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GENDER SCHOOL AND SOCIETY



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## GENDER ISSUES AND CONCEPTS

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The Objectives of the chapter are :

- *Discuss the terms and concept of gender, sex and sexuality,*
- *Discuss the concept of patriarchy, masculinity and feminism.*

### INTRODUCTION

#### ◆ Gender : Meaning And Concept

Gender is the range of characteristics pertaining to, and differentiating between, masculinity and femininity. Depending on the context, these characteristics may include biological sex (i.e. the state of being male, female or intersex), sex-based social structures (including gender roles and other social roles), or gender identity.

Sexologist **John Money** introduced the terminological distinction between biological sex and gender as a role in 1955. Before his work, it was uncommon to use the word gender to refer to anything but grammatical categories. However, Money's meaning of the word did not become widespread until the 1970s, when feminist theory embraced the concept of a distinction between biological sex and the social construct of gender. Today, the distinction is strictly followed in some contexts, especially the social sciences and documents written by the **World Health Organization (WHO)**. However, in many other contexts, including some areas of social sciences, gender includes sex or replaces it. Although this change in the meaning of gender can be traced to the 1980s, a small acceleration of the process in the scientific literature was observed in 1993 when the USA's Food and Drug Administration (FDA) started to use gender instead of sex. In 2011, the FDA reversed its position and began using sex as the biological classification and gender as "*a person's self representation as male or female, or how that person is responded to by social institutions based on the individual's gender presentation.*" In non-human animal research, gender is also commonly used to refer to the physiology of the animals.

In the English literature, the trichotomy between biological sex, psychological gender, and social gender role first appeared in a feminist paper on transsexualism in 1978.

The social sciences have a branch devoted to gender studies. Other sciences, such as sexology and neuroscience, are also interested in the subject.

While the social sciences sometimes approach gender as a social construct, and gender studies particularly do, research in the natural sciences investigates whether biological differences in males and females influence the development of gender in humans; both inform debate about how far biological differences influence the formation of gender identity.

*"Gender refers to the economic, social and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female at a particular point in time."*

*"Gender refers to the array of socially constructed roles and relationships, personality traits, attitudes, behaviours, values, relative power and influence that society ascribes to the two sexes on a differential basis. Whereas biological sex is determined by genetic and anatomical characteristics, gender is an acquired identity that is learned, changes over time, and varies widely within and across cultures. Gender is relational and refers not simply to women or men but to the relationship between them."*

*"Gender is not what culture created out of my body's sex; rather, sex is what culture makes when it genders my body."*

*"Gender is determined socially; it is the societal meaning assigned to male and female. Each society emphasizes particular roles that each sex should play, although there is wide latitude in acceptable behaviours for each gender" (Hesse-Biber, S. and Carger, G. L., 2000, p. 91).*

*"Gender is used to describe those characteristics of women and men, which are socially constructed, while sex refers to those which are biologically determined. People are born female or male but learn to be girls and boys who grow into women and men. This learned behaviour makes up gender identity and determines gender roles." —(World Health Organization, 2002, p. 4).*

*"Gender is the division of people into two categories, "men" and "women." Through interaction with caretakers, socialization in childhood, peer pressure in adolescence, and gendered work and family roles women and men are socially constructed to be different in behaviour, attitudes, and emotions. The gendered social order is based on and maintains these differences".*

*—(Borgatta, E.F. and Montgomery, R.J.V., 2000, p. 1057).*

### GENDER AND POWER

Differences in male and female gender roles are related to the power differential between men and women. Structural and institutional power reside in the forms of access to educational, economic, and political resources and opportunities. In most societies, access to these structural forms of power are aspects of male privilege.

Education, for example, provides people with the power to gather and process information, thus understanding the world in which they live. Although women in North America receive educations comparable to those of men, women in other nations often lack access to education and the power it affords. The United Nations (2000) reported that females comprise two-thirds of the world's 876 million illiterates. For example, under Taliban religious rule, women in Afghanistan were not allowed to attend school, and those who attempted to teach them were harshly punished. One of the first responses when Taliban rule ended was the reinstatement of education for women.

Economies provide people with the power to financially support themselves and their families. The United Nations (2000) stated that women's participation in the workforce, although increasing, tends to be limited to a few occupations. In addition, women continue to occupy lower-status and lower-paying jobs. Women also experience greater unemployment than men (United Nations 2000). Fewer opportunities in the job market may partially explain the recent increases in the proportion of poor women in the United States. The United States 2000 Census data show that, compared to men at 9.9 percent, a higher percentage of women (12.5%) reside below the poverty line in all age categories. The differences are even more dramatic when race is included in the calculations. Whereas 8.3 percent of Caucasian American men fall beneath the poverty line, 24.1 percent of African, American women fall beneath the poverty line (US Census Bureau 2001). Whether in the United States, or in other countries, women have less economic power than men.

Similar patterns are apparent in the arena of political power. Governments provide people with the power to voice their needs and wants through voting and holding elected positions. However, women did not have the right to vote in ten of the world's eleven oldest democracies until the twentieth century (Lips 2001). In addition, women are significantly under represented in legislative positions. Specifically, in 1998, women filled only 9 percent of the United States Senate seats and 12.9 percent of the House of Representative (Lips 2001).

Some theorists believe that men's greater power and status in societies underlie the differences in gender roles. Social structure theory (Eagly and Wood 1999) postulates that the powerful roles that men hold lead to the development of related traits, such as aggressiveness and assertiveness. Likewise, women who have less access to powerful roles develop traits consistent with their subordinate roles, such as submissiveness and cooperativeness. In sum, the power differential in favor of men may explain why stereotypical male traits are more valued than stereotypical feminine traits.

The existing power differential between men and women can also be manifested within marriages and families. **For example**, men may actively use their power to avoid sharing the household labor. Women may be relegated to providing more unpaid domestic labor because the gendered structure of their society inhibits their access to economic power.

Findings indicate that men who lack other types of power may compensate by exerting power through violence toward their partners. Women, who often lack economic power and interpersonal power and resources, all too frequently become trapped in increasingly violent relationships. Marital or intimate violence is a worldwide problem. For example, research suggests that one out of four Chilean women are beaten by their partners (McWhirter 1999). Similarly, findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey suggest that almost 25 percent of American women have been sexually and/or physically assaulted by an intimate partner. (Patricia, Tjaden and Nancy Thoennes 2000) Unfortunately, social institutions (legal, religious, medical) have historically supported male perpetrators of domestic violence rather than their female victims, effectively maintaining and reinforcing the power differential.

# PATRIARCHY FAMILY AND POWER CONTROL

## ◆ Patriarchy : Origin

The origins of patriarchy are closely related to the concept of gender roles, or the set of social and behavioural norms that are considered to be socially appropriate for individuals of a specific sex. Much work has been devoted to understanding why women are typically thought to inhabit a domestic role while men are expected to seek professional satisfaction outside of the home. This division of labor is frequently mapped onto a social hierarchy in which males' freedom to venture outside of the home and presumed control over women is perceived as superior and dominant. As such, rather than working to destabilize the historical notion of patriarchy, much literature assesses the origins of patriarchy, or a social system in which the male gender role acts as the primary authority figure central to social organization, and where fathers hold authority over women, children, and property. It implies the institutions of male rule and privilege and entails female subordination.

Though less popular in modern academic circles, there has been a traditional search for biological explanations of gender roles. Before the nineteenth century, this conversation was primarily theological and deemed patriarchy to be the "natural order". This took on a biological trope with Charles Darwin's ideas about evolution in **The Origin of Species**. In this work, Darwin explained evolution from the biological understanding that is now the

accepted scientific theory. Biologists such as **Alfred Russel Wallace** quickly applied his theory to mankind. To be clear, though, the line of thought called Social Darwinism, or the application of evolutionary principles to the development of human beings and our social practices, was never promoted by Darwin himself. With the popularization of the idea of human evolution, what had previously been explained as a "*natural order*" for the world morphed into a "*biological order*."

The modern term for using biological explanations to explain social phenomena is sociobiology. Sociobiologists use genetics to explain social life, including gender roles. According to the sociobiologists, patriarchy arises more as a result of inherent biology than social conditioning. One such contemporary sociobiologist is **Steven Goldberg**, who, until retirement, was a sociologist at the City College of New York. In 1973, Goldberg published *The Inevitability of Patriarchy*, which advanced a biological interpretation of male dominance. Goldberg argued that male dominance is a human universal as a result of our biological makeup. One evolutionary sociobiological theory for the origin of patriarchy begins with the view that females almost always invest more energy into producing offspring than males and, as a result, females are a resource over which males compete. This theory is called Bateman's principle. One important female preference in selecting a mate is which males control more resources to assist her and her offspring. This, in turn, causes a selection pressure on men to be competitive and succeed in gaining resources in order to compete with other men.

These sociobiological theories of patriarchy are counterbalanced by social constructionist theories that emphasize how certain cultures manufacture and perpetuate gender roles. According to social constructionist theories, gender roles are created by individuals within a society who choose to imbue a particular structure with meaning. Gender roles are constantly toyed with and negotiated by actors subscribing to and questioning them. Since the feminist movement in the 1970s and the flood of women into the workforce, social constructionism has gained even greater traction.

#### ◆ **Meaning of Patriarchy**

"**Patriarchy**" is a term for societies in which male is the favored gender, and in which men hold power, dominion and privilege. That position is reinforced by societal and cultural norms, religious teachings, media portrayals of gender roles (specifically female inferiority), the use of perceived feminine characteristics as insults, and even formal definition of gender roles, including laws limiting women's rights.

Male power in a patriarchy can be found at family, community, social and governmental levels. For example, in the family realm, fathers could have dominion over their unmarried daughters, husbands over their wives, and sons over widowed mothers. The "man of the house" makes the ultimate decision on everything from size of family to the family budget to methods of discipline. In the community, businesses are generally run by men and local leaders as well as respected elders are men. The social rules and norms are set and enforced by men. The formal definition of patriarchy as a form of government is of one

controlled by men by designed limitation, be it functionally theocracy, a monarchy, dictatorship or partial democracy with limited enfranchisement. Colloquially, any government comprised disproportionately of men can be described as a patriarchy, even full democracies.

Most, though not all patriarchies are/were patrilineal (property, name, or heritage goes from father to son). Judaism and Navaho are examples of matrilineal descent and/or property transfer in largely patriarchal societies.

A majority of human societies of the last 2,000 or so years have been patriarchal. There is disagreement about earlier in history, with some proposing the existence of matriarchal or at least sex-egalitarian societies. Although it is disputed whether such societies ever represented a norm, there is strong evidence that in at least some cultures the status of women was relatively high. Notable examples include the Berbers, most Tungstic and Mongolic peoples, and certain Native American tribes like the Hopi.

#### ◆ Power Control in Patriarchy

Patriarchy is a system of stratification where men are given more power and prestige than women. Literally translated to "rule of the father," patriarchy evolved out of a need to establish authority and power in society. While every society needs to have leadership and authority, patriarchy has systematically subjected women to subordination, abuse, and exploitation. In some societies, women are not allowed to own property and are sometimes considered property themselves. Women's sexuality has been controlled to the point where those who do not conform are ostracized, abused, or put to death. In some countries, female infanticide and female selective abortions are performed in order to ensure that families have a male to support them and to escape the financial burden of having a daughter. The problem with patriarchy is not necessarily the power it gives to men, but the patterns of abuse, exploitation, and dehumanization of women that have been found in patriarchal societies throughout the world.

Friedrich Engels was interested in the system of patriarchy and the sexual exploitation of women. He pointed out that in earlier societies, when women and men contributed equally to the food supply, there was more equality between the two. Although there was a gendered division of labor, the roles that women performed were considered equally valuable to those that men performed. However, after societies began to be transformed from Hunter/Gather to Pastoral and Agricultural societies, he saw a marked difference in the way women were treated. The establishment of wealth and private property gave rise to patriarchal societies. Instead of being passed on to the next generation of children, property and wealth were passed down through the line of the patriarch, or father.

In order to ensure a rightful heir, a woman's sexuality had to be controlled. This is why it became so important for a woman to be a virgin before marriage. If she was not sexually pure, she was less desirable for marriage.

According to Engels, under the system of patriarchy, women became an instrument for the production and maintenance of a class structure. In working-class families, where little or no property was owned, it was less important to impose these rules on women. However, as society progressed,

the ideas of the ruling class were adopted by the majority of the population. Today, women's sexuality is still controlled and exploited. As with other forms of social stratification, religion has served as a means of justifying gender inequality, perhaps more so than any other social institution.

Historically, there have been significant changes in gender stratification. By tracing these patterns through history, we can see how gender inequality has evolved through time and determine the influence of social forces on these patterns of gender stratification. Below is a chart outlining patterns of gender stratification in pre-industrial and industrial societies.

