sex ratio, the ongoing foeticide of the female child, the low rate of female labour force participation despite high levels of education, the high infant mortality rate and other factors.

Kerala's problem is distinct from that of the rest of the nation. There is no doubting in the empirical evidence that gender inequality is a problem in India. However, the answer gets more challenging when gender atrocities exist in Kerala where HDI stays high. The traditional human development indicators show that the status of women in Kerala has significantly improved and is now on par with that of developed nations. Kerala has an enviable social development indicator and ranks first among the major Indian states in the Human Development Index. Women make up nearly 52% of Kerala's total population. Let us analyse the well acclaimed 'Kerala model of development' in the gender context.

Keywords

Social movements, Organisations, Development, The Kerala model



Discussion

◆ *Economic development*

Hope you remember the concepts of WAD and WID studied in the first block. Now that you are familiar with the aspects of development related to gender; here is an extended version of it. In the multidisciplinary field of gender, development research, applied study and the feminist approach are much useful. It is used to comprehend and address the incongruent effects that economic development and globalisation had laid on people. The impact it has on people differs based upon their location, gender, class background and other socio-political identities. When development is approached only from an economic perspective, advancement is measured in terms of quantitative factors such as high employment, job creation and inflation control, all of which are meant to improve a country's "economic well being" and, therefore, the living standards of its people. Economic development defines quality of life as having access to basic rights and resources including affordable housing, quality healthcare, education and a low crime rate.

◆ *Multifaceted context*

Many of these elements are taken into account by gender and development, but it also places emphasis on efforts to comprehend how complex these challenges are in the multifaceted context of globalisation, governance, and culture. In order to fully comprehend how development policies and practices affect the day-to-day lives of targeted groups or areas, gender and development takes into account this need and employs ethnographic research, which is research that physically immerses the researcher into the environment and daily routine of a specific culture or group of people.

The field's history began in the 1950s, when studies of economic development began to include women in their discussions. At the time, these studies mostly focused on women as the beneficiaries of welfare programmes, particularly those that dealt with family planning and food assistance. Throughout the decade, there was a growing emphasis on women in development and in 1962, the United Nations General Assembly requested that the Commission on the Status of Women work with the Secretary General and several other UN agencies to create a permanent programme aimed at promoting women's advancement in developing nations. Ten years later, the groundbreaking book *Women's*

◆ *Women's advancement*

Role in Economic Development (1970) by feminist economist Ester Boserup was released, drastically altering development paradigms and helping to give rise to the area of gender and development.

4.1.1.1 The Kerala Model and Gender

◆ *Population indicators*

In spite of numerous state initiatives, gender disparities are pervasive throughout India and several states have very low measures on the conventional indicators. One state has shown itself to be an exception, while the rest of the nation has struggled with lopsided gender disparities. Kerala has placed women more favorably than the rest of India, with a favorable sex ratio of 1084 in 2011 compared to 940 for all of India. Women in Kerala have also performed better than women throughout the nation in terms of life expectancy, literacy and mean age at marriage.

◆ *Matrilineal system*

Kerala is an Indian state that has presented a model of development more open and inclusive of women while defying national trends. Women have contributed to the success of the Kerala model of development. The state's matrilineal society has had influence on the advancement of women in it. More about matrilineal system would be discussed in the coming part.

◆ *Gender capital*

Understanding modern gender relations in Kerala can be facilitated by applying the idea of gender as capital. Even with their increased education, women are still perceived as belonging only to the private sphere of the home. This is because the characteristics of femininity, such as domestication, meekness and submission to male dominance (including sexuality) are associated with women's "gender capital."

◆ *Feminine capital*

In the public domain, ideas of femininity and feminine characteristics are being simultaneously marginalized. Men continue to hold most of the higher positions of political and economic authority in Kerala. In many respects, while extending the position of women as equals in society, the Kerala model has failed to incorporate or appreciate its feminine capital. Rather, as seen by the rising rates of violence against women and girls, it has resulted in a loss or degradation of gender capital. Growing manifestations of patriarchal inclinations, women leaving the workforce and the custom of dowry, in which the bride's parents give the groom a bride price, restrict women's ability to fully engage in society.

The passing of the Kerala Panchayati Raj Bill 2009 and Kerala Municipality Bill 2009, which reserve 50% of seats in local bodies for women, was a crucial component of this strengthening. This made women's competitiveness and development potential in the state more fully realised.

◆ *Value of women's labour*

India is ranked 108th out of 152 countries in the Global Gender Gap Report 2016, which documents significant gender discrepancies. The primary cause of educational and occupational segregation disparities was identified as the undervaluing of women's labour. Caregiving and nursing, for instance, are predominantly female-dominated fields that are sometimes devalued and perceived as "natural" feminine traits. Although women in Kerala have employed their feminine capital to gain economic employment, the majority of these jobs are in the care and service industries. These fields of employment demonstrate how women make decisions about their careers under the constraints of social conventions and gender.

The language of gender equality has to give way in the present discussions of equality and development so that the lived realities of men and women in various circumstances may be examined. In a way Kerala society's gender prejudice contributes to social reproduction within the community.

4.1.2 Historical Factors

In the 1950s, writers and intellectuals referred to Kerala as a troubled state that may be considered the cradle of Indian communism, similar to how Yenan gave rise to Chinese communism. This idea was strengthened and persisted for nearly a generation after Kerala's first communist administration was elected in 1957. The emphasis on odd, but very pleasant, social indicators – like declining birth and infant death rates, rising literacy, a female-to-male sex ratio and rising average life expectancy – began to take precedence over Marxist dogma only in the 1970s.

◆ *Upright social indicators*

God's own country, Kerala, is the 13th largest economy in India. Kerala's growth narrative is distinct and the revolution has been appropriately named the "Kerala model of development." Although the state's economic development has not been outstanding, significant progress has been made in the social metrics. There has been curiosity about this type

of asymmetrical growth since it is unique.

◆ *Life expectancy*

However, according to the most recent secondary source *Economic Review*, Kerala's female life expectancy is 76.3 years, compared to only 64.2 years for women nationwide. Kerala women have historically also had good conditions, although many of the Indian states have shockingly low standards in this area. Perhaps this helped Kerala achieve remarkable success in women's growth, which in turn led to a rise in human development generally. Kerala has a 92% female literacy rate, compared to a national average of only 65%, according to the 2010 Economic Review.

Now, how does development and gender contribute to each other in the context of Kerala?

◆ *Women's contributions*

It has been noted that women's contributions to the state's growth have played a significant part in making these improvements in Kerala feasible. The extent to which women played a distinct role in each region of the state differed, but changes in land relations, family and kinship and the laws governing the social and economic structure all contributed to strengthen the position of women. As an extra bonus, it contributed to the breakdown of the inflexible caste structure.

◆ *Enlightenment through education*

The leaders of kingdoms like Travancore and Cochin, which served as the principal provinces of the British Empire, are primarily responsible for Kerala's educational growth. Leaders such as Rani Gouri Parvathi Bai, the Travancore queen in 1817, made it obvious from the start that the state should pay for everyone's education by covering the costs of education. She thought that the dissemination of enlightenment via education would lead to the production of better citizens and scholars. In the end, this would contribute to the state's wealth and prestige being enhanced.

