PREFACE

In a bid to standardize higher education in the country, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has introduced Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) based on five types of courses viz. *core, generic, discipline specific, elective, ability and skill enhancement* for graduate students of all programmes at Honours level. This brings in the semester pattern which finds efficacy in sync with credit system, credit transfer, comprehensive continuous assessments and a graded pattern of evaluation. The objective is to offer learners ample flexibility to choose from a wide gamut of courses, as also to provide them lateral mobility between various educational institutions in the country where they can carry their acquired credits. I am happy to note that the university has been recently accredited by National Assessment and Accreditation Council of India (NAAC) with grade "A".

UGC (Open and Distance Learning Programmes and Online Programmes) Regulations, 2020 have mandated compliance with CBCS for U.G. programmes for all the HEIs in this mode. Welcoming this paradigm shift in higher education, Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU) has resolved to adopt CBCS from the academic session 2021-22 at the Under Graduate Degree Programme level. The present syllabus, framed in the spirit of syllabi recommended by UGC, lays due stress on all aspects envisaged in the curricular framework of the apex body on higher education. It will be imparted to learners over the six semesters of the Programme.

Self Learning Material (SLMs) are the mainstay of Student Support Services (SSS) of an Open University. From a logistic point of view, NSOU has embarked upon CBCS presently with SLMs in English / Bengali. Eventually, the English version SLMs will be translated into Bengali too, for the benefit of learners. As always, all of our teaching faculties contributed in this process. In addition to this we have also requisioned the services of best academics in each domain in preparation of the new SLMs. I am sure they will be of commendable academic support. We look forward to proactive feedback from all stakeholders who will participate in the teaching-learning based on these study materials. It has been a very challenging task well executed, and I congratulate all concerned in the preparation of these SLMs.

I wish the venture a grand success.

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Netaji Subhas Open University
Under Graduate Degree Programme
Choice Based Credit System (CBCS)
Subject : Honours in Sociology
Core Course : CC VII
Code : CC-SO-07
Sociology of Gender and Sexuality

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**NETAJI SUBHAS
OPEN UNIVERSITY**

**Honours in
Sociology**

**Core Course : CC VII
Code : CC-SO-07**

Module – 1 Gender as a Social Construct

Module – 2 Gender: Differences and Inequality

Module – 3 Gender, Power and Resistance

Module – 4 Gender and the Mass Media

UNIT 1 ❑ Gendering Sociology : An Overview

Structure

1.1   Learning Objectives

After going through the units the students will be able to:

- ✓ To develop an understanding of the concept of gender.
- ✓ To understand the ways in which classical sociologists dealt with the idea of gender.
- ✓ To learn about the idea of sex roles in sociology.
- ✓ To trace the development of feminism and its effect on mainstream sociology.
- ✓ To know about the emergence of the concept of gender in sociology.

✓ To understand how the sex-gender distinction was reconsidered.

✓ To understand why it is necessary to establish a gendered sociology, rather than sociology of gender.

1.2   Introduction

Gender was a late entrant in Sociology's Lexicon as a key concept. The centrality of Gender in Sociological analysis can be traced back to the early 1970s. What is surprising is the length of time it required for the concept of gender to secure its due place in mainstream Sociology. Although the role of gender in shaping all aspects our social life is taken for granted now, prior to 1970s, gender was marginal to Sociology's core concepts. For the most part, Sociology studied the world of men as if men constituted the whole society. Women were rendered invisible and gendered nature of men's social, locations, identities and activities was concealed. Even where women were included in Sociological thinking, their place in society was regarded as "naturally" given and they were conceptualized in terms of their social roles which were nonetheless unproblematic.

Do you know?

Androcentrism is the practice, conscious or otherwise, of placing a masculine point of view at the center of one's world view, culture, and history, thereby culturally marginalizing femininity. The related adjective is androcentric, while the practice of placing the feminine point of view at the center is gynocentric.

The resurgence of feminism in the 1970s challenged the prevalent androcentric views of mainstream Sociology. Central to Feminist project was the objective of challenging the prevalent assumption that differences between men and women were ordained by nature. The study of gender in sociology grew out of the second wave of the women's movement (Wharton 2005). Initially Reforming sociology was seen to require adding women to the sociological analysis. Smith (1974) called this "add women and stir approach" which led to the sociological focus on women.[1] The sociology of women has gradually given way to sociology of gender. Initially, the change is reflected in a growing literature on men and masculinity that focused on men as gendered rather than generic beings.[2] This resulted in the recognition that gender is relational. Feminists introduced the concept of gender in order to emphasize the social construction of masculinity and femininity and the social ordering of relations between men and women. The term 'gender' connotes several things and is used by different people in different ways. Stevi Jackson and Sue Scott (2002: 1) define gender as a "hierarchical division between women and men embedded in

both social institutions and social practices". Gender, for them, is a "social structural phenomenon which is also produced, negotiated and sustained at the level of everyday interaction". The world we live in is ordered by gender. Gender is also embodied and lived by men and women in their local and biographical contexts. According to Wharton (2005:7) gender is a "system of social practices" that creates and maintains gender distinctions and it organizes relations of inequality on the basis of [these distinctions]." In this view, gender involves the creation of both differences and inequalities. This definition has three aspects. First, gender is as much a process as a fixed state. Second, gender is not simply a characteristic of individuals, but occurs at all levels of the social structure. Third, this definition highlights the importance of gender in organizing relations of inequality.