Type of Society	Patterns of Gender Stratification
Hunter-Gatherer Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women gathered vegetation and were responsible for child rearing. Men were hunters.</li> <li>• Equitable relationship between men and women because neither has the ability to provide sole means of food necessary for survival.</li> <li>• No inheritance rituals.</li> </ul>
Horticultural Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hand tools, hoes and digging sticks make it possible for women to work in cultivation of vegetation. For this reason, there was a high degree of equality between men and women.</li> <li>• Neither sex controls food supply.</li> <li>• Inheritance could be matrilineal or patrilineal.</li> <li>• Patriarchy is not yet established. Many horticultural societies are matrilineal.</li> </ul>
Pastoral Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestication of animals is done mostly by men and women contribute very little to production of food.</li> <li>• Patrilineal inheritance rituals</li> <li>• Women's sole purpose is to produce male offspring to preserve family lineage</li> <li>• Marriage practices include:</li> <li>• <b>Polygyny</b> (marriage of one man to many wives), and</li> <li>• <b>Bridewealth</b> where men provide goods and services in exchange for the sole right to a woman's sexual services and offspring.</li> <li>• <b>Menstrual taboos</b> subordinate women by segregating them from the rest of society when they have their cycle. Menstruation is considered "unclean."</li> <li>• Patriarchy is established and monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam) document the importance of the patriarch and the subordination of women.</li> <li>• Men increasingly begin to control procreation and women's sexuality.</li> </ul>

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<b>Agricultural Society</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of animal-drawn plow and equipment requires more strength, and because men are physically stronger, they do the majority of work.</li> <li>• Surplus of wealth is established.</li> <li>• Premarital virginity and marital fidelity are strictly enforced.</li> <li>• Male dominance becomes institutionalized through religion, government, marriage, and the family.</li> <li>• Protecting paternity and ensuring rightful heir are of extreme importance. Women are punished severely if they do not conform.</li> <li>• <b>Purdah</b> (found mostly in Hindu and Muslim societies)-the practice of keeping men from seeing women. Either women must cover their bodies (burqa and veil), walk behind men to show deference, eat only after men, and only speak when spoken to.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Genital Mutilation</b>-surgical procedure that involves cutting the clitoris and labia out in order to control a woman's sexuality. In some cases, the girl's vagina is stitched up until she is married. Women are not considered desirable for marriage if this procedure is not performed. This practice still occurs in over twenty nations today.</li> <li>• <b>Primogeniture</b>-inheritance ritual where property of the estate is passed down to the oldest male in the family. As a result, women cannot own property.</li> </ul>
<b>Industrial Society</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Men are considered sole providers or "breadwinners" and women are "homemakers."</li> <li>• Men continue to control women's sexuality, and procreation is further controlled by establishment of male dominated field of medicine.</li> <li>• <b>Medicalization of Childbirth</b>-childbirth, a natural condition, became treated medically as if it were an illness. Abortion was made illegal and the practice of midwifery became practically non-existent.</li> <li>• <b>Cult of Domesticity</b>-true manhood depended on how well a male provided for family; true womanhood depended on how well a woman performed duties of wife, mother, and homemaker.</li> <li>• <b>Body Consciousness Increased</b>-both men and women became occupied with body image more as jobs became less physical and more sedentary. Mass media influenced this by showing images of thin, attractive people in movies, advertisements, and television shows.</li> </ul>

<b>Post-Industrial Society</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service based economy brought more women out of the home and into the workforce. As a result, women's status is on the rise.</li> <li>• More women receive college education and higher paying jobs.</li> <li>• Inheritance is bilateral.</li> <li>• Men have less control over procreation as more women enter field of medicine.</li> <li>• <b>Dual Earner Marriages</b>-both husband and wife must work outside the home in order to make a living.</li> <li>• <b>Second Shift</b>-women are faced with more work today; after working a full-time job, they do most of the work at home, including childreaning, cooking and cleaning.</li> <li>• <b>Feminization of Poverty</b>-due to increase in divorce rates, there are more female-headed single parent families. Because women are paid lower wages than men, this results in increase in poverty rates among these families.</li> <li>• <b>Eating Disorders</b>-prevalence of anorexia and bulimia in young women who are increasingly concerned about body image.</li> </ul>
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As societies modernize, women gain more rights through the democratic process. Also, because social stratification is less extreme in modern societies, women are treated more equally. However, due to the nature of socialization and internalization, gender roles have not changed as much. Women's roles are continually devalued in modern society. Female-dominated professions receive lower pay than male-dominated professions. And poverty is higher among women and children. These patterns show the power and pervasiveness of social structure. In modern societies, women continue to be faced with new problems such as eating disorders, body dysmorphia, feminization of poverty, and the second shift. In the next section, we will explore how gender stratification is built into our social institutions and the challenges women face in trying to bring about change at the level of social structure.

### **Patriarchy & Power**

The historical nature of gender-based violence confirms that it is not an unfortunate aberration but systematically entrenched in culture and society, reinforced and powered by patriarchy.

### **Systemic Gender Oppression**

Violence against women maintains the structures of gender oppression; be it carried out by individuals in private and/or by institutional forces in the public sphere. Families, communities, and social, legal and civic institutions may covertly and overtly endorse it. Whilst violence commands greater attention and fear; sexism and misogyny do their share to shape inequality, by defining and upholding restrictive gender norms.

### **Patriarchy**

Patriarchy is about the social relations of power between men and women, women and women, and men and men. It is a system for maintaining class, gender, racial, and heterosexual privilege and the status quo of power-relying both on crude forms of oppression, like violence; and subtle ones, like laws; to perpetuate inequality. Patriarchal beliefs of male, heterosexual dominance lie at the root of gender-based violence. Patriarchy is a structural force that influences power relations, whether they are abusive or not.

### **Power**

Power sets the agenda for patriarchy. But, conflating it with abuse or masculinity is problematic and we need a more complex analysis of the typical power and control explanations. Feminism, which is about women claiming their rights to self-determination and equality, confronts gender conformity and aims to replace relationships of power with relationships of meaning.

### **Culture**

Culture is used to justify gender inequality and violence by evoking traditional cultural beliefs about how women should be treated. The defense of the culture of a place, country, religion, etc., is in fact a defense of the culture of patriarchy in that country, religion, identity; and the culture of violence everywhere. The culture of patriarchy is not static: its manifestation on an army base differs from that in a rural town; just as the culture of patriarchy in Chicago differs from that of Dubai, or Manila.

### **Patriarchy in Indian Culture**

In Indian culture the main cause of women's subordination is male domination and because of this the structure of family in our culture is fragile. The essentially patriarchal state structure in the Indian context and in fact in most Third world countries was to some extent influenced by their colonial past which shaped the nature of the independent states they eventually culminated into.

But in this scenario, neither male domination nor imperialism alone accounts for women's subordination, but both are equally linked in continuing women's oppression. The impact of foreign domination is an important factor in women's subordination, historically and in the present. Adding on to this, women who participated in the national struggle were conditioned to subsume all their concerns under the national issues and it was not easy for them to raise their issues when the task of new nation-building with comprehensive planning was undertaken.

But, as it is evident even in the independent India, challenging the patriarchal ethos of the society has never been the agenda of the state itself. The gap between Nehru's vision of modern and just India, and the reality of women's continuing subordination could possibly have been explained if the planners, along with Nehru, had no access to any systematic information on the position of women in the social and economic system. However, this was not the case. Even before independence, there had been serious efforts to collate the available information on women's position in India to recommend some

measures for rapid change. Various studies were available documenting the same. Their invisibility was clearly more an outcome of the ideology governing public policy relating to women. Hence, women were noticeably absent from the discussions of development theory.

In India, families adhere to a patriarchal ideology, follow the patrilineal rule of descent, are patrilocal, have familialistic value orientations, and endorse traditional gender role preferences. The Indian family is considered strong, stable, close, resilient, and enduring (Mullatti 1995; Shangle 1995). Historically, the traditional, ideal and desired family in India is the joint family. A joint family includes kinsmen, and generally includes three to four living generations, including uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews, and grandparents living together in the same household. It is a group composed of a number of family units living in separate rooms of the same house. These members eat the food cooked at one hearth, share a common income, common property, are related to one another through kinship ties, and worship the same idols. The family supports the old; takes care of widows, never-married adults, and the disabled; assists during periods of unemployment; and provides security and a sense of support and togetherness (Chekki 1996; Sethi 1989). The joint family has always been the preferred family type in the Indian culture, and most Indians at some point in their lives have participated in joint family living (Nandan and Eames 1980).

In the context of gender, in patriarchy families there are very strict rules for girls/ women. In the traditional Indian family, communication between parents and children tends to be onesided. Children are expected to listen, respect, and obey their parents. Although in modern era many things have been changed but still there are gender socialization practices which remains the same in patriarchy families which leads to women's subordination.

The chief characteristics of a patriarchal family are the following:

- The wife after marriage comes to live in the home of the husband.
- The father is the supreme lord of the family property.
- Descent is reckoned through the father. The children are known by the name of the family of their father.
- The children can inherit the property of their father only. They have no right over the property of the mother's family.
- In many traditional families there are still strict rules for girls regarding their freedom .

# GENDER BIAS, AND STEREOTYPING

The objectives of the chapter are :

- *Discuss the meaning and concept of gender bias.*
- *Discuss the gender bias situation in India.*
- *Explanation of the term gender stereotyping in Indian context.*
- *Detailed description of empowerment and women's empowerment in India.*

## GENDER BIAS: AN INTRODUCTION

- *"Differences in the treatment of males and females".*
- *"Gender bias is commonly considered to be discrimination and/or hatred towards people based on their gender rather than their individual merits, but can also refer to any and all systemic differentiations based on the gender of the individuals".*

Gender bias, and its corollary, gender equity, describe the comparison of opportunities and treatment available to males with those available to females. Today, gender bias is observed and discussed in societies and cultures worldwide. Parents and teachers of young people are especially concerned with unequal treatment of boys and girls, particularly the effect these differences have on child development. Economic development professionals have observed that, from subsistence to advanced economies, women are assigned different workloads, have different responsibilities for child and family welfare, and receive different rewards for performance.

In the United States, the Education Amendments of 1972 were passed by the U.S. Congress. These included Title IX, introduced by Representative Edith Green of Oregon, requiring educational institutions that receive federal funds to provide equal opportunities in all activities for girls and boys. Title IX applies to all schools, public and private, that receive money from the federal government, from kindergarten through higher education.

However, in 1992 a study published by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) revealed that enforcement of this law has been lax nationwide. The AAUW's report, *"How Schools Shortchange Girls,"* which compiled results from hundreds of research studies and articles on gender bias at every educational level, concluded that schools continue to perpetuate subtle discrimination against girls, stereotyping them as studious and well-behaved, while more aggressive students, usually the boys, may receive more attention from the teacher. Additionally, a 1989 study of books used in high school literature classes found that 90 percent of the most frequently assigned books were written by males; a year later, an evaluation of school textbooks

specifically written to comply with gender-equity guidelines in California revealed lingering bias toward males in both language usage and in accounts of historical milestones.

Female students are affected by gender bias in many subtle but significant ways. Girls have lower expectations for their success in math and science; are more likely to attribute academic success to luck rather than to ability, and are more likely to equate academic failure to lack of ability (boys are more likely to attribute failure to lack of effort). Boys are more likely than girls to challenge the teacher when they do not agree with an answer. Generally, girls earn higher grades than boys, but boys outperform girls on standardized tests. Boys with higher SAT scores are more likely than girls with equal or better grades to be awarded academic scholarships.

The ramifications of gender bias are not limited to the educational arena. Researchers have shown that in most cultures the lack of decision-making power among females regarding sexual and economic matters contributes to population growth and confines women to subservient roles to men—usually their fathers, and later, their husbands. Although women make up 45 percent of the workforce in the United States, 60 percent of professional women are in traditionally female occupations such as nursing and teaching.

Gender stereotypes defining appropriate activities and behaviour for men and women are prevalent in every culture, even though they may differ slightly from culture to culture. Awareness of the existence of these biases will help to overcome their negative effects.

**Gender bias can refer to subtly different beliefs or attitudes:**

- The belief that one gender or sex is inferior to or more valuable than the other which is Female or male chauvinism.
- The attitude of misogyny (hatred of females) or misandry (hatred of males); as well as the attitude of imposing a limited and/or false notion of masculinity on males and a limited and/or false notion of femininity on females, or vice versa.
- A feeling of distrust towards the opposite or same sex as a whole.

Gender bias, as a part of essentialism, holds that individuals can be understood or judged based solely on the characteristics of the group to which they belong—in this case, their gender group, as males or females. Certain forms of gender discrimination are illegal in many countries, but nearly all countries have laws that give special rights, privileges, or responsibilities to one sex or two sexes.

The view that men are superior to women is one form of gender bias. This form is often called male chauvinism, chauvinism in a broader sense referring to any extreme and unreasonable partisanship that is accompanied by malice and hatred towards a rival group. A similar term is gynophobia, which refers to fears of females or femininity. Historically, in many patriarchal societies, females have been and are viewed as the "weaker sex". Women's lower status can be seen in cases in which females were not even recognized as persons under the law of the land.