Matrilineal System and Development

◆ *Status of women*

According to Amartya Sen, the prevalence of a matrilineal system of property inheritance among the upper class segments of the society was another element that might account for Kerala's success. Understanding the status of women in Kerala society is essential to appreciating the efficacy of the development model. The matrilineal model is credited with most of the state's growth, although it is said to have declined over the 20th century and disappeared entirely by 1976.

◆ *Change in the system*

The system's collapse brought about the emergence of a patriarchal society, as seen by the declining portion of property awarded to women and the replacement of that with dowries. In this sense, the impact the matrilineal system on the people's legal, structural and sentimental values, as well as the function it has played from its inception until its collapse, is crucial.

◆ *'His'tory*

While talking about the political and socio-cultural movements in Kerala, it is important to begin with the nature and strategies of historical recordings. History writing has always been a male-centric endeavor. In India's mainstream history of literature, women's lives and the social activities of women activists have not always been documented. While things used to be much the same everywhere, they changed in the United States and Europe around a century ago. This new interpretation of history has influenced the Indian women's movement and inspired similar initiatives abroad.

◆ *Criticism of kerala model*

In the cities of North India, feminist action and conversations were sparked by Western publications. Writing about women's social action has been done with great effort. You have learned about Kerala's pleasant social indicators in terms of gender. But you should also be aware that Feminist criticism claims that the state's politically charged society, which includes a powerful Marxist party, and the so-called Kerala Model have alienated women and disregarded their contributions.

◆ *Autonomy issues*

Kerala's social circumstances have deprived women of a position in both history and society. Women's history has long been overlooked by mainstream historians, much as they have been denied authority in the process of producing knowledge. An attempt is made to comprehend how the genesis, structure and success of feminist actions on the local level differ from those of the wider scene by contrasting the feminist movement in Kerala with its national and global equivalents.

Feminists who have critiqued historical writing techniques have brought up the issue of authority and sources in historical writing. They have attempted to determine and document their autonomy through their methodological and epistemological critiques. Individual and collective

autonomy has long been a source of contention in society. Women are not granted autonomy under a patriarchal social order.

Women's ability to organise for securing their human rights and other social goals has been restricted in India due to the numerous elements that govern social life. Uma Chakravathy (1993) has endeavoured to transform Indian historiography by penning several feminist works. While socio-cultural and religious elements are comparable across India for feminist study, Kerala's politics and development paint a different image.

◆ *Poor social condition*

It is untrue that Kerala women's social circumstances have altered as a result of increased focus on education, which led to nearly 100% literacy and increased work opportunities for women. The Kerala Model of growth has resulted in good social indices, yet women's social situation has remained poor. Sexual harassment in the workplace and uneven pay are still serious issues. According to Elizabeth Chacko's 2003 article on *Inheritance and marital inequality*, Kerala's high Gender Development Index is less valuable under more social scrutiny.

◆ *National movements*

The history of the women's movement would provide insight into the efforts made by activists to address these weaknesses in Kerala society. The independent local groups of feminists and autonomous women's groups in Kerala date back to the mid-1980s. Though women's sections of India's main political parties already existed, a feminist movement had not developed from within them. Women had taken an active part in the early twentieth-century liberation movements as well as the social reform movements of the nineteenth century. National movements are the beginning points of women's movements. Women activists like Sarojini Naidu and Aruna Asaf Ali were part of a larger wave of women who mobilised throughout the independence movement, but they never identified themselves with or as feminists.

Nonetheless, the issue of gender equality was not tackled by either the reform movement or the independence struggle. The reform movement helped women much by challenging harmful and objectifying rituals like Sati, which involves burning a widow on her husband's funeral pyre. However, the movement was not headed by women and was not willing to have a serious conversation about women's

◆ *Social reforms*

equality and rights. Social reforms at the period included dispelling religion and caste-based superstitions. Although males led these organisations for the most part, by the late nineteenth century, their wives, daughters and sisters had joined them, indicating that these women had some agency in joining social movements.

◆ *Independent women's movement*

Their initiative, meanwhile, may equally be seen as a product of their family's engagement, in which case it might not be regarded as actual autonomy but rather as a matter of family. This is also a very common method of interpreting women's actions in terms of family dynamics, which leaves open the issue of autonomy. The independent women's movement began in Kerala in the 1980s, when women organised small social groups of friends from various backgrounds. Although the Indian women's movement of the 1970s was likewise made up of tiny groups, it was more akin to action and research-oriented teams. Since academics made up the majority of their membership, they focused on recording and disseminating the background of their activities.

◆ *Progressive thoughts*

But rather than being academicians, the feminists in Kerala who emerged from Left political parties and associated with progressive organisations were ordinary citizens. Feminists were never able to get along with the progressive groups that the feminist-oriented women had left behind since they continued to uphold patriarchal systems. They could now discuss women's concerns and view feminism from a political and theoretical perspective, allowing them to examine women's issues independently. Women's organisations also responded to reports of rape, dowry killings and domestic abuse. Women's troubles had not received much attention in society prior to that, despite some dowry deaths being published in the print media.

◆ *Voice for the voiceless*

Using the phrase "speaking the bitterness aloud," these women's groups brought these tragedies to public notice and sparked a dialogue that changed society. Women who convened in various locations across Kerala organised protest gatherings and *Dharnas* (sit-ins) in response to local happenings. For a very long period, male-dominated society and socio-political favours had hidden violence against women in Kerala. The independent women's movement elevated it to a legal matter. In the mid-1990s, a number of sex scandals were reported in the media, including the *Suryanelli*

case, in which a 16-year-old girl was abducted from her tiny village and subjected to sexual abuse for a month by 42 men and another instance of a child having been raped in an ice cream shop.

◆ *First generation Feminists*

These revelations be linked to the development of the independent women's movement. On the other hand, more evidence exists about the identity of Kerala's first feminist generation. The first-generation feminists include, for instance, Anna Chandy, the first female judge in India and the first female candidate elected to the Srimulam Popular Assembly.

◆ *Notable women*

A. V. Kuttimalu Amma, Sarada Krishan, Parvathi Ayyappan and Akkamma Cheriyan, among other women, discussed women's concerns in relation to nationalist movements. The history record scarcely mentions Parvathi Ayyappan and other social reform movement activists who later joined Kerala's Indian National Congress in the early 20th century. Later in the 1930s, independence fighters Kalikkutty Asaatty, Arya Pallam, Parvathy Nenmini Mangalam, and Lalithambika Antharjanam joined Left political groups.

4.1.5 Kerala's First Women's Groups, Mid-1980s

◆ *Multi-faceted issues*

The earliest topics that the independent women's organisations tackled were inheritance, dowries and domestic abuse. These organisations started examining issues impacting women from a theoretical feminist perspective and introduced initiatives to stop abuse. In addition to bringing women together, the Indian Association for Women's National Conference in Trivandrum in 1984 supported group activities.