Gender, thus, is central to individual identities. Gender accounts for social division and cultural distinction between men and women. It also encompasses the characteristics that are commonly associated with masculinity and femininity. Gender, however, can't be conceptualized without taking into account the wider social relations and socio-cultural context in which it is embedded. Gender intersects with other social divisions and inequalities such as class, sexuality, race etc. Also the meaning of masculinity and femininity vary within a single society as well as between different societies (Jackson and Scott: 2002: 2). In the next section, the development and elaboration of the concept of gender within Sociological theory and research will be charted. First, we'll analyse how gender relations were conceptualized by sociologists prior to 1970s. Then we'll assess how feminists have impacted sociology by incorporating gender into its analytical toolkit.

1.3   Classical Sociology and the Question of Gender

The origin of sociology can be traced back to the 19th century when a number of thinkers sought to conceptualize the changes brought about by the rise of industrial capitalism. The fact that these theorists are widely known as the founding fathers of sociology says a lot about how gender has been conventionally conceived. These male sociologists paid very little attention to the issues of gender and sexuality despite the fact that socio-economic transformations brought about by industrial capitalism also entailed major shifts in family life, relations between men and women, and the conceptualizations of masculinity and femininity. Most of the traditional ideas about gender originated during this period (Jackson and Scott, 2002: 2). For example, the separation of workplace from domestic sphere was accompanied by the idea that women and men were suited to different spheres and that home is the

place for women.[3] Founding fathers were also silent about changes in domestic and work life which were paralleled with rapid socio-economic changes.

In the following section the underlying assumptions about gender that informed the work of classical sociologists will be discussed to understand their impact on later sociological thinking about gender relations and feminist analysis. It is also important to show the hidden and taken for granted assumptions about gender relations that inform later sociological understanding of it.

1.3.1 Karl Marx and Fredrich Engels

Marx was one of the major thinkers in 19th century. Although gender doesn't figure prominently in Marx's theorization as an independent category of analysis, Marx had the greatest impact on the work of feminists. The predominant concept of Marx's sociology is the idea of class. He was concerned with the exploitation of the 'proletariat' (the working class) by the 'bourgeoisie' (the capitalists) under capitalism. Marx never saw the gender of workers and capitalists as a significant factor and treated these classes as theoretically asexual. Therefore, first, women were rendered invisible in the analysis of labour market and second, the exploitation of women's domestic labour was also naturalized and taken for granted. Marx argues that under capitalism, a constant supply of labour was required and labour must be reproduced in two ways. First, the worker needed to be fed, clothed and sheltered in order to be fit enough to work every day. Secondly, the working class also needs to reproduce itself through producing and rearing the next generation. In the first sense, the working class is reproduced through the fulfilment of subsistence and the means of subsistence is given by capital in the form of wages (Marx 1976: 717-8). The fact that it requires labour to cook meals and wash clothes for labourers was systematically ignored by Marx. Marx even made it appear as if workers could accomplish biological reproduction without women.[4]

Marx's collaborator Fredrich Engels had given more attention to women's existence than he did. But, much like Marx, Engels took the distinction between men and women for granted *(The origins of Family, Private Property and the State)* here. Engels began from the assumption that the division of labour between men as breadwinners and women as domesticated wives and mothers had always existed since prehistoric times. This assumption, however, has been proven wrong from the perspective of both archaeology and anthropology. Engels, however, assumed that the social contributions of women and men were equally valued. He argued that the "world of historic defeat of the female sex" can be traced back to the development of private property which enabled men to seek control over women's sexual and

reproductive capacity for passing their property onto their children. This resulted in the overthrowing of the 'mother right' in favour of 'father right' and the institutionalization of monogamous marriage and the subordination of women within the family.[5] Although Engels questioned the universality of women's subordination, he nonetheless considered gender divisions to be natural.

In the 1970s, many Marxist feminists tried to incorporate gender into mainstream Marxism by focusing on how women's domestic labour contributed to the reproduction of labour power and maintenance of capitalism. The assumption of a natural distinction between men, however, was not adequately explained and hence Marxist feminists were unable to explain why women occupied the particular social position of domestic labourers and reproducers of labour power.