The feminist movement promotes women's rights to end sexism against females by addressing issues such as equality under the law, political

representation of females, access to education and employment, female victims of domestic violence. The view that women are superior to men is also a form of gender bias. Sexism against males has been referred to as "reverse sexism".

### Gender Bias: A Indian Scenario

Gender bias is on full rage in India as we can see many cases and situations in day to today life. Here are some cases that recently take place in India which shows gender bias & gender inequality. While focussing on gender issues in the context of the social sector development means empowering women as agents of socio-economic change.

It is well recognised that societies which discriminate by gender tend to experience less rapid economic growth and poverty reduction than societies which treat men and women more equally.

The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles. The Constitution not only grants equality to women, but also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favor of women. There are many cases and situations came into highlights during last 10 years which are really upsetting. Although these cases occurs in every country but for now we focusing on India.

**Sex determination and preference to male child** is very common in our culture. They are products of gender discrimination, and the underlying causes of bias against women and girls are incredibly complex issues. There is a complex web of socioeconomic and cultural factors that result in discrimination against girls. Other manifestations of gender discrimination are the abhorrent rates of sexual violence that occur; child marriage; domestic violence; honor killings; the denial of basic health care, including basic family planning and maternal health services.

**Rape and sexual harassment** are the most cruel cases in Indian culture. It's a shame that these cases can be often seen in India for example: A 23-year-old woman and assault on her companion on a moving bus in the Indian capital New Delhi in December 2012 prompted the government to tighten laws and make rape punishable by death. Of the six persons accused in the December 2012 case, a court convicted four men and sentenced them to death, and convicted one juvenile and sentenced him to three years in custody. A fifth adult allegedly committed suicide in police custody before trial.

The **Verma Commission**, created following the December 2012 gang rape identified areas of legislative reform to address crimes against women, some of which subsequently became law. The Criminal Law Amendment bill, passed in February, revised the penal code to introduce more stringent punishments for rape and other gender-based violence. But the stricter measures appear to have done little to stem violence against women. Reports of sexual assault have continued to pour in from all parts of the country-whether from remote villages or big cities like India's financial hub Mumbai or the capital New Delhi.

### ◆ Sexual Assaults

Among the targets of sexual assaults have been some foreign tourists, including those from the United States, Switzerland and Britain. Tourism industry officials say the reports of rapes have tarnished India's image in the past year and heightened fears among women tourists heading to the country.

Violence against women is a serious problem in India. Overall, one-third of women age 15-49 have experienced physical violence and about 1 in 10 has experienced sexual violence. It is very disturbing as well as discouraging to think that a country that praises womanhood through epics and their devotion to goddesses can be so demeaning and indifferent when it comes to the common women living in the country. Although there are laws (Civil & Criminal) to tackle the issues of domestic violence, it is not implemented effectively.

'Cruelty by husband and relatives' continues to occupy the highest share (43.6%) among the crimes committed against women in 2012 followed by 'assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty' (18.6%). 15.7% cases were that of kidnapping and abduction, 10.2% of rape, 3.8% of 'insult to the modesty of women' and 3.7% of 'dowry prohibition act'. Some 10.8% cases of 'cruelty by husband and relatives' underwent trial by the Courts of Law in 2012 and conviction was done in 1.6% cases. The highest conviction rate of 7.8% was observed for the crime 'insult to the modesty of women'. Out of a total 24915 victims of rape in 2012, there were 1051 victims who were less than 10 years of age,

Victims of domestic violence are afraid to protest as there is lack of awareness or rather lack of initiative to make her aware of her rights. No or less efforts are made to increase awareness among women by the authorities posted to implement the Act. If domestic violence is reported by a third party then he/she is scrutinized as an intruder and problem maker by the community. The bureaucracy associated with reporting of domestic violence, lack of funds for support group adds up to the continued domestic violence in India.

There are many different theories as to the causes of domestic violence. These include psychological theories that consider personality traits and mental characteristics of the perpetrator, as well as social theories which consider external factors in the perpetrator's environment, such as family structure, stress, social learning. As with many phenomena regarding human experience, no single approach appears to cover all cases.

**Acid attacks** against women caused death and permanent disfigurement. For example, on July 21, a 28-year-old woman died, and three others sustained injuries, following an acid attack by a former romantic interest in Morena District, Madhya Pradesh. Although the government maintained statistics on gender-based violence and general assaults, it did not disaggregate acid attacks.

Acid was commonly used as a household cleaner and was widely available at local markets. The Supreme Court issued an order on July 18 to regulate the sale of acid across the country. The government issued guidelines in August aimed at preventing attacks and also moved to oblige states to implement guidelines requiring dilution and licensing of acid sold in retail shops. Those who purchase acid are required to show identification and proof of residence.

The guidelines also direct states to pay 300,000 rupees (\$4,880) to victims of acid attacks and treat victims free of cost at government hospitals. Individuals convicted of acid attacks face a minimum of 10 years and a maximum of life in prison. The new regulations were not fully implemented in all states by year's end and were inconsistently enforced where implemented.

The prevalence of physical or sexual violence ranges from 6% in Himachal Pradesh, 13% in Jammu and Kashmir and Meghalaya, 46% in Madhya Pradesh Rajasthan and 59% in Bihar. Other states with 40% or higher prevalence include Tripura, Manipur, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and Assam. The ongoing armed-conflict situation prevalent in the North East of India has intensified the violence faced by women, which takes the form of sexual, mental or physical abuse, killings and clashes.

Although all the members of communities are affected by the armed conflict, the impact on women and girls is far greater because of their status in society and their sex. The region, under the shadow of conflict, has witnessed a resurgence of patriarchal values and norms, which have brought with them new restrictions on the movement of women, the dress they wear and more overtly physical violence such as rape, which is systematically used as a tactic against a particular community.

Official statistics pointed to rape as the country's fastest growing crime. The NCRB reported 24,923 cases of rape nationwide in 2012, the latest year for which data were available. Observers considered rape an underreported crime. Law enforcement and legal avenues for rape victims were inadequate, overtaxed, and unable to address the problem effectively. Law enforcement officers sometimes worked to reconcile rape victims and their attackers, in some cases encouraging female rape victims to marry their attackers.

**Honor killings** continued to be a problem, especially in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, and Haryana, where as many as 10 percent of all killings were honor killings. These states also had low female birth ratios due to gender-selective abortions. In some cases the killings resulted from extrajudicial decisions by traditional community elders, such as "khap panchayats," unelected caste-based village assemblies that have no legal authority. Statistics for honor killings were difficult to verify, since many killings were unreported or passed off as suicide or natural deaths by family members. NGOs estimated that at least 900 such killings occurred annually in Haryana, Punjab, and Uttar Pradesh alone. The most common justification for the killings offered by those accused or by their relatives was that the victim married against her family's wishes.

**Daman and Diu** has the lowest sex ratio of 618 in the country. This in turn leads to a shortage of marriageable women, which then leads to trafficking in persons, bride selling and prostitution. Perhaps the best figures concerning the magnitude of the problem come from India's 2011 census figures, which found that there are approximately 37 million more men than women in India. **Prime Minister Singh** addressed this issue head on, stating "*The falling child sex ratio is an indictment of our social values... Improving this ration is not merely a question of stricter compliance with existing laws. What is more important is how we view and value the girl child in our society. It is a national*

*shame for us that despite this, female feticide and infanticide continue in many parts of our country."*

Even when they are not killed outright either in the womb or just before birth, the bias against girl children manifests itself in situations where family resources are limited and little food is available; in boys being fed before girls, leading to greater incidence of malnutrition among girls and a mortality rate that is 75 percent higher for girls below the age of 5 than for boys.

In her book, "Unnatural Selection: Choosing Boys Over Girls, and the Consequences of a World Full of Men, **Mara Hvistendahl** elaborates, "*Sex selection... had the added advantage of reducing the number of potential mothers. If reliable sex determination technology could be made available to a mass market, there was a rough consensus that sex-selective abortion would be an effective, uncontroversial and ethical way of reducing the global population. Fewer women, fewer mothers, fewer future children.*"

While India has taken steps to curb these practices, indeed passing a law to ban sex-selective abortion, and tempered cultural facts such as the need for brides to provide a high dowry that contribute to parents looking at their daughters as a liability, these laws are largely—or irregularly, enforced.

In some areas of the country women and girls dedicated in symbolic marriages to Hindu deities reportedly were subjected to instances of rape or sexual abuse at the hands of priests and temple patrons—a form of sex trafficking.

NGOs suggested that some SC girls were sent to these symbolic marriages, and subsequent sex work in temples, by their families to mitigate household financial burdens and the prospect of marriage dowries. The women and girls were also at heightened risk of contracting HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections. Some states have laws to curb prostitution or sexual abuse of women and girls in temple service. Enforcement of these laws remained weak, and the problem was widespread. Observers estimated more than 450,000 women and girls were in this system.

### **Causes of Gender Discrimination**

When we discuss about gender discrimination and gender inequality, there are many reasons behind them as we all know attaining gender justice is not an easy task in India. From time immemorial, a girl child has been considered as an unwanted entity and a burden whom the parents would not mind doing away with. Discrimination against women begins even before her birth. The gruesome evils of female feticide and infanticide prove how brutal the world could be to women.

Although the Indian constitution provides equal rights and privileges for man and women and makes equal provision to improve the status of women in society, majority of women are still unable to enjoy the rights and opportunities guaranteed to them.

Traditional value system, low level of literacy, more house hold responsibilities lack of awareness, non-availability of proper guidance, low mobility, lack of self-confidence family discouragement and advanced science and technology are some of the factors responsible to create gender disparity in

our society. The most important causes of gender disparity such as poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, social customs, belief and anti-female attitude are discussed here.

### ◆ 1. Illiteracy

Illiteracy is the cause which is contributing in ongoing cases of gender inequality and discrimination. Despite the notable efforts by the countries around the globe that have expanded for the basic education, there are approximately 960 million illiterate adults of whom two thirds are women. Educational backwardness of the girls has been the resultant cause of gender discrimination.

The disparities become more visible between male and female literacy rate, during 2001. The literacy rates for males increased from 56% in 1981 to nearly 76% in 2001. The corresponding change in female literacy rate from 30 to 54%. On the whole the decline on gender gap peaked in 1981 at 26.6% and was 21.7% in 2001 is less impressive. The interstate variation in literacy rate for males was much lower in comparison to females. At the state level female literacy rate varies from 35% in Bihar to 88% in Kerala In states like Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir and Rajasthan, the female literacy rate is below 50%.

The progress towards education by girls is very slow and gender disparities persist at primary, upper primary and secondary stage of education. Girl's account for only 43.7% of enrolment at primary level, 40.9% at upper primary level, 38.6% at secondary level and 36.9% at degree and above level. More over girl's participation in education is still below 50% Gender differences in enrolment are prevalent in all the state at all levels. They are not able to realize full identity and power in all spheres of life only due to illiteracy.

### ◆ 2. Unemployment for Women

Women are not able to resolve the conflict between new economic and old domestic roles. In both rural and urban India, women spend a large proportion of time on unpaid home sustaining work. Women are not able to respond to new opportunities and shift to new occupations because their mobility tends to be low due to intra-house hold allocation of responsibilities.

Rights and obligations within a house hold are not distributed evenly. Male ownership of assets and conventional division of labor reduce incentives for women to undertake new activities. In addition child bearing has clear implications for labour force participation by women. Time spent in bearing and rearing of children often results in de-Skilling, termination of long term labour contacts. Thus women are not being able to be economically self-sufficient due to unemployment and their economic dependence on the male counterpart is itself a cause of gender disparity.

### ◆ 3. Role of Old Beliefs and Customs

Women are not free from social customs, beliefs and practices. In Indian culture there are many beliefs and customs which don't allow a women to work

form outside the home. It can be easily seen in joint families that women are not permitted to choose their career or to do job.

The traditional patrilineal joint family system confines women's roles mostly to the domestic sphere, allocating them to a subordinate status, authority and power compared to man. Men are perceived as the major providers and protectors of a family while women are perceived as playing only a supportive role, attending to the hearth. Boys and girls are accordingly trained for different adult roles, status and authority. In Indian culture since very early periods, men have dominated women as a group and their status has been low in the family and society.

The preference for sons and disfavor towards daughter is a complex phenomenon that still persists in many places. Thus anti female social bias is the main cause of gender disparity in our society.

The boy receives a ceremonial welcome on his birth where as everyone is sad at the birth of a girl child. The preference for male child is due to lower female labor participation, prevalence of social evils like dowry and many other causes. The typical orthodox mentality is present even in this modern era leading to sex determination tests and abortion in an illegal way.

Parents often think that teaching a girl child to manage the kitchen is more important than sending her to school. Many feel that it is an unnecessary financial burden to send a girl child to school as subsequently she will be married off and shifted to some other family. This orthodox belief of parents is responsible for gender disparity.