◆ *Feminist activism*

However, feminist activists in Kerala included journalists, teachers, attorneys, physicians and other professionals, in contrast to women's groups in the big North Indian towns, which were mostly made up of academics at universities and colleges. As they believed that the trade unions adequately represented them, there were very few working-class women in the movement who were in the unorganized or daily-wage sectors. What those women failed to see was a more gradual shift towards a more rigid division of work based on gender, one in which males were viewed as family breadwinners and had more job stability and monthly pay. Women were frequently denied the same advantages as males and placed

in temporary or seasonal occupations.

◆ *Unstructured organisations*

This procedure was hidden in the fight for higher pay. The organisations lacked a strict structure and lacked a leader. To raise awareness of the feminist cause among women in the patriarchal society and Left-leaning labour unions, the women in the autonomous organisations authored articles and booklets. The history of their own social groupings and activities in Kerala, however, was never documented.

◆ *Taking up of social anomaly*

A group of ladies who identified themselves as 'Prachodana' met in Kerala's capital city of Trivandrum in 1985. The five or six members of Prachodana would get together to talk about various women's concerns in what is said to be the first meeting of its sort in Kerala. They started off protesting over a dowry death that had happened in a Trivandrum district neighbourhood. One of the participants, A. K. Jayasree, a physician who is still involved in women's organisations, remembers spending several days in the region in protest of the tragedy and to draw attention to the problems surrounding dowries. For actions and processions, placards were used and booklets were given out. They organised a sit-in and a Rajbhavan march, which was directed towards the legislative assembly office and garnered significant print media coverage.

◆ *Sex-scandals*

Another women's organisation called 'Manushi' was founded by college professor and well-known novelist Sara Joseph. She started *Pennezhuthu*, or women's writing, a literary practice for women in Malayalam, their own tongue and authored compelling feminist fiction. This initiative included Sara Joseph's colleagues and students of 1986-87 from Pattambi Government College. This group took up the police rape case that happened in Idukki district in the early 1990s another incident which the group focused on was the naked parade of a young woman who demanded inherited property.



SARA JOSEPH

◆ *Extremist waves*

In the region of Kozhikode, another feminist organisation called 'Bodhana' was founded between 1986 and 1987. It also addressed crimes committed against women. K. Ajitha, a prominent participant in the violent political battle of the Naxalite movement, an extreme Left ideologist who planned against harsh landowners in Kerala in the late 1960s and early 1970s, was the major driving force behind this organisation. Following her release from jail, Ajitha broke away from the Naxalites and started a women's organisation to combat violence against women in Kerala society.



K. AJITHA

◆ *Subaltern wave*

To explore the philosophy and politics of women's concerns, a group of feminists calling themselves 'Sahaja' organised meetings in Kottayam, with some males joining them. Ashalatha, Elizabeth Philip, and Anila George were some of the founders of the organisation. During that time, a few Dalit women activists also took part in women's groups close to the Kottayam area, bringing up the subject of caste in talks on feminism. The Dalit Women's Society was established in Kurichy, a rural Kottayam district, in the late 1980s. The principal activists in this group, which was a component of the women's movement, were Lovely Stefen and Enayammal.

The first Malayalam book on the philosophy and history of feminism in the West was produced in 1987 by a few male friends who were involved in Sahaja's Kottayam activities. Dr. A. K. Ramakrishnan and K. M. Venugopal, two men who supported feminism, wrote a book named '*Stree Paksha Vadam, Charithram, Sidhantham*' (Feminism: History and Theory).

Another organisation that emerged in the late 1980s in the Kannur area of northern Kerala was 'Prabuddhatha'. The

◆ *Literature*

ladies in charge of this organisation, T. Devi and M. Sulphath, planned a demonstration against *Puthrakameshti yagam*, a religious offering made for a male offspring. This started a conversation on the cultural prejudice against women and girls in society. Additionally, it was a clear criticism of religion, particularly those rites that the organisation said objectified and oppressed women.

◆ *Rigorous wave*

Thus, the loosely organised friendship clubs served as the foundation for the independent Kerala women's movement. Women from other regions of Kerala also attempted to establish connections, as they shared friends with these groups. They talked about caste, religion, and class. However, there were philosophical disagreements both within and without the movement. Groups questioned whether it was appropriate for them to operate in local communities while affiliated with political parties. While some feminists cautioned against it, others believed that working with well-known local politicians was a good idea. The majority appeared to be in favour of establishing local connections with Left-leaning individuals who, to some extent, supported their endeavours. The feminist approach to women's concerns was not adopted until much later, in the mid-1980s, with the rise of independent feminist organisations. These organisations disbanded when women had to move for work, school, or personal reasons, but they were reorganised in different ways in the 1990s.

4.1.3.2 Women's Organisations in Kerala using NGO Models in the 1990s

◆ *Left-centric movements*

Kerala had unique events connected to the women's movement at the start of the 1990s. In 1990, a large number of women attended the National Conference of Autonomous Women's Organisations, including members of feminist groups. 'Vanitha Kala Jadhya,' a women's cultural parade, was organised by the women's wing of Kerala Sasthra Sahithya Parishad, a left-leaning progressive organisation, as part of an all-Kerala awareness campaign against violence against women. Progressive organisations existed independently of political parties as well. The government's establishment of a Women's Commission as a statutory entity in 1996 was noteworthy, particularly because K. R. Gowriamma, the female head of the Left wing, was a member of the commission.

◆ *Structured organisation*

Although they were planned by male colleagues, other organisations in the Left parties' women's section, such as Mahila Sangham and the Janadhipathya Mahila Association, also started programmes. Mahila Congress was the name of the women's branch of the Congress Party. Gender sensitive activities were highly supported by these groupings of party women. This was particularly true of the autonomous women's groups in Kerala that were modelled after Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). Zarina Bhatti (2002) asserts that via laws and official initiatives, NGOs in India were successful in bringing about the realisation of some of the women's rights.

◆ *Role of NGO*

But the reach of NGOs was narrow in Kerala, and even feminists expressed strong disapproval of the NGO model. The primary critique was aimed at an NGO's lack of autonomy, which might potentially reduce political freedom due to the potential vested interests of its funding sources. But early scepticism was progressively dispelled by the NGOs' active members. However, in the light of the rising rate of violence against women in India, Srila Roy (2015) has emphasised the necessity of moving beyond the "NGOization paradigm" for feminist reflection and remobilization.

◆ *Shelter for women*

K. Ajitha established the women's counselling facility 'Anweshi' in Kozhikode in 1993. The centre was first funded entirely by private donations, but over time it started to take in some funds from funding organisations. Anweshi offers abandoned girls and women a brief stay in a home as well as a counselling centre. It has sparked a number of initiatives to address violence and gender issues in Kerala. Anweshi has been publishing a magazine called 'Sanghaditha' for addressing women problems. Its vision is to "Change the mindset of both men and women towards the status and role of women in Indian society." The magazine is highly active even in 2023. They now have a large library as well.