1.3.2 Max Weber

Max Weber contributed to the study of gender by invoking the concept of patriarchy. Patriarchal authority, the oldest form of socially legitimized power, was vested in male heads of households and this gave them power over women and children as well as younger men, servants, slaves and any other household dependents. This form of authority was a prototype of other forms of traditional authority like feudal system. In this form of patriarchal society, women were subordinated to the men in the social hierarchy.[6] Like Marx and Engel's, Weber didn't question the basic division between men and women. He in fact took the mother-child unit for granted and hence didn't consider it sociologically relevant. He didn't quite consider the relationship between private and public sphere, especially the idea that private sphere, inhabited by women and children, is separated from, but subsumed by male dominated public sphere, worthy of sociological analysis. While a few modern feminist writers such as Roberta Hamilton (1978) who have developed a Weberian analysis of patriarchy, Weber's theory had limited impact on modern approaches to gender.[7]

1.3.3 Emile Durkheim

Durkheim had the least impact on the modern feminists because of his view of society as an integrated functioning whole in which everyone has a function, based on their social location and women's place was in the home. Durkheim analyzed the increasing complexity of division of labour with the linear progression of society. According to Durkheim, with the elaboration of division of labour, the roles of men and women became more specialized. This sexual difference was seen by Durkheim as fundamental to the conjugal bond. Women and men were seen as dependent on each other in a complimentary relationship whereby men take care of the intellectual

functions and women of the affective functions.[8] Durkheim recognized the social subordination of women in his theory of suicide and posited that married women were more likely to commit suicide than either married men or single women and he also argued that men benefitted more from marriage than women.[9]

One of the things that didn't go well with modern feminists is Durkheim's idea that monogamous marriage had the function of providing restraint to men's sexuality, and giving them security, tranquility and mental calmness. Women, according to Durkheim, didn't need this calming effect as their sexual life was presumed to be less intellectual and associated more with biological imperatives. However, he recognized that monogamy was imposed more powerfully on women than men because of the double standrards of morality. Much like his contemporaries, Durkheim too considered sexual division of labour to be an inevitable corollary of naturalized biological difference.

1.3.4 George Simmel

George Simmel, like most other sociologists of his time shared the common presumption about sexual difference between men and women being natural and the idea that women were fit for the domestic sphere, and men for the public sphere was also taken for granted and hence naturalized by him. Simmel, however, was not unaware of the existing power imbalance between two genders and the ways in which masculinity came to be established as the norm and femininity as the deviation from it. The way men represent themselves was posited as ungendered and objective knowledge despite being constructed from a masculinist perspective.[10]

Things to do

Critically examine the major writings of classical theorists in sociology and try to see how they have evaded the question of gender in their analyses of social change brought about by the industrial revolution and subsequent rise of capitalism. How have they systematically ignored the role and contributions of women while theorizing about social structure?

1.3.5 Check our progress

1. Answer in Detail:

    (a) Elucidate the concept of gender in detail.

    (b) How did the founding fathers of Sociology deal with the question of gender?

2. Answer Briefly:

  (a) Define gender.

  (b) Briefly discuss how Karl Marx and Fredrich Engels engaged with the concept of gender.

  (c) Which concept was propagated by Max Weber that influenced feminist understanding of gender and how?

  (d) How did Emile Durkheim deal with the issue of gender in his understanding of division of labour in society?

  (e) What was George Simmel's understanding of gender?

3. Answer Very Briefly:

  (a) Which strand of feminism was instrumental in developing the sociology of gender?

  (b) How did feminists define the concept of gender?

  (c) According to Marx, what are ways in which Labor is reproduced under capitalism?

  (d) How did Engels conceptualize the division of labor between women and men?

  (e) What is patriarchy?

  (f) How did Durkheim justify sexual division of labor between women and men?

1.4 Sex Roles and Sociology

Mainstream Sociology continued to produce knowledge from a masculine perspective even in the 20th century. Functionalist analysis of family put forward by Talcott Parsons is the most prominent example of this. Influenced by Durkheim, Parsons argued that the potential strain between the instrumental ethos of industrial society and the emotional orientation of family life was minimized by the segregation between private and public sphere. Men worked outside home and specialized in goal-oriented or instrumental roles and women were domestically oriented and specialized in affective roles (Parsons and Bales 1956).[11] Gradually, more critical analyses of sex roles started to emerge which challenged the dominant perspective of the era about sex differences. Margaret Mead (1935) challenged the naturalistic assumptions about sex differences in her anthropological study of three New Guinea societies where the ideas about sex roles are very different from western standards.[12] She later suggests that what is considered masculine is universally considered to be

superior to femininity. She tried to establish that masculinity and femininity are largely defined by culture instead of being naturally determined.[13] Despite her intention to establish the cultural situatedness of ideas about sex and temperament, Mead is often accused of judging other societies through the lens of western gender stereotypes.[14] Despite the criticisms, Mead's pioneering work continues to influence sociological understanding of cultural rootedness of gender and its disconnection from biological sex. Viola Klein (1946: 163) also challenged the social ordering of 'sex roles' and the inequalities produced by that. She tried to establish that feminine traits are sociologically determined, instead of being biologically given. At a time when women's domestic roles were taken for granted in mainstream sociology, Klein and Alva Mydral conducted one of the first studies of women's strategies in combining paid work with domestic work and they focused on the increasing participation of women in post-war labour force and analysed how the burden on them was doubled.[15] These early anthropological and sociological studies established the ground for later conceptualizations on gender.