#### ◆ 4. Poverty

In India of the total 30 percent people who are below poverty line, 70 percent are women. Women's poverty in India is directly related to the absence of economic opportunities and autonomy, lack of access to economic resources including credit, land ownership and inheritance, lack of access to education and support services and their minimal participation in the decision making process. The situation of women on economic front is no better and men still enjoy a larger share of the cake. Thus poverty stands at the root of gender discrimination in our patriarchal society and this economic dependence on the male counterpart is itself a cause of gender disparity.

#### ◆ 5. Social Attitude

Although there are many social reformers and activists who play a great role in the restoration of women's honor but still the condition of women is not acceptable. According to many sociologists society can be very cruel sometimes and we can see its rage on women's. Despite pronounced social development and technological advancement, women in our society still continue to be victims of exploitation, superstition, illiteracy and social atrocities.

The social stigma that women are house ladies or home keepers and should stay in the walls of house only is the basic cause of gender disparity. They are not permitted to go out with male friends or to raise voice for their own. In patriarchal society a lot of weightage is given to men.

From the viewpoint of health, male members of family are supposed to take fresh and nutritious food in comparison to women because either they are earning members or head of the family or they are supposed to be more important than female members. This type of social attitude is conducive to create the problem of gender discrimination.

#### ◆ 6. Lack of Awareness of Women

Most of the women are unaware of their basic rights and capabilities. They even do not have the understanding as to how the socio-economic and political forces affect them. They accept all types of discriminatory practices that persist in our family and society largely due to their ignorance and unawareness.

Article 15 of the Indian constitution states that the state shall not discriminate any citizen on the grounds of only sex. The irony is that there still is widespread discrimination which is a form of injustice to women. Hence at the onset of the new millennium let this generation be a historic example by putting an end to the gender-based discriminations by unfurling the flag of gender justice in all our action and dealings.

According to Desai, *"if women get equal opportunities like men, they can work in every field like man. Today if she lags behind a little, it is not her fault but the fault of traditions which have suppressed them for centuries, owing to this, her own thoughts like also hang around only familial life and her nearest environment also does not provide favorable conditions for her devotion in the outside work. In order to change the situation along with economic growth social progress is also greatly required. Hence the need of the hour is to effectively combat gender disparity as to promote gender equality by sufficiently empowering the women."*

### GENDER STEREOTYPES

Gender stereotypes are over-generalizations about the characteristics of an entire group based on gender. While gender stereotypes have been popularly perceived as having negative connotations, they can also have positive ones as well.

A man might say women aren't meant for combat, while a woman might say men do nothing but watch sports. Such expressions represent gender stereotypes, which are over-generalizations about the characteristics of an entire group based on gender. While women were barred from serving in military combat in Western nations until the latter half of the 20th century, in recent times they have served in combat roles as capably as men. And while many men may watch sports, not all men would necessarily do so.

Gender stereotypes can have negative connotations, like those above, but they can also have positive connotations, even though they're often over-generalized. For instance, the notion that women are better caregivers than men is a positive connotation, but it is a generalization and not necessarily true in all cases. This is similarly so for the notion that men are better providers than women, which while positive, can be disproved by looking at cases where men have abandoned their families and defaulted on child support.

Gender stereotypes are simplistic generalizations about the gender attributes, differences, and roles of individuals and/or groups. Stereotypes can

be positive or negative, but they rarely communicate accurate information about others.

Traditionally, the female stereotypic role is get married and take care of family. She should also put others welfare before hers and she have to be sympathy, loving, polite and humble. The male stereotypic role is to be as financial provider and supporter. He is also to be assertive, competitive, independent, brave, and career focused; hold his emotions in check. These sorts of stereotypes can prove harmful; they can stifle individual expression and creativity, as well as hinder personal and professional growth.

The weight of scientific evidence demonstrates that children learn gender stereotypes from adults. As with gender roles, socializing agents-parents, teachers, peers, religious leaders, and the media-pass along gender stereotypes from one generation to the next.

One approach to re-examining conventional gender roles and stereotypes is androgyny, which is the blending of feminine and masculine attributes in the same individual. The androgyny, or androgynous person, does not neatly fit into a female or male gender role; she or he can comfortably express the qualities of both genders. Parents and other socializing agents can teach their children to be androgynous, just as they can teach them to be gender biased.

Emerging as a powerful sociopolitical force beginning in the 1960s, the feminist movement, or women's liberation movement, has lobbied for the rights of women and minorities. Feminists have fought hard to challenge and redefine traditional stereotypic gender roles.

**We can divide gender stereotype as follows :**

**Personality Traits:** If we discuss about gender stereotyping the very first point that strikes is nature and traits. Women are supposed to be shy, passive and submissive. Women should be organized and clean. Man are expected to be tough, aggressive, dominant and self-confident. Man can be lazy and messy.

**Domestic behaviours:** What we Do reflects our behaviour. Women are supposed to cook, clean and to do house work. Women's job is to raise a child. Stay-at-home mothers are better than working mothers. On the other hand: Man are better at household repairs. Man cannot cook, sew or care for their children. Man always tell their wives what to do.

**Occupations:** Women are supposed to have "clean" jobs such as teachers, nurses, secretaries and librarians. Women are not good at math. Women are weak in science and they should not do the field jobs. Women are supposed to make less money than man. Women are not politicians. Women cannot be presidential candidates. On the other hand: Men are supposed to have "dirty jobs" like mechanics, construction workers, plumbers and engineering. Man are all good at math. Man are better doctors than women. Man are supposed to be in charge at work and should make more money than women. Man are better politicians.

**Physical Appearance:** Generally speaking, women are expected to be short and slender, small and delicate while man are supposed to be tall with broad shoulders. However, physical appearance gender stereotyping varies from culture to culture. In cultures where man are small in size, masculinity is determined by acting macho. Acting macho for man would mean getting involved in fights, drinking alcohol, smoking unfiltered cigarettes and getting into fights. Female gender stereotype occurs for women who act "macho" in some cultures. Women who smoke, drink, and swear often are considered "masculine".

### Gender Role Stereotyping in Other Countries

As we had discussed earlier in this chapter that gender role stereotyping occurs when a person is expected to enact a series of norms or behaviours based upon their sex. Gender is a social construction, and other social categories such as race, ethnicity, class, religion, and language also influence that construction. In most European and North American societies, gender roles divide through male and female behavioural norms. Certain types of behaviours are categorized as masculine or feminine. However, gender as a continuum is social and relational, rather than categorical. In other words, gender only exists as a comparative quality (if people are "less masculine" than others, they are also "more feminine" than those same others, even if their biological sex is the same). Thus gender role individuals are expected to enact certain practices or behaviours because of their gender.

Although girls' schooling experiences vary depending upon their socioeconomic status, geographic location, ethnicity, and/or disability (AAUW, 1998), many schools, and other educational institutions, reinforce and support gender stereotyped roles. Moreover, schools operate through the interactions of groups and individuals, and how students and teachers construct gender in the classroom impacts the learning environment. Two decades after Title IX of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act legislation banned sex discrimination in education programs and activities, public schools still exhibited bias against girls. In 2005, comments by the then-president of Harvard University Lawrence Summers suggesting that innate sex differences may contribute to fewer female faculty in the sciences resulted in national and international discussions on how cultural factors are more likely to explain women's participation in science than biological differences between females and males.

The gender role stereotypes that schools help to reproduce include the notion that girls are caring, nurturing, quiet, helpful, considerate of others, and place others' needs before their own. Academically able girls' achievements are attributed to their hard work, whereas successful boys are considered naturally gifted. In contrast, underachieving male students are considered lazy, whereas underachieving girls are regarded as not capable. Boys are viewed as rational, logical, unemotional, and strong and are also expected to be outgoing, smart, and naturally academically talented. Thus in schools, gender role stereotypes attribute males' academic success to innate intelligence and girls' achievements to hard work. Moreover, these gender differences are explained through biological differences without any consideration of the impact of social environment on students' learning, achievement, motivation and attitudes.

### Empowerment

The term empowerment refers to measures designed to increase the degree of autonomy and self-determination in people and in communities in order to enable them to represent their interests in a responsible and self-determined way, acting on their own authority. Empowerment as action refers both to the process of self-empowerment and to professional support of people, which enables them to overcome their sense of powerlessness and lack of influence, and to recognise and eventually to use their resources and chances.

The term empowerment originates from American community psychology and is associated with the social scientist **Julian Rappaport (1981)**.

In social work, empowerment forms a practical approach of resource-oriented intervention. In the field of citizenship education and democratic education, empowerment is seen as a tool to increase the responsibility of the citizen. Empowerment is a key concept in the discourse on promoting civic engagement. Empowerment refers to increasing the spiritual, political, social or economic strength of individuals and communities. It often involves the empowered developing confidence in their own capacities.

Empowerment is probably the totality of the following or similar capabilities:

- Having decision-making power of their own.
- Having access to information and resources for taking proper decision.
- Having a range of options from which you can make *Choices* (not just yes/no, either/or)
- Ability to exercise assertiveness in collective decision making.
- Having positive thinking on the ability to make change.
- Ability to learn skills for improving one's personal or group power.
- Ability to change others' perceptions by democratic means.
- Involving in the growth process and change that is never ending and self-initiated.
- Increasing one's positive self-image and overcoming stigma.

### ◆ Definitions

Robert Adams points to the limitations of any single definition of 'empowerment', and the danger that academic or specialist definitions might take away the word and the connected practices from the very people they are supposed to belong to. Still, he offers a minimal definition of the term: 'Empowerment: the capacity of individuals, groups and/or communities to take control of their circumstances, exercise power and achieve their own goals, and the process by which, individually and collectively, they are able to help themselves and others to maximize the quality of their lives.'

One definition for the term is 'an intentional, ongoing process centered in the local community, involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring, and group participation, through which people lacking an equal share of resources gain greater access to and control over those resources' (Cornell Empowerment Group).

Rappaport's (1984) definition includes: 'Empowerment is viewed as a process: the mechanism by which people, organizations, and communities gain mastery over their lives.'

Sociological empowerment often addresses members of groups that social discrimination processes have excluded from decision-making processes through-for example-discrimination based on disability, race, ethnicity, religion, or gender. Empowerment as a methodology is also associated with feminism.

### Process

Empowerment is the process of obtaining basic opportunities for marginalized people, either directly by those people, or through the help of non-marginalized others who share their own access to these opportunities. It also includes actively thwarting attempts to deny those opportunities.

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Empowerment also includes encouraging, and developing the skills for, self-sufficiency, with a focus on eliminating the future need for charity or welfare in the individuals of the group. This process can be difficult to start and to implement effectively.

### Strategy

One empowerment strategy is to assist marginalized people to create their own nonprofit organization, using the rationale that only the marginalized people, themselves, can know what their own people need most, and that control of the organization by outsiders can actually help to further entrench marginalization. Charitable organizations lead from outside of the community, for example, can disempower the community by entrenching a dependence on charity or welfare. A nonprofit organization can target strategies that cause structural changes, reducing the need for ongoing dependence. Red Cross, for example, can focus on improving the health of indigenous people, but does not have authority in its charter to install water-delivery and purification systems, even though the lack of such a system profoundly, directly and negatively impacts health. A nonprofit composed of the indigenous people, however, could ensure their own organization does have such authority and could set their own agendas, make their own plans, seek the needed resources, do as much of the work as they can, and take responsibility-and credit-for the success of their projects (or the consequences, should they fail).

The process of which enables individuals/groups to fully access personal or collective power, authority and influence, and to employ that strength when engaging with other people, institutions or society. In other words, *"Empowerment is not giving people power, people already have plenty of power, in the wealth of their knowledge and motivation, to do their jobs magnificently. We define empowerment as letting this power out."*

It encourages people to gain the skills and knowledge that will allow them to overcome obstacles in life or work environment and ultimately, help them develop within themselves or in the society.

To empower a female *"...sounds as though we are dismissing or ignoring males, but the truth is, both genders desperately need to be equally empowered."* Empowerment occurs through improvement of conditions, standards, events, and a global perspective of life.

### Empowerment to Cater Gender Stereotyping

At the country level, the following policies and measures would be effective:

- Temporary distinct measures, including quotas in parliaments and political parties, judiciary, law enforcement agencies, executive and the corporate sector (Women's Empowerment Principles to be applied) are to be taken.
- Accurate presentation of women's image in media and their role as media persons.

- Development of the curriculum from the perspective of equality, considering both boys and girls should be attended by educational campaigns for adults. Special educational programs should be included with the aid of e-learning.
- Inspiring women and girls to join and attend male dominant courses like marine, forces, science etc.
- Passing the laws that can transform mind-sets, like those against domestic violence and other gender-based violence, including sexual harassment at the work place and rape.
- Promoting the responsibilities equally on both sexes like parenting or guiding.
- Promotion of property rights, including land rights and control over financial and economic assets, access to credit and support for entrepreneurship development.
- Tax and other incentives to enhance women's empowerment, including involvement of the private sector, etc.
- Promoting girl child education programs in rural areas.
- Raising awareness for sex education between both sexes.