◆ *Progressive group*

Muslim women's groups have developed in Kozhikode, where the overwhelming population is Muslim, to address particular challenges pertaining to caste and religion that affect women. Although there had been women's splits in various political organisations, such the Muslim League, V. P. Suhra founded the independent NISA Progressive Muslim Women's Forum in Kozhikode about 1997. The word "NISA" in Arabic means "WOMAN." NISA attempted to solve problems that Muslim women faced, such as muthalaq, an Islamic divorce issued by a male by uttering

the word “thwalaq” three times, and the interpretation of shariah (Islamic personal law).



SANGADITHA MAGAZINE

The Sakhi Women’s Resource Centre was established in Trivandrum in 1996. It started out as a component of a MacArthur Fellowship given to campaigner Aleyamma Vijayan, a woman, for planning programmes aimed at sensitising people to gender roles and other issues. The centre organised a number of protests to raise awareness of Kerala’s women’s problems. Small women’s organisations from all across Kerala were organised out of this centre, and it served as the foundation for the establishment of a platform at the state level. A forum for lone and small-scale feminists, the “woman’s stage,” or “Stree Vedi,” developed between 1996 and 1997.

The first gender training camps were established by women’s NGOs, catering to both men and women from diverse backgrounds. Until 2005, gender studies and women’s studies were not officially offered as university courses in Kerala. But independent women’s organisations established a forum for acknowledging and conversing about women’s concerns, as well as organising feminist discussions.

4.1.3.3 Current Advancements in Kerala’s Feminist Movements, 2000s and later

Diverse feminisms emerged in the early 2000s, leading to the creation of Gay and Dalit feminist groups within the women’s movement. The Dalit movements were already well-established in many areas of Kerala, but its female branches were not as well-known as those of other progressive

organisations from earlier decades. Numerous conversations on caste hierarchy and women's issues were started by the *Panchami Dalit Women's Group*, a new feminist organisation established in Kottayam. The organisation supported demonstrations about the Chengara land dispute, where the indigenous people called for their territory's sovereignty.

◆ *Third Gender*

Between 2004 and 2005, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) network *Sahayathrika* developed in Kerala. The group initially kept a low profile, limiting its operations to planning sexuality related talks and workshops to increase awareness among particular demographics. A fact-finding study was also conducted to investigate the truths behind the alleged suicides of two girls in different districts of Kerala during this time.

◆ *Sexuality*

The sex workers' movement was one of the social movements of the period. They were planned in Kerala by an NGO that deals with initiatives to prevent AIDS. Sex workers and whether to include them under their umbrella or not were fervently debated topics among individual feminists and the independent women's groups that were already in existence. Finally, women's organisations had to address this as a problem exclusive to women.

◆ *In-depth gender talks*

The feminist movement started tackling these problems with in-depth gender talks in recent years. When it came to women's concerns, caste, class and gender were always prevalent. The women's movement reexamined many of its strategies and closely examined the postmodern theoretical themes of identity politics. Regarding LGBT and sex-worker issues, feminists within the women's movement held sharply divergent views. The topic that Kerala feminists have been addressing for the past ten years is whether lesbian, transgender and sex worker concerns are, in fact, women's issues. Though there were disagreements among the women's movement's sections, inclusion is now accepted for all groups. The state's seminar programmes and media discussions have brought transgender problems to a heightened level of attention. For almost five years, Kerala has had an annual "pride festival" to honour the rights of LGBT individuals.

Women in the feminist movement disagree on the subject of enjoyment, even though there were numerous challenges in recognising various gender and sexual identities and sexualities. Some contend that by altering their methods

◆ *Re-claiming the lost spaces*

of action, the women's movement should also attempt to establish a woman's claim to her enjoyment in addition to her rights. For instance, the "claiming the night" protest celebration events planned by a few female activists were unacceptable for the movement as a whole. There are differing views among Kerala feminists on the topic of "re-claiming the kitchen" or (*Adukkala Thirichu Pidikkuka*). Owing to these disputes, numerous groups within the Kerala women's movement are probably going to endorse distinct platforms in the future. The women's movement's current online activities include planning protest events and having conversations about them. Through email and text messaging, women may be organised through e-groups and WhatsApp groups, which also support relevant social activities.

◆ *Campaigns*

The ways in which people protest against violence and demand their freedom have also evolved significantly in recent years. These days, it is fairly typical to see a procession or dharna including cultural activities like singing and dance. In Kerala, women frequently engage in social action by putting on street plays or dressing up in various ways to advocate causes. Other campaigns have attempted to reestablish feminists' physical presence for dialogue and action. Media coverage is currently contributing to the documenting of these movements to some degree, potentially leaving a record of women's activism in history.

◆ *Lone feminists*

The efforts of lone feminists who dared to speak out against violence and discrimination in their patriarchal culture served as the foundation for Kerala's independent women's movement. Despite Kerala's well-regarded progressive culture, which has a strong Marxist political heritage and excellent development indices, feminists have had to fight to increase awareness on important women's concerns. Nonetheless, persistent efforts to eradicate sexual exploitation and crimes against women are gradually bringing about gender-sensitive social transformation in Kerala. Women's movement activists have been the ones to start the process of documenting women's history. The social construction of reality in India will leap off the pages if women's viewpoints are included in history writing conventions and if newly emerging media outlets continue to cover the country with awareness.

Summarised Overview

The First Wave of feminism in the West had to confront issues like citizenship and voting rights, while the women's movement in India emerged at a different moment. However, throughout the second half of the 20th century, the women's movement in Indian cities focused mostly on concerns related to inheritance, work, education and divorce. The fact that the Second and Third Waves in the West directly influenced the conversation gave it more traction. There are many common circumstances that caused women to band together and fight in groups, even if Indian feminism cannot be compared to Western feminism. Violence was the primary catalyst for the emergence of the independent women's movement in India. While inheritance - and dowry-related domestic violence is a widespread problem in India, the women's movement in Kerala has particular concerns about the kidnapping of girls for sexual exploitation and the sex trafficking of women and girls.

In conclusion, it can be claimed that, while being frequently overlooked, women's roles have significantly influenced Kerala's growth as a state, especially with regard to the state's well-known Kerala model of development. But recently, there has been a discernible drop in the number of women participating in state affairs, and concerns have been expressed over the real effects of the matrilineal system in homes. Policies and indicators are required to quantify the true power held by women in the state and the extent to which this power is truly transferable. Up until the mid 1990s, development organisations and academics alike praised the Kerala model of social development, despite its slower rate of economic growth. However, growing socioeconomic disparities and the marginalisation of its minority call into question this overarching narrative.

Self-Assessment

1. Elaborate the connection between matrilineal system and development.
2. What responsibilities did Kerala's women organisations take up?
3. NGO and its contributions to Kerala with relation to gender.
4. List out the organisations that stood up for Muslim women.



Assignments

1. Kerala model in terms of gender.
2. Role of socio-cultural and political movements in building up gender friendly Kerala.
3. Kerala has seen a model of 'lone-feminism'. Evaluate.