Their contributions on forthcoming feminist analyses are as follows:

1. Sociological assumptions about the naturalness of sex differences were challenged.
2. The idea that sex roles for men and women were complimentary was questioned.
3. Finally, these studies sought to show that sex roles not only indicated division between men and women, but also signified a key hierarchical social division.

1.5 The rise of Feminism and its effect on Sociology

The rise of second wave feminism in the late 1960s and early 1970s facilitated the introduction of more critical approaches to the study of social lives of men and women and the inequalities between them. There was a shift from the language of sex-roles and new terms such as patriarchy and gender started to emerge. Simone De Beauvoir in her classic book 'The Second Sex' (1949) paved the way for a feminist analysis of gender. The social character of womanhood as distinct from biological femaleness was emphasized by her proposition that 'one is not born, but becomes, a woman.'[16] Bodily differences, for Beauvoir have no significance in themselves and their meanings are imputed by the social context men and women inhabit. She laid the foundation for the understanding of the difference between biological sex and socio-cultural gender. This distinction was elaborated further by

Anne Oakley (1972) who borrowed the terminology of sex and gender from Robert Stoller (1968) who used the sex-gender distinction for those whose biological sex was not in consonance with their gender category.[17] In line with Stoller (1968), Oakley (1972) defined sex as the anatomical and physiological characteristics signifying biological maleness and femaleness, and gender as socially constructed masculinity and femininity.[18] Masculinity and Femininity, thus, are socio-cultural and psychological attributes acquired through the process of becoming a man and a woman in a particular society at a particular time. Instead of being a direct byproduct of biological sex, gender, therefore, is a social attribute. Another highly influential account on gender was provided by Gayle Rubin (1975) who argued that each society has a sex/gender system that shapes the biological raw material of human sex and procreation. Gender, according to Rubin (1975: 179) is 'a socially imposed division of sexes' and 'a product of the social relations of sexuality.'[19] Both these accounts posit gender as independent from, but related to the biological bases of male female relations. The concept of gender also emphasises the historical and cultural variability of masculinity and femininity. The ideal definitions of masculinity and femininity can also vary within a particular society and indicates other differences and inequalities such as class, race, religion etc.

Even if it is accepted that gender is social, rather than natural, hence open to change and variability, what has remained constant is the hierarchical relationship between men and women despite the changes in the meaning of femininity and masculinity. This hierarchical division needs to be analyzed in relation to social arrangements. Although the term patriarchy was used by a number of theorists to analyze male dominance as systematic and pervasive, it wasn't readily accepted as a valid concept for analyzing wider social contexts since patriarchy traditionally means rule of fathers. While some theorists wanted to broaden the definition of patriarchy as any form of systematic male domination, others thought of it as an ahistorical conceptualization not applicable to modern western societies. Others like Delphy (1984) wanted to analyse the form of patriarchal domination prevalent in contemporary society and Sylvia Walby (1986) explored how it had changed over time.[20] Some also thought that Patriarchy was too monolithic a concept to actually be able to analyze differences of class, race and sexuality. These disagreements regarding the definition and applicability of 'patriarchy' were never resolved and gradually the term lost its steam. The concept of gender, however, addresses some of the concerns feminists sought to raise through the concept of 'patriarchy' because it describes an asymmetrical and hierarchical division between men and women. Although researchers have indicated that inequalities between men and women exist in society, these inequalities have to be understood in relation to other social divisions such as class, race and sexuality.

1.6   The Gendering of Sociology

The recognition of the concept of gender in feminist scholarship in no way guaranteed the recognition of its importance within sociology. While British Sociology considered 'class' as the only significant form of stratification. Few American Sociologists adopting a multidimensional approach took gender into account while analysing forms of income, status and power hierarchy. The problem with this approach was that it treated all forms of inequality as salient and assumed a relatively open society. British sociologists however argued that sex can't be considered to be an important dimension of stratification since gender inequality didn't override the inequalities imposed by class. Those emphasizing class as the only form of stratification took the division of labour between men and women for granted and assumed that women's social class position was same as their husbands. Feminists sought to problematize these assumptions by providing much more nuanced analysis of sources of inequality within family and also by examining how labour market itself was divided along lines of gender. Despite these attempts by feminists, mainstream sociology refused to consider gender as a valid analytical category. Feminism, however, was successful in facilitating a reorientation of sociological understanding of class. Recognizing the importance of gender also had the potential for facilitating its integration within sociology. Rendering gender visible will invariably enable sociologists to view the world from a different perspective and sociologists would start questioning the naturalized social arrangements. Gender, however, was still not taken seriously and neither had all areas of sociology been transformed through their engagement with feminism (Jackson and Scott: 2002: 12).