To conclude we can say our society is full gender biased examples and to eliminate them, government have to enact laws for the empowerment of women. Although there are several policies are running currently but still they did not seem to fulfill the results as we can see the degrading conditions of women in our society. Apart from that there are so many misconceptions lying in the society which are main causes of women's subordination and to remove the gender bias and stereotyping it is very necessary to educate a girl child as there is saying 'Better women are the constructor of better world'.

**EXERCISES**

## GENDER ROLES IN FAMILY

Gender roles are defined by the socio-cultural norms of any society. In most of the societies the family systems are based on the gender roles and it is the pre-designed gender roles that help members of the family to run the family with bound responsibilities. Any disturbance in the gender role aspect may affect the smooth functioning of the easy-going of any family :

- But today, the modern life has very much changed the family structure and the gender roles have been diverting from the traditional responsibilities and path of performance. In fact, the gap between different genders has already melted down, creating an all equal society and more equalized families. Today, there are no monarchs in families and no bout-to-obey members in families.
- All live together, taking decisions together, expressing opinions openly, criticizing and encouraging mutually and yet being independent and responsible. The society-defined gender roles may crash with the modern roles of family members and many families experience the dilemma of the crashing gender roles.
- The origin of gender roles can be dated back to the very establishment of the social life. Ever since man started living in societies, they differentiated between the male gender and female gender and implicated specific lifestyle, duties and functional areas for each of these genders. It was quite needed in the then lifestyle of human beings.
- Hunting was the only way of finding a living; thus muscular male members took the role of hunters of food suppliers and physically less fit female members took over the role of home makers and cooks. The masculinity helped male gender to dominate the society and made them authoritative in families.
- But the time has grown a lot empowering female gender to almost equal status of men and today, they dare to live independent of the help of men and at times, to the extent of questioning men in different aspects. The newly gained power makes women get out of the norms and define new gender roles in the family, which may often result in clashes in the family.

### ◆ Issues of Equality in Family

The modern social structure sees both men and women as equal partners of the society with equal rights, status and responsibility. This is a sudden change of concepts of a male dominated society. In the families, people who

have observed authoritarian father and submissive mothers may expect the same when they setup their own families.

The equal status may disturb the husbands as the laid-underneath superiority elements may require certain amount of time to dissolve themselves and accept the new socio-cultural setup. The aspect of equality will give rise to certain issues too. Who is to direct and who to be directed? Who is the authority in family related issues? etc., may put the family in trouble. If not accepted well and handled appreciably, the family may become like a vehicle steered to different direction at the same time by many drivers.

### **Clash in Family Responsibilities**

Family is not just an institution of many people living together under one roof; but the union of similar minded or mutually loving people bound with certain duties and responsibilities. The gender role structure was deliberately designed by the initial social setups to help the people accept and realize the specific duties each gender bound to.

But today, both the parents work and earn for the family and both father and mother enjoys equal social statues and financial independence. At this point, the role of homemaker becomes no one's responsibility and both the partners may insist the other one to be the homemaker. Adjustments, understanding and empathy are the advised aspects that may help a smooth running family. Clinging to the century old concepts and lifestyles may help only to worsen the situation.

### **Kids and Gender Roles**

Traditional family system had enough time dedicated for the kids as the mother was responsible for the entire process of childcare and development, when the father had to bring in the essential food supplies. But modern lifestyle makes both the parents busy working for the family and earning the amount to meet the demands of life. Kids many a times are left with caretakers or paid nannies.

Such lifestyles may affect the families badly as children may grow unaffectionate to the parents. It is quite difficult for any parent to balance between the modern lifestyle and parenting or homemaker tasks. Kids need to be trained to cop up with the family roles. This will help them to be more understanding and affectionate to parents.

### **Women And Gender Roles**

Gender role discrimination may be considered by many to be nonexistent to today's society and that equality between the sexes has been achieved. Gender roles and relations still play a part in perpetuating inequality, and the effects of gender roles in relation to childhood, family life and at work. Over the last 30 years companies as well as society have begun to recognize that the nature of jobs, the workplace environment, and more generally, the culture of the workplace can have a significant impact on the ability of workers to balance their work and family lives.

The word gender distinguished from sex, which refers to the male and female biologically. Those are the determined characteristics, for instance the reproductive organs and chromosomes. Whereas gender is, the feminine and masculine tense refers to characteristics and behavior that are not tied to biology but instead originate from the culture-specific perception, treatment of what sex you are and should be. Gendered behaviors can include gender-specific clothing, speech, movement, activities, thoughts and feelings, and those norms may vary according to place, time and culture. Gender roles are relational and become more pronounced in the comparison of gender role successes and failures! Femininity equals what is not masculine; masculinity equals what is not feminine. Roles can be reinforced by positive and negative sanctions. Women and men that conform to gender expectations (men are breadwinners and women are mothers and homemaker's) are positively sanctioned and those who refuse to conform to gender roles are negatively sanctioned named called (mothers boy and lesbian or tomboy). Sanctioning can either be overt, for example legislation that criminalizes homosexuality, (such as in India and the Middle East) or covert, such as the prevalence of and bias towards extremely feminine females and masculine males in the media. Though gender is specific to context, it can have similarities across cultures, in particular gender inequality.

Gender roles persist in many areas of life starting from delivery, being wrapped in either a blue or a pink blanket depending on sex. After birth, people whom give gifts, seem to ask the sex of the baby even before inquiring about health, and then select gifts based on the answer just like at delivery blue for boys and pink for girls. These gender roles are obvious, like the role of woman as principal child giver, and some are more obscure, such as the institutions and social expectations that support women and not men in caring for children. In the toddler years, children are gifted with gender-specific toys that encourage them to play-act gender roles in practice for adult life. Often giving to are baby dolls, dollhouses, makeup, and hair dressing sets. This clearly schools them in the traditional gender roles of nurturer, housekeeper, and in the importance of being attractive. Boy's toys on the other hand are action figures, cars and building sets. This enforces an emphasis on power, worker, and autonomy. At school, children learn from other children to differentiate gender appropriate toys, clothes and interests; other children socialized to value traditional gender roles are quick to point out behavior that goes against the norm.

Placement, thoughts and actions that were taught in a long-established way often gave a misleading image of gender roles. From each generations interiorize their parent's model for instance the females are often found in the kitchen and laundry room along with the area of child giver This is extremely different from the males in the past they are usually found doing the hard labor like working or fixing different things. By the pattern shown this states that each partner has roles of responsibilities both at home and in society. Normally these roles are set in stone and are expected. Separate roles and responsibility lies primary on either male or female roles. With the every changing

time-honored gender roles seems to be complicated by both genders not having or possessing the physical and mental skills. Then you also have stereotyping of the males and females roles in the family and outside. From the being of time, this world has always been a male world with men in the forefront, a male dominated world.

Society's evolution about woman's worth and placement has changed the traditional gender roles that many have known. By doing this, women are becoming more active at home and in society. They are becoming more motivated and striving to have independence. This leaves the balance of gender roles lopsided and a man are taking on the famine side, being more emotionally involved in household tasks. This is seen more and more as each year passes. Women are moving into the work force and men are becoming homemakers and caregivers. In these days and ages many more women have seen and felt the liberty of traditional roles. Many have the option and choice to be a home mother or a working mother or even both. The old anchored of the past in being lifted with new ways and new ideas. With the choice of work over family is known as the feminist model, which is the priority of a career. This is a new choice then from ones in the past. Balancing home and work is the anti-feminine type this also may be called middle model adopted by the double career type of woman, this seems to be the hardest but many or choosing this for many reasons. Either by the state of the economy or by choice the freedom to do so. This one shares a profession or career and family life equally. We are assisting to a reprioritization of woman needs and so professional success became more interesting and even attractive than family one probably because it brings something new. Women are motivated to choose the career by elements as the wish for financial independency, the need to prove her capacities, to open and better integrate in modern society and the possibility to control and not being only controlled. All this reasons are making women move more toward the working world.

Many men consider a women's career as a conflict source having arguments, for instance women will neglect their family attributions, the imminent change of man's power and influence, his incertitude concerning the professional competition and the risk to deteriorate the marital relation. Even at first side man and children are felling the stress generated by the new status of woman, she is living an interior conflict as well. Woman need to understand her need for self-accomplishment by going to the work force but the remains of traditional mindset still affect her modern vision as for as the need to be the mother, wife and caregiver. Both men and women in today's workforce are less likely to embrace traditional gender roles than before, working men's stress has raised more dramatically over the years because of increased household and childcare chores. Causing this is the coast of living, that there are many single fathers then before, also we have seen more father running the households'. We have seen the changing in the trends of men's and women's attitudes and actions over the past few decades, showing that changing gender roles have significantly and specifically increased the overall level of work-life conflict experienced by men.

## GENDER AND CASTE

Gender and Caste; missed component of the theoretical discourse :

'Indian population follows a rigid caste system which divides people into a hierarchy that governs the distribution of power, status, and identity in society' (Macwan, 2006). The caste system, is divided into four distinct classes comprised of (in descending order of "superiority") priests, warriors, artisans, and peasants. These four classes are "vested with spiritual importance" because they all derive from different parts of the Hindu god, Brahma. Below the four castes are the "untouchables, also known as Dalits or in Indian legal parlance: Scheduled Castes. They are officially external to the caste scheme; i.e., they are considered to be outcasts and are seen as a lower form one of the four Hindu classes.

'According to Ministry of Home Affairs, as of the 2001 census, there are over 166 million Dalits; comprising 16.2% of India's population' (Government of India, 2001). A complex web of religious, moral and cultural beliefs and attitudes has, over centuries, created the pervasive view that Dalits are impure or polluted' (Chung, 2009). They are considered so inferior to other castes, and so polluting, that they are deemed "untouchable" (Narula, 2008, p. 4). As a result, they are subject to various forms of oppression.

For example, one custom prohibits Dalits from "walking public streets lest their 'polluting' shadow should fall on an 'upper-caste' Hindu. While those customs are not necessarily followed everywhere in India today, caste divisions, and their attendant forms of discrimination, continue to prevail.

The normative and democratic pillars of institutions and doctrines enshrined in the Constitution of India set the agenda of post-colonial state in India in terms of abolition or at least reduction of social-inequalities. The objective of 'welfare' state was to make a modern caste-less society by reducing centuries old disabilities inflicted upon the 'depressed' and attempt to improve their lot by providing them 'reservations' and 'quotas' in education as well as job market especially in state-bureaucracy and over-sized public sector enterprises.

The Constitution of India requires the state to treat all citizens equally, without regard to birth, gender or religious belief. However, society does not function merely on the basis of formal principles. Enforcement of legal doctrines and attempt to remove social discrimination is a process entangled in the complexities of social formation. The pernicious aspects of jati, varna and class, therefore, still permeate our families, localities and political institutions.

In the perception of most of academic mainstream of the West there is an essential conflict between equality and freedom. The problem of social justice, then, is to evolve the criteria of balancing the claims of equality and freedom. There are equalitarian who either prefer equality to freedom or give representation to both equality and freedom whereas some scholars give very low priority to equality. Equality is a powerful moral and political supreme that stimulated and guided human society for centuries. In political supreme the concept of equality define that all human beings have an equal worth despite of

their colour, gender, race, or caste. It maintains that human beings deserve equal contemplation and respect because of their human.

Equality requires identification of similarities either reference to equality alone or to principles extraneous to equality. Equality, either independently, or in association with principles extraneous to equality, is one of the referents of justice. 'Perelman attempted to find some common core in equality to ascertain, similarities without reference to considerations extraneous to equality' (Julias, 1965, p. 339).

In the contemporary situation equality of all human beings has been used as a tool to raise voice against states and social institutions which creates power structures of ranks, wealth, or privilege among people. The social and political institutions created for the sake of the individual and continue to be for the sake of the good life of the individuals. John Locke, one of the profunder of the social contract theory, argued that life, liberty and property are the three basic elements for which civil society and state came in to existence. The evolution of democracy added the element of equality and justice in these virtues.

Twentieth century witnessed some remarkable phenomenon when in Asia and Africa many new nations liberated from the clutch of the western power. India can be characterized by social inequality; perhaps nowhere else in the world has inequality been as elaborately constructed as in the Indian institution of caste. Caste has long existed in India, but in the modern period it has been severely criticized by both Indian and foreign observers.