Suggested Reading

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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU





Gender Analysis of Development Policy

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- ◆ explain the role of gender development policies in India
- ◆ be aware about the relevance of Kerala's women organisations
- ◆ understand the role of NGOs

Background

Beginning with the statement of The Commonwealth Charter of 2016 “... *gender equality and women's empowerment are essential components of human development and basic human rights. The advancement of women's rights and the education of girls are critical preconditions for effective and sustainable development.*” What does it reflect? The Commonwealth's ideals of equality between boys and men and girls and women are replicated in these principles. The Indian government released a groundbreaking skilling programme in 2015 that included gender mainstreaming. Increasing women's engagement through 'appropriate skilling and gender mainstreaming' was one of the policy's stated goals. Assessing the effects of any proposed action, including laws, policies, or initiatives, on women and men at all levels and in any field is the process of mainstreaming a gender perspective. In order to ensure that inequality is avoided and women and men benefit equally from policies and programmes in all political, economic and social domains. It is a strategy to incorporate the concerns and experiences of both sexes as essential components of their design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Gender equality is the ultimate objective of mainstreaming. This unit will take you to the aspects of gender policies in India.

Keywords

Gender policy, Legislations, Rural development, Women organisations



Discussion

4.2.1 Gender Development Policy in India - Aspects

◆ *Legislative measures*

The fifth of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that the UN has approved is “Gender Equality.” The Preamble, Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State Policy of the Indian Constitution acknowledge the idea of gender equality. Article 15(3) of the Indian Constitution, which gives the State the authority to enact laws that promote discrimination against women, is one of its most important clauses. Notable is also the establishment of the National Commission for Women in 1992, which was tasked with protecting women’s legal rights, addressing complaints of violations of their rights and offering advice on women’s socioeconomic growth.

◆ *Specific laws*

Many laws addressing gender inequality and securing equal rights for women in a range of social and personal domains have been passed in India, both at the federal and state levels. These laws are sometimes referred to as “women-centric” or “women-oriented / specific” laws.

Examples of Legislations

Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005; the Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987; the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013; the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, 1956; the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986, etc.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which India approved in 1993, is the most important convention, instrument, initiative and strategy that India has endorsed and ratified on a global scale to promote equal rights for women.

4.2.1.1 Gender Policy in India - Objectives

India has been making great efforts to ensure that women have equal status and opportunity in all areas, including basic education, employment and compensation, among others. Women held just 11% of the seats in the Lok Sabha



◆ *Legislation*

as of June 2019, whereas 46% of the seats in Panchayati Raj Institutions were held by women. Physical abuse by a husband or his family members accounted for nearly one-third of all crimes against women that were recorded in 2016. India is undoubtedly moving towards gender equality, but there is still much room for growth, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic's consequences, which have made already existing disparities worse.

The following are the major objectives of the gender policy in India:

a) Implement changes to ensure that women have equal access to financial resources, natural resources, inheritance rights, and ownership and control of land and other property, all in compliance with national laws.

b) Boost the promotion of women's empowerment by utilising enabling technologies, especially information and communications technology.

c) Adopt and fortify sensible laws and policies to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls on all fronts.

d) Acknowledging and appreciating unpaid caregiving and household labour by providing governmental services, infrastructure and social protection laws; also, encouraging shared responsibilities within the family and home as suitable for the country.

e) Make certain that women have equal access to leadership opportunities and are fully and effectively included in all decision-making processes related to politics, the economy and public life.

f) As agreed upon in line with the Beijing Platform for Action, the International Conference on Population and Development's Programme of Action and the conclusion papers of their review conferences, ensure that everyone has access to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

g) Putting an end to prejudice against women and girls worldwide in all forms.

h) The abolition of all forms of violence, both public and private, directed at women and girls, encompassing trafficking and sexual as well as other forms of exploitation.

i) Putting an end to all harmful practices, including female genital mutilation and child, early and forced marriage.

4.2.1.2 Gender Development Policy - Methods

To promote, develop and empower women, the National Policy for the Empowerment of Women was adopted in 2001. The following are the aims and objectives that the Policy aims to accomplish:

a) Establishing an atmosphere that supports women's entire growth and gives them the opportunity to realise their full potential. Adopting constructive social and economic policies will accomplish this.

b) Ensuring women have equal access to all human rights and basic freedoms in all domains, both legally and in practice.

c) Guaranteeing women's equal access to decision-making and involvement in the nation's social, political, and economic spheres.

d) Women's equal access to healthcare, high-quality education at all educational levels, career and vocational counselling, work, equal pay, workplace safety and health, social security and public office, among other things.

e) Bolstering the legal frameworks designed to end discrimination against women in all its manifestations.

f) Altering cultural perceptions and local customs *via* the active engagement and participation of men and women.

g) Incorporating a gender viewpoint into the process of development.

h) Abolition of all types of violence and prejudice against women and girls.

i) Forming and preserving alliances with groups that support women in civic society.

4.2.2 MGNREGP- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005

With the goal of ensuring the "right to work," the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005, sometimes known as MGNREGA, formerly known as the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, or NREGA was

enacted. This legislation was enacted on August 23, 2005, and it was put into effect in February 2006 under Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's UPA administration, after Minister of Rural Development Raghuvansh Prasad Singh introduced the bill in parliament.

◆ *Assurance of employment availability*

By offering at least one member of every family whose adult members volunteer to perform unskilled manual labour at least 100 days of paid employment in a fiscal year, it seeks to improve livelihood stability in rural regions. A third of the employment made available under the MGNREGA are guaranteed to women. Building durable assets is another goal of MGNREGA (such as roads, canals ponds and wells). Minimum salaries must be paid and employment must be supplied within 5 kilometres of the applicant's domicile. The applicant is eligible to unemployment benefits if employment is not offered within 15 days of submitting an application.

◆ *Social security*

In other words, the government must give those individuals specific unemployment benefits if it is unable to find them work. As a result, employment under MGNREGA is mandated by law. Other arguments in favour of NREGA include the fact that it may support social fairness, empower rural women, safeguard the environment and reduce migration from rural to urban areas in addition to generating economic stability and rural assets. P.V. Narasimha Rao, the prime minister at the time, originally introduced the act in 1991. It was eventually approved by the parliament and put into effect in 625 Indian districts. NREGA was expanded to include all of India's districts as of April 1, 2008, based on the results of this trial project. "The largest and most ambitious social security and public works programme in the world" was how the government described the act.

◆ *Comprehensive*

The World Bank and other organisations had criticised the statute in 2009 for impeding growth through internal mobility restrictions. Nonetheless, the World Bank described it as a "stellar example of rural development" in its 2014 World Development Report. Gramma panchayats would be the primary implementers of MGNREGA (GPs). According to the legislation, it offers several protections to encourage efficient administration and application. The legislation makes specific reference to the agencies and guiding principles for execution, permitted works list, financing structure, supervision and assessment, and comprehensive procedures to guarantee accountability and transparency.

4.2.3 Role of NGOs

◆ *Advocating newness*

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have long been at the forefront of advocating for novel concepts and pressuring governments to put them into practice. NGOs serve as the “voice of the people” at all governmental levels, including local, national and global. They have taken on responsibilities including training, education and lobbying in addition to actively tracking the accomplishments and failures of their goals. Over the last twenty years, non-governmental organisations have been vocal in their support of giving women’s great contributions to the family, society and development the utmost acknowledgment possible. From the International Women’s Year Conference in Mexico City in 1975 to subsequent UN global conferences on women, NGOs have been among the most vocal supporters of putting the agreements reached into practice.