The areas in sociology in which gender was established first were sociology of the family and sociology of work and the inclusion of gender prompted radical alteration of the ways in which these fields developed. With the recognition that structures of families and labour market were organized by gender hierarchy, it was possible to challenge the uncritical acceptance of public/private divide and rethink the relationship between the two. As a result, house work came to be recognized as work carried on within a hierarchical relationship within which women contributed to the economy by fulfilling the needs of men and hence, preparing them for work in the labour market. Contrarily, women's skilled work was perceived as feminine and often was extensions of their domestic works like cooking, caring, cleaning, sewing etc. Incorporation of gender in sociology opened up new areas of inquiry, such as sexuality, the body, violence against women and children. The study of gender was easier to be introduced into the studies of social institutions and structures than into the areas of interpersonal relations. Introduction of gender to the latter field was potentially threatening to the privileges enjoyed by male sociologists.

Violence against women was seen more as a manifestation of individual pathology to be studied by psychologists. Feminists, through the evocation that personal is political, however, established the connection between violence and power and sought to show that violence against women is neither personal, nor cultural, rather is a sign of the power relations underlying marriage contracts.

Extending this argument to the previously underexplored areas such as sexuality was even more difficult as it was seen as a natural human capacity regulated by moral and institutional codes. Despite being a social phenomenon, sexuality before 1970s was too naturalized and frivolous to be considered as a valid area of sociological investigation. It was only after the introduction of gender as a sociological concept that sexuality came to be perceived as worthy of sociological attention. Sexuality was itself an axis of inequality as heterosexuality is institutionalized as the norm and homosexuality is seen as the deviation from it (Jackson and Scott: 2002: 14). The dichotomy between the two also produces inequalities within gender categories. Gay men, although enjoy some privileges for their manhood, are considered to be inferior to heterosexual men. Similarly, lesbians are seen as less than 'real women'. Both lesbians and gays are a threat to the gender hierarchy because they destabilize the norms of compulsory heterosexuality whereby sex is tied to reproduction and gender difference is the legitimate basis of emotional and sexual attraction.

It was also taken into consideration that gender and sexuality intersect other forms of inequality such as class and race in a very complex manner (Goldthorpe 1983, 84, Ericson 1984).[21] Despite the reconceptualization of mainsteam sociological thinking, there are many areas that have been resistant to recognize the significance of gender and hence, certain areas remain unaffected by the introduction of gender as a concept.

1.7   The Reconsideration of Sex-Gender Distinction

The theoretical distinction between sex and gender rendered the concept of biological sex as naturally given and hence it was largely left untheorized. The validity of this assumption therefore has been challenged. One current of feminism has argued for the revalorisation of femininity and for them the concept of gender is incapable of fully capturing the interplay between specificity of women's embodiment and socio-cultural definition of femininity.[22] This position that sought to establish the existence of an essential and extra-social femininity, however, was far removed

from everyday social practices and material relations. From a sociological perspective, the sex-gender distinction has been called into question because it assumes a fixed biological foundation upon which socio-cultural gender is imposed.

There are three strands of feminism that have questioned both sex and gender to come up with a social understanding of the distinction between men and women:

1. Ethnomethodology
2. Materialist feminists
3. Post-structuralism/Post-modernism

While the first position is distinctly sociological, the second was developed by French feminist sociologists and anthropologists and the third was developed outside sociology, but has been recognized as a significant current of it.

1.7.1 Ethnomethodology

Despite being considered least important in discussions of gender, ethnomethodology first challenged the idea of a natural distinction between males and females. This challenge originated from Garfinkel's (1967) case study of Agnes, a male-to-female transsexual and using an ethnomethodological approach he intended to show how members of society are constantly making sense of social reality and thus, constructing it. Garfinkel (1967) challenged the notion of biological sex and considered gender as an achievement by showing how Agnes 'passes' as a 'real woman' despite having male genitals before her operation. Much before Judith Butler, Garfinkel (1967) contended that 'passing' for Agnes is a carefully managed 'performance' of femininity through which she accomplishes her gender. This process not only entails performance of gender, but also the reading of performance of others through which gender is attributed to others. This is why Agnes' feminine appearance, dress and demeanour help her pass as a woman.[23]

While Garfinkel used pre-feminist terminologies of sex and sexuality, first fully developed ethnomethodological account of gender was provided by Kessler and McKenna in 1978 who, like Garfinkel, challenged the idea that gender is founded on a pre-social reality and used gender to denote the social origins of the differences between men and women.[24] Attribution of gender was held as the most important aspect of gender as it enables us to make a distinction between masculine and feminine characteristics. Gender division is the reason behind the gendered social order, gender inequalities and gender roles. Like Garfinkel, gender attribution is seen by them as involving both a performance of gender and a reading of the performances.