Although some educated Indians tell non-Indians that caste has been abolished or that "*no one pays attention to caste anymore*", such statements do not reflect reality. Caste has undergone significant change since independence, but it still involves hundreds of millions of people. In its preamble, India's constitution forbids negative public discrimination on the basis of caste. However, caste ranking and caste-based interaction have occurred for centuries and will continue to do so well into the foreseeable future, more in the countryside than in urban settings and more in the realms of kinship and marriage than in less personal interactions. The term "**Justice**" is very comprehensive and it is not easy to define it. In word of Dias, "The concept of Justice is too vast to be encompassed by one mind. It is not something which can be captured in a formula once and for all. Scholars like Krishnamurthy said "In spite of best efforts it has not been possible to clearly define justice' (Krishnamurthy, 1982, n. 18).

all theoretical frameworks deal with gender roles, so, there is utmost need to look in the theoretical discourse.

## Cultural Variations in Gender Roles

**Matsumoto (1994)** defines culture as a set of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors shared by a group of people and communicated from one generation to the next through cultural practices and language :

- If gender roles were based on biology alone it would be natural to assume that gender roles are universal and based on evolution. For example, women have traditionally done most of the household work and spent more time on childcare than men, but does this indicate that housework and child caring is based on women's biology?
- If gender roles were based on culture it would be natural to assume that gender roles vary across cultures according to a specific culture's beliefs and expectations with regard to men and women's roles (gender role ideology). In most cultures, women have had the major responsibility for taking care of the children and house work.
- **Eagly's (1987)** social role theory suggests that gender stereotypes arise from the different roles occupied by males and females. Women and men are seen as best suited for the roles they occupy respectively and this gives rise to beliefs about how women and men behave and feel respectively. Some of these stereotypes may become cognitive schemas, which are resistant to change.
- In modern societies, physical strength is no longer the only way to assure "bread winning". Women and men are more likely to have the same jobs and share the responsibility for the family.

**Goffman (1977)** predicted that gender roles will shift as societies shift from a belief that gender roles are based on biological differences to a belief in general social equality.

Support for this could be research on new male gender roles in Western cultures :

- **Reinicke (2006)** found that young fathers in Denmark find childcare important. Being a father is an important part of their identity and they want to be close to their children.
- **Engle and Breaux (1994)** found that, if fathers participated in programs on parenting and child development, they became more involved with their children.

## CULTURE AND GENDERED ROLES

The world turned upside down, by **Israhel van Meckenem the Younger**. The wife is holding the sceptre and the man is spinning.

Ideas of appropriate behavior according to gender vary among cultures and era, although some aspects receive more widespread attention than others. **R.W. Connell** in *Men, Masculinities and Feminism* claims: *'There are cultures where it has been normal, not exceptional, for men to have homosexual relations. There have been periods in 'Western' history when the modern convention that men suppress displays of emotion did not apply at all, when men were*

*demonstrative about their feeling for their friends. Mateship in the Australian outback last century is a case in point.'*

There are huge areal differences in attitudes towards appropriate gender roles. In the World Values Survey, responders were asked if they thought that wage work should be restricted to only men in the case of shortage in jobs: in Iceland the proportion that agreed with the proposition was 3.6%; while in Egypt it was 94.9%.

- Attitudes have also varied historically, for example, in Europe, during the Middle Ages, women were commonly associated with roles related to medicine and healing. Because of the rise of witch-hunts across Europe and the institutionalization of medicine, these roles became exclusively associated with men but in the last few decades these roles have become largely gender-neutral in Western society.
- Vern Bullough stated that homosexual communities are generally more tolerant of switching gender roles. For instance, someone with a masculine voice, a five o'clock shadow (or a fuller beard), an Adam's apple, wearing a woman's dress and high heels, carrying a purse would most likely draw ridicule or other unfriendly attention in ordinary social contexts.
- Because the dominant class sees this form of gender expression as unacceptable, inappropriate, or perhaps threatening, these individuals are significantly more likely to experience discrimination and harassment both in their personal lives and from their employer.
- Gender roles may be a means through which one expresses their gender identity, but they may also be employed as a means of exerting social control, and individuals may experience negative social consequences for violating them.

### MASS MEDIA AND GENDER ROLES

Mass media play a significant role in a modern world, by broadcasting information in fast pace and giving entertainment to vast audiences. They consist of press, television, radio, books and the Internet. The latter is now the most developing medium, however, TV also has a wide field of influence. By creating a certain type of message, media can manipulate people's attitude and opinions. I would like to focus on this problem by investigating commercials structure; I will also attempt to specify gender stereotypes, which are used in advertising as a persuasion technique.

#### ◆ Stereotypes

People organize their knowledge about the world around them by sorting and simplifying received information. Therefore, they create cognitive schemes, which are certain representations of the reality displaying its most typical and fundamental elements and properties. These schemes are responsible for defining the essence of our worldview and have a significant influence on social cognition-understanding, anticipation, situation and emotion control.

# EQUALITY AND EQUALITY

The Objectives of the Chapter are :

- Discuss the concept of equity and equality.
- Discuss the equality in caste, class and religion.
- Explanation of various govt. plans for equity and equality.

## INTRODUCTION

Today we are living in the world of democracy and equality is necessary to maintain a democratic environment. The history of mankind is the history of equality and liberty. Throughout the nook and corner of the world the march of equality is received with cheers. Whether it is the fight of Dr. Nelson Mandela against racial discrimination in South Africa or Sue Kyi's fight against the military regime in Myanmar Republic (Burma), we notice and hear the voice of equality. As no two men are equal in their physical appearances, personalities and capacities, the question of equality assumes greater importance. The American Declaration of Independence (1776) proclaims that "all men are created equal" and the French Declaration of Rights of Man (1789) says "Men are born and always continue to be free and equal in respect of their rights. Therefore, equality is the notable aim of every individual in this world."

The Indian Constitution recognizes every person as equal. This means that every individual in the country male and female from all castes, religions, tribes and background are recognized as equal.

### ◆ Meaning

Equality literally means a levelling procedure whereby the difference between the rich and the poor can be minimized. To Prof. Laski it "implies fundamentally a levelling process. It means that no man shall be placed in society that he can overreach his neighbor to the extent which constitutes a denial of the latter's citizenship". It is vital for social justice. As no two man are equal and as inequality is a naked truth of our very existence, the term 'equality' is given much more importance.

*"The Right to Equality proper is a right of equal satisfaction of basic human needs, including the need to develop and use capacities which are specifically human."*

—D.D Raphall

According to Prof. H. J. Laski the term equality has a threefold implication:

- It means the absence of special privilege.

- It means not equal opportunity but adequate opportunity for all individuals to develop their inner potentialities.
- It also means that the minimum and urgent claims of all must be met before we can meet the particular claim of some.

Thus, Laski is of the opinion that special privilege is the negation of equality and adequate opportunity is to be provided to all individuals. Identity of treatment does not convey the true meaning of equality. Adequate opportunity means that the right man must get the right opportunity and not equal distribution of paternal property among the successors. It gives priority to the urgent claims of all as against the particular claim of some. An example is given to clarify this point. Providing for drinking water is the urgent claim of all. Provision for providing a Television set to a club by the government is the particular claim of some. If we are to choose between provision for drinking water and provision for T.V set, our priority must be fixed on the first one.

To G. Sartori "equality has so many facets and so many implications that after we have examined it from all angles we are left with a feeling of not having really mastered it."

Thus, as a whole equality does not mean absolute equality in all spheres and to every person. It does not aim at identity of treatment as intellectual and physical capacity varies. It opposes discriminatory treatment. It means complete and absolute equality at the bottom most level and then equal opportunity to develop one's inner potentiality.

### Types of Equality

From the establishment of human civilization and the pursuit for knowledge, the political philosophers have tried to analyse the concept of Equality. Plato, Aristotle etc. have encouraged for the principle of natural inequality which implies that nature has made man unequal in capacity and temperament as a result some are superiors to others. But on the other hand Hobbes etc. have talked of natural equality. Nature has made man equal as a weak man can kill a strong man through secret machination and confederacy. But it is Prof. Laski and Prof. Barker who have elaborately discussed on different kinds of equality.

Prof. H. J. Laski, in his book "Grammar of politics", talked about Economic equality and Political equality. Prof Barker talks of Legal equality and Social equality. Lord Bryce writes about four types of equality namely (1) civil equality (2) political equality (3) social equality and (4) natural equality. The different types of equality are discussed below.

**1. Legal Equality or Civil Equality :** Civil Equality means that all are equal in the eyes of law and there is rule of law. It also means equal opportunity and chances must be provided by law to all without any discrimination. All persons must be subjected to same civil law and without this there is no reason to imply democracy.

**2. Political Equality :** Political equality is the nerve-center of a democratic polity. Democracy emerged and thrives on this principle. According to this all the people must be provided with equal right in the field of voting, contesting and holding public offices. The highest office of the land is within the

such of a common man in the street. Any man/woman can be able to stand for election and can even run for presidency.

**3. Social Equality :** Social equality means that all citizens in a society must be treated at equally with each other and there will be no discriminatory treatment on the ground of race, sex, religion, education, caste etc. The preamble of our Constitution aims at social equality and the directive principles of state policy further supports our cherished ambition. The division of society by 'Mandal' and 'Mandir' is not in conformity with the goal set by the makers of the constitution.

**4. Economic Equality :** Economic equality means that wealth should be enjoyed by all equally. It was Karl Marx who opined that without economic equality, political equality is pointless. "He who pays the Piper orders the tune" is the acceptable principle of the society. He who holds the economic lever holds the political lever too. To Lord Bryce it means "the attempt to expunge all differences in wealth, allotting to every man and woman an equal share of worldly goods".

**5. Natural Equality :** Natural equality means that all men are born equal. But a close look will reveal that it is not true. Nature has not endowed same ability to every individual. We should have to understand the term 'natural equality' in proper spirit. It means that artificial or man-made inequality must be respected and equality before law with adequate opportunity must be the rightful claim of every individual.

**6. National Equality :** National equality means that all the nations of the world are equal. With the growth of international outlook the idea of 'one world one state' has been put forth by some writers to save this world from atomic warfare. The concepts of 'International Law' and 'Family of Nations' have emerged. All nations are equal in the eyes of international law while dealing with other nations of the world.

Political philosophers and revolutionaries have used this concept profusely to win over the hearts of the common man. Thus, democracy as a form of government and a way of life can succeed only when there is equality in general and political equality in particular.

◆ **Equality: Features**

- Equality does not stand for absolute equality. It accepts the presence of some natural inequalities.
- Equality stands for absence of all unnatural man-made inequalities and specially privileged classes in the society.
- Equality postulates the grant and guarantee of equal rights and freedoms to all the people.
- Equality implies the system of equal and adequate opportunities for all the people in society.
- Equality means equal satisfaction of basic needs of all the persons before the special needs, and luxuries of some persons may be met.
- Equality advocates an equitable and fair distribution of wealth and resources i.e. Minimum possible gap between the rich and poor.

- Equality accepts the principle of protective discrimination for helping the weaker sections of society. In the Indian political system, right to equality has been given to all and yet there stands incorporated provisions for granting special protection facilities and reservations to persons belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, minorities, women, and children.

### EQUITY: MEANING

In education, the term equity refers to the principle of fairness. While it is often used interchangeably with the related principle of equality, equity encompasses a wide variety of educational models, programs, and strategies that may be considered fair, but not necessarily equal. It has been said that *'equity is the process; equality is the outcome,'* given that equity—what is fair and just—may not, in the process of educating students, reflect strict equality—what is applied, allocated, or distributed equally.

Inequities occur when biased or unfair policies, programs, practices, or situations contribute to a lack of equality in educational performance, results, and outcomes. For example, certain students or groups of students may attend school, graduate, or enroll in post-secondary education at lower rates, or they may perform comparatively poorly on standardized tests due to a wide variety of factors, including inherent biases or flaws in test designs.

Educational equity is dependent on two main factors. The first is fairness, which implies that factors specific to one's personal conditions should not interfere with the potential of academic success. The second important factor is inclusion, which refers to a comprehensive standard that applies to everyone in a certain education system. These two factors are closely related and are dependent on each other for true academic success of an educational system.

The growing importance of education equity is based on the premise that now, more than ever before, an individual's level of education is directly correlated to the quality of life he or she will live in the future. Therefore, an academic system that practices educational equity is a strong foundation of a society that is fair and thriving. However, inequity in education is challenging to avoid, and can be broken down into inequity due to socioeconomic standing, race, gender or disability.

### GENDER EQUITY AND GENDER EQUALITY

Gender equality refers to ensuring everyone gets the same resources regardless of gender, whereas gender equity aims to understand the needs of each gender and provide them with what they need to succeed in a given activity or sector. The terms are sometimes used interchangeably, but there are significant distinctions between them.

In contrast to gender equality, gender equity refers to the process of allocating resources based on the particular requirements of a gender. For example, instead of making sure males and females each receives 50 percent of the facilities of a sports center, gender equity means that each gender receives the right proportion and types of facilities according to their interests, capacities and experiences. While gender equality focuses on providing the same starting circumstances for everyone, the goal of gender equity is to

provide both genders with the same end results. The term gender equity is often used as a juxtaposition for social justice. In most cases, the concept of gender equality is used in correlation with the empowerment of women, while gender equity refers to the process of treating both men and women with the same amount of fairness when it comes to the equality of chances based on individual needs.