◆ *Variety of domain*

The shift from a “women-centered” to a “gender” approach has dominated most of the primary discourse on women’s concerns among NGOs in recent years, especially when it comes to their role in development. One of the most recent topics to be tackled in this manner is health. Furthermore, NGOs acknowledge that gender disparities can negatively impact women’s health in a variety of domains that are not typically associated with health. For instance, when women are excluded from the decision making process regarding the distribution of resources within the health sector, choices are made by males who might not be considering the specific health treatments that women will require. Inadequate allocation or scarcity of resources within the health system might be linked to elevated rates of death among mothers and infants.

a) Discrimination against female children can result in anaemia, malnutrition and stunting of growth. It can occur (1) prior to birth through prenatal sex selection; (2) at birth through infanticide and (3) during childhood through neglect and son preference, compounded by their unequal share of food and household chores;

b) The pervasive and mainly unacknowledged occurrence of violence against women, which includes sexual and psychological abuse that can be lethal or leave long-lasting health effects;

c) Women’s bodies are far more prone to contracting HIV

/ AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STDs) and this risk is increased since they are unable to demand safe sex. The comorbidities encompass infertility and mortality;

d) unequal amount of family income that women and girls get, as well as their limited access to training and education options and ensuing joblessness, may push them to engage in commercial sex, increasing their risk of HIV/AIDS and STDs;

e) Early planned marriages can result in premature and unspaced pregnancies with accompanying health hazards, a practice over which the females involved have little to no influence;

f) Cultural customs that restrict women's autonomy, such as widow inheritance and female genital mutilation, which affect two million girls annually, can have detrimental long-term implications on their health.

4.2.3.1 NGOs Advocacy or Support

Advocacy is one of the most significant tasks that NGOs perform. The improvement of the lives of their constituents and the communities they work with is often the primary emphasis of NGOs' goals and objectives. NGOs, for instance, have taken the lead in defending women's rights as human rights, bringing attention to instances of violence against women, advocating the needs of girls and women and advancing the creation of a thorough, all-encompassing and rights-based approach to women's health care.

To effect change, one must persuade the important parties / stakeholders involved – whether they are employed by the government, in administration or as the ones who supply the required funds – to make the change. Ensuring the electorate is aware of and supportive of the required reforms is also essential. NGOs are in a good position to advocate the necessity of a gender perspective in healthcare. As advocates, they are now more successful on a local, national and worldwide scale. The actions of networks and coalitions like the Women's Caucus, Advocacy for Women's Health, and HERA at the most recent round of UN intergovernmental conferences and the ongoing five-year assessments of the conferences have demonstrated this on a global scale. In addition, non-governmental organisations have been actively involved in locating influential decision-makers,

◆ *Community development*

◆ *Gender in health care*

creating position papers and advocacy materials, reaching out to the media through news releases, press conferences and scheduled media visits and interactions.

◆ *Power and influence*

NGOs must play a significant role in persuading decision-makers to adopt a gender perspective, as most of the decision-makers in the organisation and financing of health care delivery tend to be males and not women. Health professional associations are most suited to advocate a gender-based approach to health care delivery at the national level. Their officers typically include people in powerful positions to influence government, such as the current Ghanaian Minister of Health, who was previously the Vice-President of the Ghana Medical Association, among many other examples.

◆ *Professionalism*

Alongside students from other fields who went on to hold important roles in government decision making, physicians studied for their medical degrees. Sensitization of health professional associations should thus be prioritised to take advantage of their easy access to Ministries of Health and other influential opinion formers to effect the required reforms. Legislators can be successfully partnered with by health professional groups to advance a gender-responsive approach to health care delivery. They are aware that medical ethics compel doctors to give unbiased counsel on health concerns in the best interests of their patients; hence they frequently turn to health professional bodies for guidance on these matters. Health professional groups can utilise their connections to advance a gender perspective to the delivery of healthcare as they understand how important it is to cultivate positive relationships with the media for their own purposes.

◆ *Gender-responsive approach*

Additionally, they can persuade the broader public to accept their statements as objective and free from governmental interference. In concert with other health-focused non-governmental organisations, they may influence the expertise and experience NGOs have accumulated in communicating with the public in a way that is easily understood, which will be crucial in advancing a gender-responsive approach to healthcare.

4.2.3.2 Training and NGOs

Numerous non-governmental organisations (NGOs) engage in training and training initiatives, a role they have customarily played at all levels. As a result, they are in a

◆ *Gender as the base*

good position to help the government agencies concerned to implement the necessary adjustments to guarantee a gender-based approach to healthcare. For instance, raising awareness of gender sensitivity in other ministries—like finance and planning—as well as in the health ministry would be crucial.

◆ *Collaboration*

Numerous non-governmental organisations have created training courses in this field, which are easily modified to accommodate the unique requirements of the healthcare industry. To ensure that they adopt a gender-sensitive approach at all levels of their health service activities—for example, it is crucial that they adopt a gender-sensitive approach when working with their colleagues, since women make up the majority of the less-trained and lower-paid health care workers—health professional associations will need to sensitise their own members, who play a crucial role in the provision of healthcare. Therefore, governments ought to ask NGOs to collaborate as co-developers of training courses on the gender perspective in healthcare.

Some of the registered NGOs for women in Kerala

- ◆ Sarojini Naidu Mahila Samajam
- ◆ Navajyothi Mahila Samajam
- ◆ Kerala Working Women's Association
- ◆ Sree nikethan Centre for Social Development
- ◆ All Kerala Youth Centre
- ◆ Bharat Vanitha Vikasana Society
- ◆ Ahalya
- ◆ Integrated Community Development Centre (ICDS)
- ◆ Bodhi Kala Samskarika Samithy
- ◆ Anweshi Women's Counselling Centre
- ◆ Arsha Bharath Bhahujana Bhodha Valkarana Grama Vikasana Samithi

4.2.3.3 NGOS as Catalyst

◆ *Men-centric*

It must be considered that important government agencies involved in creating a gender-responsive approach to health care typically have a male preponderance and do not prioritize the needs of women. In certain instances, people might be initially opposed to efforts to implement a gender

approach to the delivery of healthcare because they think it will benefit women more than men.

◆ *Participation*

NGOs can serve as catalysts by enticing participation from the many health-related departments. The collaboration of several NGOs will make this more effective. The constituencies of various NGOs vary. For instance, in addition to health professional NGOs, there are women's NGOs that focus on initiatives to enhance women's status and development NGOs that are specifically focused on development concerns.

◆ *Gender sensitive strategy*

It will be required to request other ministries involved in the provision of health care when a government decides to implement a comprehensive sector-wide strategy to gender sensitivity in health care medical treatment. The Ministry of Transport can play a significant role in ensuring that "high-risk" women can access hospitals for treatment, which is frequently life-saving in countries with high rates of maternal mortality and morbidity. For example, in some parts of Nigeria, women experiencing obstetrical complications are frequently driven to the closest main road, where a passing truck must be stopped and the driver asked to take her to the closest hospital. The driver is paid for taking her to the hospital, which solves the situation in a straightforward manner and may even save the woman's life.