1.7.2   Materialist feminists

Materialist feminists intended to explore the structural reasons behind the subordination of women. Developed in the 1970s, in France, they challenged the naturalistic assumptions about sexual difference and adopted a Marxist method of analysis. This strand of radical feminism wanted to dissociate social attributes of gender from both psychological attributes of men and women and their sex organs. Instead of seeing male domination over women as resulting from pre-social sex differences, they insisted that gender operates as a social division because of patriarchal domination. In line with the Marxist analysis that classes exist only in relation to each other, materialist feminists argued that men and women exist as socially significant categories because of the exploitative relationship that ties them together, and also sets them apart from each other. Just like bourgeoisie can't exist without the proletariat, conceptually, the category 'women' can't exist without the opposing category 'men' and vice versa.

Materialist feminists, most significant amongst whom was Christine Delphy (1984), treated 'sex', in the sense of biological sex difference, as itself the product of society and culture. The usual sex-gender binary whereby gender is supposedly built upon biological sex difference is reversed by Delphy (1984) and she argued that sex has come to exist as a perceived category only because of the existence of gender.

1.7.3   Post-Modern Feminists

The ideas propounded by post-modern feminists were astoundingly similar to those of materialist feminists. The foundation of post-modern feminism was laid by writers who were inspired by structural anthropology, psychoanalysis and linguistics. Deriving from the work of Michele Foucault and Derrida, there was a shift of focus from cultural and linguistic structure towards a more fluid notion of the discursive construction of subjects. This paradigm shift became evident in historical works that sought to deconstruct not only the singular 'woman' but 'women' and show how categories of sex are historically constructed through the turn of centuries.[25] Deriving from the work of Michele Foucault and Derrida, there was a shift of focus from cultural and linguistic structure towards a more fluid notion of the discursive construction of subjects. According to Denise Riley (1988), the terms such as women and sex denote different things in different historical contexts.

Judith Butler's (1990) deconstruction of sex and gender in her book "Gender Trouble" is probably the most influential and comprehensive analysis within post-structuralist perspective on gender. Building on the argument that gender doesn't

follow automatically from sex, Butler argues against the idea that there are inevitably only two genders. She challenges the immutability of sex and asserts that sex, just like gender, is culturally constructed and body doesn't possess a pre-social and essential sex. Gender is what render bodies intelligible and sex, therefore can't be said to have an independent existence before the attribution of gender. Bodies acquire gender through repeated performance of gender (Butler 1990: 7-8). Gender, hence is performative. Becoming feminine and masculine requires the performance of femininity and masculinity.[26]

Butler (1990), however, is not denying the materiality of bodies, nor is she describing gender as something that one puts on and discards at will. Materiality of body is a an effect of power and bodies are forcibly materialized through time. Butler later (Bodies that matter) introduced the term performativity to denote the process through which utterances bring the names of something into being. Attributing gender identity to a child upon birth actually brings a boy or a girl into being and this process of naming is effective because it cites the established norms and conventions that establish what a girl is. Although Butler doesn't consider social structures and the reasons why gender is hierarchical, Butler's has made a significant contribution in reinforcing the critique of sex-gender distinction that was already developed by materialist feminists and ethnomethodologists.

Since the distinction between sex and gender has been rendered redundant, Jackson and Scott argues for the retention of 'gender' rather than 'sex'. First, as a sociological concept, gender highlights the social division between men and women and the hierarchical relation between them. Second, because sex refers to both the difference between women and men and to sexual relations and practices, the term is much more ambiguous than sex.

Gender categories are far from being homogenous and gender is experienced differently depending on class, ethnicity, religion, race, nationality and sexuality. Social inequalities such as class divisions, racism and normative heterosexuality facilitate significant differences that cut across those of gender. Sociological analysis of gender lost its credibility to cultural analysis because of its inability to analyse the complex intersections. Gender, therefore, must not be treated as just another variable added to the list of class, race, sexuality and so on. Sociologists must understand the various ways in which these social divisions intersect each other. Rather than establishing a sociology of gender, what is needed is a gendered sociology which doesn't disembed gender from its social contexts. Sociology has the unique capacity of understanding gender as a form of structural inequality as well as it is lived in everyday social settings.