### CLASS, CASTE, RELIGION AND DISABILITY : EQUITY AND EQUALITY IN EDUCATION

India is a vast country which is rich in culture and there are different types of persons regarding different class, caste, religion and disability. Equality of educational opportunities is to assess the availability of equal educational opportunities to children of different race, color, religion, and national origin or simply "to all". The concept of Equality of Opportunity has been examined by philosopher **Peter Westen**. Westen shows that an opportunity is a three-way relationship between a person, some obstacles, and a desired goal. However, a person only has an opportunity if she has a chance of achieving that goal. One cannot have an opportunity if one faces insurmountable obstacles that make it impossible to secure the goal.

India is a democratic and secular country. The success of democracy depends upon education of its citizens. Education should aim at total development of individual's personality. Modern education is a process of learning from real life and from the dynamic society around us. So the learning should be at the choice and pace of the learner. It is only in this way that education becomes relevant to life. So educational opportunities are to be provided to individuals to develop their personalities into the fullest extent and should be available to all.

The Constitution of India also writes for the provision of educational opportunities to all citizens of the country. The Indian Constitution also as per the articles 15, 16, 17, 38 and 48, guarantee that the State shall not discriminate between persons on account of their religion or region and caste or class. The Preamble of the Constitution also assures equality to all the citizens. It means that our Constitution is committed to the principle of equality and accepted it as an article of faith. Since education is one of the most important means for development and growth of country, it is through education that one can aspire to achieve higher status and position. So every individual should have similar opportunities for getting education.

Equality of opportunity means to give equal chance to every individual for the development of his capacity. It is an accepted working policy of all the democratic nations to make provision for equal opportunities. As **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar** had pointed out long back "Democracy only provides that all men should have equal opportunities for the development of their unequal talents".

There is a great need for emphasizing the equality of opportunity in education due to the following reasons:

- It is needed for the formation of developed society.
- It is needed because it is through the education to all people in a democracy that the success of democratic institution is assured.

- The equality of educational opportunities will guarantee a rapid advancement of a nation.
- The equality of educational opportunity will outspread the search for talent among all the people of a nation.
- It will help to develop a close link between the manpower needs of a society and the availability of skilled personnel.
- for Human Resource development.
- It is needed for the successful functioning of a democracy. Only Educated and enlightened people can ensure a meaningful democracy.
- for occupation of citizens.
- for healthy and rich society.
- for wellbeing and citizenship.

### Equality for Scheduled Castes and Tribes

With a view to provide safeguards against the mistreatment of Scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes and to support and protect their social, educational, economic and cultural interests, special provisions were made in the Constitution. Due to their social disability and economic backwardness, they were totally handicapped in getting reasonable share in elected offices, Government jobs and educational institutions and, therefore, it was considered necessary to follow a policy of reservations in their favor to ensure their equitable participation in governance. Consequently, the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes came into being on passing of the Constitution (Sixty fifth Amendment) Bill, 1990 which was notified on 8-6-1990.

However, with the Constitution (Eighty-Ninth Amendment) Act, 2003 coming into force on 19-2-2004 vide Notification of that date, the National Commission for Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes got bifurcated and a separate National Commission for Scheduled Caste was constituted. Each Commission has a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson and three other members (including a lady member).

The imbalance in educational development between different sections of the society has led to many social, economic ills and non-harmonious development of the individual learners' personality. The following are some important measures which should be taken by the schools to facilitate the SC/ST education.

#### Norms for opening primary school has been relaxed.

- Abolition of tuition fees, arrangement for hostel facilities, free text books, uniforms, school bags etc. should be provided to the SC/ST students.
- Emphasis on special coaching for SC/ST students should be provided as well as scholarships at the secondary stage for talented students from rural areas.

#### The Role of the Teacher:

- As a rule, the school staff should seek, provide and ensure non-discrimination between the children of SCs/STs and other communities.

- Use of caste names/derogatory words when taking attendance of students should be avoided.
- Teacher should lead all the children equally to participate in the curricular and co-curricular activities of the school.
- Frequent meetings between the staff and parents of SCs/STs should be arranged.
- Teachers have a special responsibility to educate first generation learners

**For Women :** The National Commission for Women was set up as a statutory body in January 1992 under the National Commission for Women Act, 1990 to:

- review the Constitutional and Legal safeguards for women ;
- recommend remedial legislative measures ;
- facilitate redress of grievances and
- advise the Government on all policy matters affecting women.
- The Commission consists of a Chairperson and five members. At least one member each shall be from amongst persons belonging to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe respectively.

Education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women. Women's studies will be promoted as a part of various courses and educational institutions encouraged taking up active programmers to further women's development. The removal of women's illiteracy and obstacles inhibiting their access to, and retention in, elementary education will receive overriding priority, through provision of special support services, setting of time targets, and effective monitoring. Major emphasis will be laid on women's participation in vocational, technical and professional education at different levels. The policy of non-discrimination will be punished vigorously to eliminate sex stereotyping in vocational and professional courses and to promote women's participation in non-traditional occupations and technologies.

♦ **Measures of Equalization of Educational Opportunities for Women**

- Focus on girls especially belonging to SC/ST and minority groups.
- In many states including Meghalaya, Mizoram and Manipur free education is provided to girls up to Class XII.
- Free textbooks for girls.
- Special coaching, remedial classes for girls and congenial learning environment.

**For Disabled Children:** There are various categories of disabled children requiring special educational facilities. They are:

1. Blind,
2. Partially Sighted,
3. Deaf,
3. Partially Hearing,
4. Educationally Abnormal,
5. Epileptic,
6. Maladjustment,
7. Physically Handicapped,
8. Affected by Speech Defect,
8. Delicate.

- Integrated Education for Physically Challenged (I.E.P.C) was launched in 1974 to provide educational opportunities for disabled children in the general school system.

- Unless the disabled children get an equal opportunity for education, we can't achieve our national goal. It is to bring about effective measures to promote academic development and vocational possibilities. For this, teachers, parents are to work hand-in-hand to make the integrated education an effective mode of education.

### **Recommendations of the NPE (1986) on Equal Opportunity to Education of Disabled Children :**

- The NPE (1986) states, the objective should be to integrate physically and mentally handicapped with the general community as equal partners for normal growth and to enable them to face life with courage and confidence.
- Wherever it is possible, the education of children with motor handicaps and other mild handicaps will be common with that of others.
- Adequate arrangements will be made to give vocational training to the disabled.
- Teacher's training programmes will be re-oriented to deal with handicapped children.
- Regular classroom facilities with changing the environment of the classroom to be suited their needs.

**For the Minorities :** The Government of India constituted a National Commission for Minorities in May, 1993. The setting up of Minorities Commission was envisaged in the Ministry of Home Affairs Resolution dated 12.01.1978, which specifically mentioned that "despite the safeguards provided in the Constitution and the laws in force, there persists among the Minorities a feeling of inequality and discrimination.

- Article 30 of the Indian Constitutional relates to certain cultural and educational rights to establish and administer educational institutions.
- All minorities whether based on religion or language shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their own.
- The State shall not discriminate against any educational institution on general that it is under the management of a minority based on religion or language.
- Scheme of financial assistance for modernization of Madrasah education.

# GENDER SOCIALIZATION

## ◆ Meaning and Definitions

- *"The process of educating and instructing males and females as to the norms, behaviours, values, and beliefs of group membership as men or women."*
- *"Gender socialization is the tendency for boys and girls to be socialized differently."*

Socialization is the process of internalizing society's values in order to adapt to one's culture. It influences how people behave as males and females in society. The social learning process that imbibes people into understanding the various aspects of culture includes the process of gender socialization. Gender socialization encompasses the process of learning society's gender roles and their advantages and limitations.

In most societies there is a clear categorization of what it means to be male or female. This categorization process and the agents of socialization that

transmit knowledge about gender roles influence how individuals define themselves and other in terms of gender and sex roles.

**In many societies gender roles are rigidly defined:**

For instance men have traditionally been expected to be strong, aggressive even dominating. Women have been expected to be nurturing, sensitive, emotional and relatively passive. Children are taught these values both consciously and subconsciously from a very early age. This is further reinforced with the use of toys as boys are given large sized, noise making or violent type whereas girls are often given gentler toys. These expressions influence information of self as well as identities.

The main agents of gender socialization are parents, peer, siblings, school, society and religion. For very young children parents and family play the central role in shaping gender socialization. They determine how the family interacts with a boy as well as the types of toys and clothes that the baby is given.

Gender identity is established by age of two years. Its central component is the notion-I am male or I am female.

Sigmund Freud theorized that identification and imitation of same-sex parents leads to effective gender -identity formation. In the latency period males and females tend to aggregate themselves from each other. This may be considered part of the socialization process and further solidifies gender identification and role specific behaviour. Schools and families continue to influence gender socialization throughout adolescence. During adolescence peer influence becomes the strongest agent of gender socialization as teens form together in small social groups to facilitate their transition into adulthood and into the larger society. The socializing effects of the mass media also become powerful in formative years.

Culture has been seen as of key significance in the construction of gender identity. Education has been seen as an important part of this process drawing girls and boys into different activities and achievements. The analysis of gender and culture has drawn on literary theory with the deconstructionism of Derrida and also on the discourse analysis of Michal Foucault. The emphasis has shifted from the individual's learning experience to the creation of the texts or representations that construct our notions of gender. In the Indian context woman is defined as an ambivalent person. Woman is located in myth and popular culture as both goddess and Shakti as virtuous and evil. Women were not only revered and worshipped but also controlled through a direct regulation of her sexuality.

Religion is powerful social institution that shape gender identity in society. There are sacred spaces where only men are allowed to enter and not women. There are norms defined by which only men can perform certain duties or obligations pertaining to religious activities but also reinforce and legitimize gender roles assigned to men and women in society.

Gender identity is conveyed and structured by both verbal and non-verbal means. The gender classification is influenced by the semantic structure of language. Lakoff has suggested that generic terms in language may influence cognitive structure and attitudes towards gender superiority. The term man

means human being in general while woman refers to female. The term bachelor conserves its original meaning of single man while spinster has acquired the negative connotation of old maid. Language is another medium through which gender identities are imposed or reinforced.

### GENDER SOCIALIZATION PRACTICES IN FAMILY

Gender socialization and the family have a vast literature. Research on gender in childhood, adolescence, and adulthood consider different stages that are unique to human development. The focus for this discussion is based on how males and females learn masculinity and femininity through family/primary group interactions, and how they are socialized into dichotomous, "traditional" gender roles. Specifically, the idea that males learn masculinity and masculine impressions in opposition to femininity and feminine behaviour is examined. These mechanisms of socialization are examined as identity processes that the family and other primary groups help to create and maintain.

#### ◆ Family and the Construction of Gender

The socialization of a child in the family has been observed in several ways. Research has normally concentrated on four traditions: the parent effect perspective, the child effects perspective, the reciprocal socialization perspective, and the systemic-ecological perspective; each perspective provides a unique understanding to child socialization.

The parent effect perspective addresses how the different styles, actions, and temperaments of parents socialize traits and behaviour in children. This perspective is the most common area of inquiry in literature on gender socialization.

The child effects perspective reverses the order of operations in family socialization, focusing on how children socialize parents. A common area of inquiry in the child effects perspective examines how the presence of a child forces mothers/fathers to enter the workplace to support the added economic stress a child brings, hence influencing parents to develop additional, new identities. The reciprocal effects perspective examines how both children and parents socialize one another reflexively; the impact of gender and family socialization are mutually tied to both entities. The systemic-ecological perspective considers that gender and family socialization is neither a parent-to-child nor child-to-parent process, but that all family socialization is embedded in an environment or context that can have great impact. This perspective treats family socialization as a social system in which multiple sources of socialization simultaneously impact both parents and children. The parent effect perspective is the oldest in the tradition of socialization theories and provides the basis for the proceeding discussion on socialization. This is primarily due to the fact that while identity construction is a reflexive process, more cues are provided to children from parents (especially in infancy and youth) than the other way around. This is an important aspect to understanding how identity theory serves as a control mechanism for actors (as will be examined shortly); parental definitions of acceptable behaviour-which is

usually gendered is internalized by children early on and serves as a foundation for all subsequent interactions.

Regardless of the application or analysis of the family, the family is usually the first unit with which children have continuous contact and the first context in which socialization patterns develop.

### INDIAN FAMILY LIFE: THE GENDER PERSPECTIVES

Gender seems to be one of the most powerful variables that influence human development from conception till death especially in Indian society. The life events of an individual born into an Indian family is found to be totally gendered, which results in making the family life "heaven" or "hell".

Hence understanding family life from gender perspective is the main aim of this section (in this chapter), which tries to throw light on the theoretical structure of gender, gender system and gender socialization prevailing in family life.

Further, we are going to discuss the challenges faced in terms of changing family values and ethos; identity confusion especially on the part of the girls and women; family and work interface, its impact on gender roles and violence within family.