◆ *Undesirable impact on women*

The health condition of women and girls has suffered significantly as a result of the wildly unequal presence of males and their subsequent domination among those in charge of organising and delivering health care, especially in developing nations. Due to their gender or the fact that women are more severely impacted by them, the numerous harmful elements that have an impact on women's health have received less attention. As a result, while addressing the health needs of women and girls, health planners and providers have not given them enough consideration. The rights of women and girls to have good health and the fact that discrimination against them in this regard violates their human rights should also be publicly acknowledged.

◆ *Role of professionals*

To improve the health of women, who make up more than half of the world's population and to fully realise their contribution to development, there is a need for focused advocacy directed at educating decision-makers, opinion leaders and the general public about the significance of implementing a gender approach to health care. It emphasises the vital role that health professional associations and their

practising members may play as well-informed, powerful community members with health expertise.

It would be unjustifiable if the NGOs for transgender community are not mentioned under this title. Here are a few details.

◆ *Sex education*

The transgender and LGBTQIA+ communities have long faced discrimination and persecution from society. People are growing to appreciate this community because of these NGOs. Additionally, these groups educate individuals about sex education and support it. Now, let us learn about the Indian NGOs that support the transgender population.

a) Sahodari foundation

Since 2007, the Sahodari Foundation has been a trailblazing organisation in India, advocating on behalf of the transgender and non-binary communities. The association was founded by writer, artist and transgender rights activist Kalki Subramaniam. It is a family, a movement and a community of young transsexual people. The association structure of this 2008 registered foundation is not conventional. Rather, they function based on necessity. After a decade, they have been actively promoting and enlightening the public about the rights of transgender individuals in India. Their focus has been on legal recognition since 2012, and they have conducted campaigns in several Indian locations. Their goal has been to empower transgender people in all spheres since 2017.

◆ *Support for non-binary communities*

b) Udaan Trust

An Indian non-governmental organisation operating in Maharashtra is called Udaan Trust. It is the first HIV/AIDS group founded by LGBT individuals who are HIV/AIDS positive. The focus of Udaan is sexual health among the homosexual and transgender communities, particularly in relation to HIV/AIDS prevention. Udaan provides clinical benefits, guidance, sex education, condom distribution and other forms of support to people that are at risk in order to accomplish this. Udaan also aims to raise awareness of issues concerning the LGBT community and those who are HIV/AIDS positive.

◆ *Sexual health*

c) Gay Bombay

Gay Bombay, often known as GB, is a 1998-founded LGBT

◆ *Cultural activities*

social group that advocates for LGBT rights in Mumbai, India. The organisation holds parties, film screenings and seminars in an effort to raise awareness of LGBT rights. The goal of the group is to create a safe haven for the LGBTQ community. Furthermore, it is one of the oldest LGBT support groups in Mumbai, having organised get-togethers at a variety of venues since 2000.

Now, focusing on the social situation of Kerala, have you noticed any of the organisations for transgender communities? Hope you remember the escalating rate of transgender suicides in the beginning of 2000s.

◆ *Sheltered care*

Against the backdrop of increasing lesbian suicide rates in Kerala at that point in time, the organisation Sahayatrika was founded. In 2001, the first talks about Sahayathrika took place. In 2002, the first project was launched in collaboration with the mental health organisation FIRM. Sahayatrika became a separate, legally recognised organisation in 2008. Sahayatrika serves transgender and lesbian / bisexual women from Kerala. The word “Women fellow-travelers” is a Malayalam translation of the name. The organisation’s primary goals are community organising, counselling and helping women who identify as members of sexual and gender minorities survive. The organisation also works together on projects that raise public awareness of LGBT issues. In 2022, the organisation commemorated its twentieth anniversary with a lavish event called ‘Idam.’ Actress Shakeela was among the notable guests and activists in attendance, which was opened by Minister of Higher Education and Social Justice, Smt. R. Bindu.

4.2.4 Women’s Organisations

◆ *Empower*

Since the beginning of time, women’s organisations have been crucial in improving the position of women. Women’s groups in India date back to the time before independence, when influential figures like Pandita Ramabai, Annie Besant and Margaret Cousins were involved. These associations have contributed significantly to nationalistic movements by empowering women to take a leading role in the fight for Indian independence.

◆ *Leadership*

Indian society has historically included women in leadership roles. They have not diminished in their commercial or agricultural endeavours while acting as writers and singers. Women’s roles have changed dramatically from being passive members of society to active participants. The

demand for equal rights for women in a variety of socio-political arenas was one of the significant events that preceded the development of women's organisations in India.

Women were important in many aspects of life in India, but a big problem has been getting them accepted by society. A few of the elements highlight the significance of women and their role in the nation.

- ◆ *Wages* a) Economic Roles: In the workplace, women collaborate with people of other genders. Neglecting women's economic duties leads to increased unemployment, uneven pay, and worker exploitation. This has been a serious source of worry. Women's groups have consistently brought attention to these problems and fought for the constitutionally guaranteed implementation of the equal pay for equal labour concept.
- ◆ *Social position* b) Gender Equality: As all genders have equal possibilities, many women have inspired other girls to dream big and desire to succeed in life. Women are accorded equal position in society, and several groups strive to achieve this objective.
- ◆ *Equitable society* c) Social Issues: Women's organisations have strived to create a fair and equitable society for women by advocating constitutional amendments that benefit women in India. The National Commission for Women (NCW) was established to address issues pertaining to women.
- ◆ *Better participation* d) Political spheres: A large number of women actively participated in the Indian freedom movement. Many women now hold significant posts in the Rajya Sabha, Lok Sabha and State Legislatures as of 2022. Additionally, women now have the chance to become the nation's president and prime minister.

Women are now involved in practically every aspect of modern life, including politics, society, the economy and technology. Numerous groups dedicated to the advancement of people have been founded since independence.

The following are the early women's organisations that the social reformers founded:

- a) Jyotirao and Savitribai Phule - Both contributed to the establishment of a girls' school and the education of females.
- b) Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar - He advocated the remarriage of widows. Lord Canning was assisted in enacting

the Widows Remarriage Act in 1856 by Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Rani Rashmoni.

c) One of the first social reformers to address women's difficulties was Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who advocated the welfare of women. He ended the practice of sati pratha and the prevailing polygamy in the community. He was also an advocate for women's property rights.

d) Keshab Chandra Sen spearheaded several educational initiatives while speaking for widows' rights. He launched a journal for women. He was a member of the Prathna Sabha and Brahmo Samaj, organisations that fought tirelessly for women's rights.

e) A group led by M.G. Ranade, R.G. Bhandarkar, and Narayan Ganesh Chandavarkar was founded in Pune with the goals of ending child marriage, promoting women's education and facilitating widow remarriage.

Now let us understand an early legislation for women, which were passed in the 19th century.