1.8   Conclusion

In this unit, attempts have been made to summarize the long history of incorporation of gender into the disciplinary lexicon of sociology. The entry of gender as a valid sociological concept has been traced back to the 1970s before which it did not receive adequate recognition as an independent category of analysis. With an overview of the ways in which founding fathers of the discipline of sociology dealt with the idea of gender, this chapter has highlighted its marginal status in sociology. These thinkers, it has been shown, formulated theories based on their analysis of the world of men as if they constituted the world. The women being the other half of the population were not only rendered invisible, but their roles were also conceptualized as naturally given. The gradual emergence of critical analyses of sex roles since the mid nineteenth century sought to displace naturalistic assumptions about sex differences and acknowledged the cultural rootedness of gender. Simone De Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* can be credited for laying the foundation for the understanding that gender is a socially constructed category. Feminists since then have analysed the hierarchical social division between men and women as systematic and pervasive systematic male domination, have been defined by some feminists by the idea of patriarchy. There have also been, as the chapter has shown, disagreements regarding the definition and appropriateness of the term patriarchy. The concept of gender has come to be accepted as the appropriate term for representing the asymmetry between men and women. The inclusion of gender to the fields such as sociology of work, family, and sexuality opened up new areas of inquiry and facilitated the reconceptualization of mainstream sociological thinking. Later, the validity of the assumptions about sex-gender distinction came to be questioned by three distinct theoretical positions. Gender has thus been recognized as a heterogeneous and complex category that intersects with other categories such as class, ethnicity, and sexuality

1.9   Summary

In this unit we have learnt that gender was a late entrant in sociology's Lexicon as a key concept. Prior to 1970s, gender was marginal to sociology's core concepts. For the most part, sociology studied the world of men as if men constituted the whole society. The ways in which classical theorists in sociology were silent about the question of women and gender inequality in society have been thoroughly discussed here. The gendered division of labour and women's place in society were regarded as 'naturally' given and they were conceptualized in terms of their social roles which were nonetheless unproblematic. The rise of feminism in the 1970s

challenged the male-centric assumptions of mainstream sociology. Central to Feminist project was the objective of challenging the prevalent assumption that the difference between men and women were naturally given. The study of gender in sociology grew out of the second wave of the women's movement. Initially Reforming sociology was seen to require adding women to the sociological analysis. This unit traces the development of the concept of 'gender' in sociology. Feminists introduced the concept of gender in order to emphasize the social construction of masculinity and femininity and the social ordering of relations between men and women. The various connotations of the term 'gender' have been discussed in this unit. This unit, thus, can be said to have traced the trajectory of the gendering of sociology.

1.10 Questions

1. Answer in Detail:

    a. Discuss Margaret Mead's contribution to the understanding of gender.

    b. Who paved the way for a feminist analysis of gender? In which work?

    c. Who elaborated the distinction between sex and gender?

    d. Discuss the ways in which gender was included in mainstream sociology as a valid category of analysis.

    e. Discuss the contribution of ethnomethodology to the study of gender.

    f. Analyse the arguments of the three theoretical strands that have challenged the sex-gender distinction.

2. Answer Briefly:

    a. Discuss Talcott Parson's idea of gendered division of labour.

    b. What are the contributions of sociologists studying sex role on feminist analyses?

    c. What is the difference between sex and gender?

    d. Discuss the relevance of the term 'patriarchy' in discussions of gender.

    e. Name the theoretical strands that have called into question the distinction between Sex and gender.

    f. How did Garfinkel challenge the naturalized distinction between men and women?

    g. How did materialist feminists conceptualize the sex-gender distinction?

    h. Discuss the contributions of Judith Butler to the study of gender.

3. Answer very briefly:

    a. Who influenced Talcott Parson's conceptualization of gender distinction?

    b. In which areas of sociology the concept of gender was established?

    c. Why was the theoretical distinction between sex and gender called into question?

    d. Through which case study did Garfinkel challenge the natural distinction between males and females?

    e. How did the materialist feminists treat the concept of 'sex'?

    f. Which theorists have influenced the works of post-modern feminists?

    g. In which book does Judith Butler deconstruct the ideas of sex and gender?

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Unit 2 ❑ Gender, Sex, and Sexuality

Structure

2.1   Learning Objectives

After going through the sub units the students will be able to:

- ✓ To study the concepts of sex and gender as used in feminist works.
- ✓ To distinguish between the concepts of sex and gender and explain why these differences are important in understanding other concepts such as sexuality, sexual orientation, gender roles etc.
- ✓ To know about the concept of sexuality and the complexities surrounding it.
- ✓ To document the theoretical works related to the area of sexuality.
- ✓ Demonstrate how feminist sociological theory accounts for intersectionality between sex, gender, and sexuality.

2.2   Introduction

Concepts are terms used by social scientist as analytical categories to study society and social behaviour. Through the use of concepts, social scientists develop categories that act as aids in the scientific investigation of behaviour in the society. In gender studies there are several such concepts that provide the framework in the study of behaviour. For example, the concept of gender was first developed by Matthews in 1984 in her study of the construction of femininity. According to Mathews, the concept of gender gives recognition to the fact that every known society distinguishes between women and men. Therefore the term / concept of gender is a systematic way of understanding men and women socially and the patterning of relationships between them.[1] The concept of gender helps to study the differences in behaviour between men and women and to analyse the basis of these differences as basically biological or as social constructions by the society. In this unit some basic concepts will be studied. These concepts are sex, gender, and sexuality. In feminist writings and in discourses on Gender Studies, these concepts are basic to our understanding of social differences between men and women in the society. These concepts are useful as analytical categories.