The family is the main social organization that has always been observed as a fundamental part for the development of the person as well as for the society and mankind. This is the main reason of giving more and more attention to the changes of family values and traditions around the world. However any understandings of these changes require knowledge about the status quo, the conditions and the context of change.

According to Singh (2004), "The twenty-first century recorded great changes of far reaching importance in the family system under the influence of westernization, industrialization, modernization and greater population mobility across the subcontinent. Since then the Indian family has progressively confronted and combated various kinds of problems and challenges, and yet India does not have any family policy per se so far; albeit the Government of India has indeed taken several useful legislative measures relating to widow remarriage, women's right to property, practice of child marriage, succession, adoption and maintenance, dowry, dissolution of marriage affecting different communities and most recently domestic violence, which have impacted the Indian family system in more ways than one".

The main cause of the family foundation is gender. Thus, understanding the construction of gender within family is the most important aspect of any research and study.

Major features of gender system prevailing within Indian family according to Choudhury (2006) are:

**1. Discrimination between boy/girl child:** The practice of male-female contradiction forms is the core of a gender-based system. Biological sex differences, which are real, are extended to be the criteria for social placement. Chaterjee (1987) was of opinion that, "discrimination begins with the fact that a girl is unwanted and therefore eliminated even before she can emerge into the world".

If we discuss in Indian context the discrimination starts from the early stage of child birth. According to many studies it had been seen that in many families boy are more preferable than girls. They get the proper education and nutrition, on the other hand girl child has to face many challenges from the beginning and apart from all that they had to bear many responsibilities at very low age.

**2. Roles within families:** As we discuss above in patriarchy families it has been often seen that girls played roles which are related to responsibilities or duties like washing clothes, making food etc.

According to **Bharat (1997)**, "In Indian families sex roles are well differentiated and influence the socialization process from birth onwards. Both boys and girls according to **Choudhury (2006)** grow up with the knowledge of special preference attached to the male child and often experience blatant expressions of this preference through parental reactions, behaviour; family rituals, practices; social customs and traditions".

**Rao (1969)** define women's roles-all interpersonal and her identity is wholly outlined by her relationships to others, such as:

- An obedient daughter;
- A faithful wife;
- A nurturing mother;
- A the all powerful mother-in-law;
- A the benevolent grandmother.

Woman is always "tossed on to someone else, her worth and status as an individual gets devalued". Accordingly from childhood to adulthood, there is a deliberate attempt for the female to be named or addresses in some male person's name or identity.

**3. Gender-based hierarchal placement:** Along with role distributions, certain standards and values, along with customs and trends, further encourages the husband-wife superior/inferior hierarchy within family.

**Bhogle (1999)** was of view that the higher incidence of widowhood in women as compared to men is due mainly to the cultural practice of men marrying women who are considerably younger to them. This demonstrates how gender and age can be the sources of disadvantages. According to **Sharma and Khosla (1997)**, "to be a female is often less than to be human". Woman's role in society, her limited rights, considerable duties and the shabby treatment meted out to her in all walks of life originate from the fact that she is basically considered a liability and a burden on the family right from birth itself.

**Further Sharma (1981)** was of opinion that attitudes towards sex differences/inequality are the first to be formed in sequence of development, followed by caste, religion and class prejudices.

**Gender socialization within the Indian Family:** There were many images of the traditional Indian family, but all of them emphasize its corporate and corporal character. It was sometimes viewed as a living cohesive body, growing, developing, expanding and at times contracting or even withering way when struck by major calamities (**Hanchalte, 1988**).

## **Role of Mass Media**

The media form the third agent of gender socialization, which also come at an early age of about 2 to 3 years. The first encounter of media as an agent of socialization may include the radios, televisions, music and movies. This is through the various televisions, radio show, and other programs, which are often commercialized. Most of the shows are very good and affect positively on the children in helping them develop the right norms and morals in the society. They teach the roles of the females and the males in the society. This defines the participation of men and women in the society depending on what the media is putting on air.

### **◆ Mass Media**

#### **Includes:**

- Television
- Radio
- Movies
- Music
- Books, magazines, etc.
- Internet

Television is the medium with the greatest socialization effect, surpassing all the other media by far in its influence on the young child. The very fact that television is not an interactive agent is greatly significant to the development of young children. While watching, children have the feeling that they're interacting, but they're not. That's one of the disadvantages of television as a socializer-it satisfies social needs to some extent, but doesn't give children the social skills (or the real-life practice in those skills) that allow them to function effectively with people. Since the average child watches 3 to 4 hours of television a day, the time left for playing with others and learning social skills is drastically reduced. Even infants average about an hour and a half of television viewing a day between the time they are born and age 2 (Wright et al., 2001).

Of course, parents can control the time their children spend watching television, but many don't. They can monitor the selection of programs, but don't consider how they can use television to teach decision making. They don't make children aware that when one program ends they can either weigh the various merits of the next offerings or turn the set off. Some children, especially those with a remote control in hand, flick through the channels periodically, randomly stopping at whatever catches their interest at the moment. That's very different from critically examining options and consciously deciding on one. This is where parent education could be effective. Some parents who grew up with television themselves haven't given much thought to the effects of that medium, and how to decrease these effects.

Children learn through watching television. Some of the things they learn are beneficial; others are not. They learn about the world and the ways of the society. They learn something about occupations, for example, getting an idea about what a nurse does, what a doctor does, and how the two relate to each other. They learn about the institutions of the society-what goes on in court, for example. They learn the language to go with these roles and settings-and they learn some language you'd rather they didn't know.

Children also learn about current themes and issues, both from newscasts and dramas-issues such as kidnapping, the homeless, and the spread of AIDS. Most of these issues and themes are not happy ones, and many are very frightening, especially when children watch programs that are intended for adults.

Children learn more than facts from television; they also get a good daily dose of stereotypes and a lot of misleading information about their world. Most of all, they get a big helping of violence and another of commercial advertising.

Some sociologists and theorists of culture have recognized the power of mass communication as a socialization device. **Dennis McQuail** says:

*... the media can teach norms and values by way of symbolic reward and punishment for different kinds of behaviour as represented in the media. An alternative view is that it is a learning process whereby we all learn how to behave in certain situations and the expectations which go with a given role or status in society. Thus the media are continually offering pictures of life and models of behaviour in advance of actual experience."*

### **Role of Schools : Formal Organization**

The school also plays an important role in gender socialization of both boys and girls in the society. In the past, children used to start schooling at the age of seven or above, these days' things have changed. At the age of five or four, most children have left their parents and spend much of their times in school. School therefore plays a very important role in nurturing the already acquired behaviour within the family. Even though the family and media still play important roles in socialization, the schools serves a lot. In schools, socialization takes place through social curriculum, official curriculum or through the hidden curriculum. Both the social and official curriculum involves those behaviours acquired by the children from their teachers that also affect

their moral. The pupils learn good behaviour and their role in the society depending on their gender.

### **Socialization takes three forms in school:**

#### ◆ **Official Curriculum**

What the school system and its teachers announce as their content and goal. It includes the knowledge & skills learned in English, math, history, etc. The school is the official place where our society transmits its accumulated knowledge and skills from one generation to next. It's also the place where we officially pass on our cultural values, tradition, and heritage, at least the "official" heritage.

This curriculum often reinforces but what was learned in the family but it can also challenge family socialization (e.g., teaching values of tolerance to a child from a racist family).

#### ◆ **Social Curriculum**

This is learning social behaviour appropriate for peer groups that are not friendship groups, which then become the model for secondary group interactions. Many of the skills learned in peer groups are transferable but now the child learns to communicate, negotiate, dominate, etc. with peers outside of their immediate social circle, often from diverse social backgrounds. In many ways this social curriculum reinforces and deepens gender role socialization started in the family and continued in the peer group.

By middle school and high school, teens have largely learned the social curriculum. It is replaced more and more by peer social interaction in the hallways, in the parking lot, under the bleachers, etc. and broadens away from general group interaction to interaction in sexualized situations. In addition, many adolescence are introduced to the social curriculum through organized sports.

#### ◆ **Hidden Curriculum**

This is learning the rules of behaviour need to function in formally organized groups. It includes such behaviour maxims as:

- Don't talk when the teacher is talking.
- Get your assignments in on time.
- Not all teachers have the same rules for their class.
- When a teacher tells another student to stop talking, it is not a good idea to start talking to your neighbor since the teacher has already expressed disapproval of that action.

It includes positive reinforcement for such values as:

- Precision
- Self-reliance
- Competitiveness
- Obedience

As preparation for the adult world of formal organization and workplace authority, the hidden curriculum stresses such things as formalization and

standardization, following instructions, obedience to authority figures that are not Mom and Dad, learning to control behaviour and fit into the group, pleasing (even manipulating) authority figures, and working in teams.

### Teacher Attitudes

Many teachers express the viewpoint that they treat boys and girls equally and that their gender is irrelevant. This position is called gender-blindness; it provides a false sense of objectivity and impartiality, often at variance with actual practice. Teacher attitudes may reflect biases toward girls and boys. Biases are subtler than visible discrimination and may result in unconscious behaviours that give more careful attention either to girls or boys. These behaviours may foster among the less favored students a sense of alienation and hinder personal, academic, and professional development (Davis, 1993).

**The School Environment** Given that schools are social settings where gender and sexual identities are constructed, negotiated, and officially sanctioned, the overall educational environment offers influential messages about gender. Gender segregation in elementary school is a significant component of childhood socialization (Thorne, 1993). Teachers use space arrangements that emphasize gender separation, though left to their own discretion, students also chose to be separated by gender. In many countries, students sit in same-sex pairs or groupings in the classroom (Warrington et al., 2000).

Physical education is an area of the formal curriculum that serves a powerful function in the production of masculinity. If well conducted, it can also serve as a site for the emergence of strong female identities. In British schools, Parker (1996) found that sports act as a channel for aggressive behaviour in which insults promote a masculinity that derides mistakes and weakness as feminine and physical force is used by male students to push other boys into conformity with hegemonic masculinity.

### ◆ The Workplace

Workplace is another agent of socialization. Just as the children spend a significant part of day at their school, the adults spend much of their day at their workplace. At the workplace, a person meets people of different age groups and belonging to different social and cultural backgrounds. This makes him come in close contact with different thought processes, belief systems, etc. The interaction that then happens, helps a person to broaden his/her horizons in terms of social acceptance and tolerance towards the others. It also sometimes helps in changing the notions of 'right' and 'wrong'. It makes him understand the true difference between the 'self' and the 'other'. The 'other' is only distinct from the 'self' but both are still 'right'.

Apart from imbibing punctuality (e.g. target achievement) and following procedures (e.g. whether to approach the boss directly or not), a person also becomes well-versed with the importance of regularity in work and behaving mannerisms with respect to superiors as well as juniors and subordinates.

According to psychologists, just as children spend much of their day at school, most Indian adults at some point invest a significant amount of time at

a place of employment. Although socialized into their culture since birth, workers require new socialization into a workplace, both in terms of material culture (such as how to operate the copy machine) and nonmaterial culture (such as whether it is okay to speak directly to the boss or how the refrigerator is shared).

Different jobs require different types of socialization. In the past, many people worked a single job until retirement. Today, the trend is to switch jobs at least once a decade. Between the ages of 18 and 44, the average baby boomer of the younger set held 11 different jobs (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2010). This means that people must become socialized to, and socialized by, a variety of work environments.

## RELIGION

While some religions may tend toward being an informal institution, this section focuses on practices related to formal institutions. Religion is an important avenue of socialization for many people. INDIA is full of temples, churches, mosques, and similar religious communities where people gather to worship and learn. Like other institutions, these places teach participants how to interact with the religion's material culture. For some people, important ceremonies related to family structure-like marriage and birth-are connected to religious celebrations. Many of these institutions uphold gender norms and contribute to their enforcement through socialization. From ceremonial rites of passage that reinforce the family unit, to power dynamics which reinforce gender roles, religion fosters a shared set of socialized values that are passed on through society.

As many studies founds that religion is one of the most powerful agents of socialization which is linked with concepts and values people identify themselves with. At the same time, it is the most sensitive agent of socialization as well. People tend to develop their own religious beliefs from their parents, right from their inception. They begin to acquire knowledge of which god to believe in (or not?); when, where and how to pray; what rituals to follow; what to consume and what to avoid; etc., right from infancy, and it is these belief systems that evolve further and remain with them for the rest of their lives.

While the major function of religion in the process of socialization is teaching people, belonging to different religions, to be tolerant and respectful towards each other, things do not always work out as desired. Therefore, the power of religion as a socializing agent should be understood well, and any sort of misinterpretations need to be avoided.

## GOVERNMENT

Although we do not think about it, many of the rites of passage people go through today are based on age norms established by the government. To be defined as an "adult" usually means being 18 years old, the age at which a person becomes legally responsible for themselves. And 65 is the start of "old age" since most people become eligible for senior benefits at that point.