◆ *Legislation for women*

The Age of Consent Act, 1891, also known as Act X of 1891, was a piece of legislation passed on March 19, 1891, in British India. It increased the legal age of consent for all girls, married or single, to 12 years old in all jurisdictions and any violation of this age could result in rape charges.

On January 9, 1891, Sir Andrew Scoble presented a measure before the Legislative Council of the Governor General of India in Calcutta. The act amended Section 375 of the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Legal Code.

One of the best organisations for women in 2022 by the Economic Times is *All State Solutions Private Limited (ASPL)*, which is also known as *All State India*. Allstate is recognized for creating an inclusive environment, accelerating equality for all in the workplace and introducing policies in the interest of women employees.

The same day it was discussed and councillor Sir Romesh Chunder Mitter opposed it, claiming it went against the traditional Hindu code. Councillor Rao Bahadur Krishnaji Lakshman Nulkar, the council president, the governor general and Viceroy Lord Lansdowne, however, supported it. Rukhmabai revived the topic of such a statute in an 1887



case involving a child bride in Bombay High Court; the British had been drawn to the case because it involved the eleven year-old Bengali girl Phulmoni Dasi's death from coercive sexual relations. In 1891, the statute was passed.

4.2.4.1 Initiatives by Women for Women

Several women founded the following organisations.

◆ Education

a) Arya Mahila Samaj: Ramabai Saraswati founded it in Pune. Its primary goals were educating women, opposing antiquated customs and discouraging child marriage. Later, in 1889, she established Sharada Sadan in Mumbai to provide education for child widows.

◆ Against customs

b) Bharat Mahila Parishad: Founded in 1905 to enhance the social circumstances of women, it is the women's branch of the National Social Conference, which is a constituent of the Indian National Congress. This parishad campaigned against underage marriage, dowries and other social evils.

◆ For widows

c) Rabindranath Tagore's sister Swarnakumari Devi founded the Ladies Society of Calcutta in 1882. It was successful in teaching the widows livability skills. The first Indian woman to serve as an editor was Swarnakumari Devi, who edited the women's publication *Bharati*.

◆ Health facilities

The main organisation for the Parsi community was the Stri Zarthosti Mandal, also known as the Parsi Women's Circle. For women's social work, it was effective. This group provided healthcare, education and finance from the rich Parsi philanthropist Sir Ratan Tata.

Women Organisations in India

- ◆ All India Women's Conference
- ◆ Association of Theologically Trained Women of India
- ◆ Krantikari Adivasi Mahila Sangathan
- ◆ Bharatiya Grameen Mahila Sangh
- ◆ Confederation of Women Entrepreneurs
- ◆ All India Federation of Women Lawyers.
- ◆ Appan Samachar
- ◆ Durga Vahini
- ◆ Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA)

4.2.4.2 Government Initiatives for Women Empowerment

The various government initiatives directed towards women empowerment are as follows:

a) One Stop Centre

One Stop Centres (OSCs) is an initiative of Ministry of Women and Child Development. It is intended to support women affected by violence, in private and public spaces, within the family, community and at the workplace. In accordance with this scheme, 36 centers were established in the first phase, with one OSC to be established in each State / UT to enable access to an integrated range of services, including medical, legal and psychological support. Additionally, 150 more centers are established in the second phase between 2016 and 2017 in addition to the 234 operational one stop centers and the 654 approved OSC. The Scheme aims to: (i) Offer comprehensive support and aid to women impacted by violence, in both public and private settings, all under one roof. (ii) To provide quick access to a variety of emergency and non-emergency services, such as psychological, legal, medical and counselling assistance, all under one roof in an effort to combat all types of violence against women.

◆ Quick access

b) Nai Roshni Scheme

The Ministry of Minority Affairs launched “Nai Roshni,” a Leadership Development Programme for Minority Women, in 2012-13 with the goal of empowering women. The programme’s goal is to empower and give minority women – including their neighbours from other communities who live in the same village or neighborhood – confidence by teaching them the skills, knowledge and methods necessary to communicate with banks, government agencies and other organisations on all fronts.

◆ Skill training

c) Beti Bachao Beti Padhao

The Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP) programme was launched by the Indian government in 2015 to address issues of gender inequality and women’s empowerment in the nation. Translation: “Save the girl child, educate the girl child” is what the term *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao* means. The programme seeks to increase the effectiveness of social services for girls and educate the public against gender prejudice. The Ministry of Human Resources Development (MoHRD), the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoH&FW), and the

◆ Gender sensitive strategy



Ministry of Women & Child Development (MoWCD) oversee it collectively. The MoWCD is in charge of overseeing and managing the BBBP's budget. However, the MoH&FW is in charge of capacity growth and quality control. Programmes for community participation have also been funded by the MoHRD.

The following objectives are sought after by the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Yojana:

- a) Enhance the child-to-sex ratio.
- b) Assure women's empowerment and gender equality
- c) Stop sexism and discrimination against women and protect and ensure the survival of girls.
- c) Promote girls' involvement and education.
- d) Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana

The Ministry of Women and Child Development introduced the Centrally Sponsored Programme known as Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, or PMMVY. Grants-in-aid would be given to State Governments and Union Territory Administrations (UTs) in a specific Escrow account so that the recipients would get their benefits directly. For the first live child in the household, Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers (PW&LM) would get a monetary incentive of 5,000/-under PMMVY, provided they met certain requirements related to maternal and child health.

◆ *Reproductive care*

Summarised Overview

To conclude, it is horrible to see women treated with less status than males in a nation like India, where many goddesses are worshipped. Sociologists view this as a cultural paradox. Despite several post-independence changes, women are still suppressed, marginalised and exploited. The main problem with comparing women to Gods is that it presents a picture of a powerful woman who is prepared to battle evil. But that is not how this makes sense. It propagates the myth that successful women are superwomen and that average woman are incapable of making a name for themselves. Then, it merely highlights a tiny subset of women, keeping the bulk in the shadows. Furthermore, it ignores the fact that even the goddesses were subject to male authority in their culture and that their abilities were only ever used in dire situations to defend civilization or to defend their spouses.

The empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of their political, social, economic and health status is a highly important end in itself. In addition, it is essential for the achievement of sustainable development. Women's empowerment and achieving gender equality is essential for our society to ensure the sustainable development of the country.

As social beings, we must be alert and aware of the transformations of gender perceptions and our judgements should be thoroughly based on theoretical knowledge. The gender construction in social institutions should be neutral, thus ensuring equality. Social activities of organisations and empowerment measures of legislations could be effective only through the micro level changes which should happen within each and every individual. Gender equality is not just a human right, rather it is humanism.

Self-Assessment

1. Bring out the aspects of gender policy in India.
2. What training does NGOs initiate in terms of gender?
3. What were the major aims of women's organisations?
4. Is India a gender-friendly nation? Analyse on the basis of contemporary issues.

Assignments

1. Are the objectives of gender policy in India effective?
2. Methods of Gender Development Policies. Expand.
3. NGOs as catalyst in gender issues. Analyse.
4. Suggest solutions for gender equality in society

Suggested Reading

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8. <http://keralawomenscommission.gov.in/index.php/content/index/registered-ngos>

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

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