2.3   Sex and Gender

'Sex' and 'gender' are concepts used by academicians, researchers and feminist writers to make a distinction between the biologically different 'male' and 'female' and between the socially different 'man' and 'woman'. Feminist sociologists suggest that there is a need to understand and distinguish between the two terms 'sex' and 'gender' in academic discourses and writings.

2.3.1   Sex

In a very broad way, 'sex' refers to the biological and physiological differences between male and female bodies. According to Ann Oakley (1985) the starting point for the study of sex differences is biology. Thus, when an infant is born, the infant comes to be labelled "boy" or "girl" depending on their sex. There is a biological difference between the sexes and most people are born (expect for a few ambiguous cases) as one sex or another. However, it has been argued that having been born into one sex or another, individuals are then socialized according to specific gender expectations and roles. Biological males learn to take on masculine roles. They are socialized to think and act in masculine ways. Biological females learn to take on feminine roles.[2] They are socialized to think and behave in feminine ways. As the

feminist writer Simone de Behaviour puts it "one is not born a man but becomes one", "one is not born a woman but becomes one".[3] At birth, besides the basic biological differences in the genitals and reproductive organs, there is not much difference between the male child and the female child. Society makes the differences between boy and girl through gender constructions. The biological differences between the sexes do to some extent explain certain psychological and socially constructed differences.

Criticizing this perspective, Judith Butler (1990) argues that sex is natural and comes first. Gender is perceived as a secondary construct which is imposed over the top of this natural distinction. "Sex", according to Butler (1990), itself becomes a social category and the distinction between "male" and "female" is a socially created one. Butler (1990) explains that "sex" though seen as biological is as much a product of society as it gender. The scientific, biological meaning and definition of sex is an important source of explanation to point out the basic differences in sex. Butler's concern is that 'biology' itself, as a scientific discipline, is a social system of representation and more important there are a number of differences between human beings, but only some become a basis for dividing human beings into distinct types. In other words, even if we accept that there are basic differences between the 'sexes' there is no logical or rational reason for use. This is the basis for dividing human beings into two groups or 'sexes'. Judith Butler (1990) further explains 'sex' is not only an analytical category, but also a normative category as it stipulates what men and women are as well as what men and women ought to be by formulating rules to regulate the behaviour of men and women.[4]

Much research in Sociology assumes that each person has one sex, one sexuality and one gender. Sometimes sex and gender are used interchangeably. Sometimes sex means sexuality. A woman is assumed to be feminine female, a man a masculine male. Research variables polarize sex as males and females; sexuality is polarized as homosexual and heterosexuals; gender is polarized as men and women. These polarizations do not take into account transvestites (a person, typically a man, who derives pleasure from dressing in clothes primarily associated with the opposite sex), transsexuals (a person who emotionally and psychologically feels that they belong to the opposite sex or a person a person who has undergone treatment in order to acquire the physical characteristics of the opposite sex), bisexuals (sexually attracted not exclusively to people of one particular gender; attracted to both men and women) and so on. In gender studies and women studies, the primary concern is on the way in which biological differences have been socially gendered in different ways by patriarchy. When infants are categorized as a particular sex, they are subject to a range of gendered behaviour through gendered socialization. This brings us to the question what is gender?

2.3.2 Gender

The concept of gender in feminist writings and other sociological discourses became popular in the early 1970. In simple terms, gender explains the social differences between men and women. According to Kamla Bhasin (2003: 1) gender is a conceptual category that refers to the socio-cultural definition of men and women. It is used as an analytical category to capture the ways in which societies differentiate between men and women and assign them social roles. The process through which every culture attaches values and assigns roles, responses and attributes to biologically female and male bodies is 'gendering'. 'Gendering', therefore is a social and cultural packaging that is done for girls and boys from birth onwards is[5]. Ann Oakley was one of the first few feminist scholars who used this concept of 'Gender' as a matter of culture that refers to social classification of men and women into masculine and feminine. The concept of 'Gender' substantiates the claim that differences between men and women are not biological but are social constructions of patriarchal society whereby men are described as superior to women. Therefore women become subordinate to men in the society. Ann Oakley in her book, Sex, *Gender and Society* written in 1972 says that in the Western culture women are made to play the roles of being mothers and wives because of their biology and it is believed that any effort to change the traditional roles of men and women in the society can disrupt the social fabric of the society. Oakley (1972) concludes that this view regarding the roles of men and women helps to support and maintain the patriarchal society. Simone de Beauvior has also explained that gender differences in the society make the man superior through his role as the bread winner and gives him a position of power in the society and family. Gender differences are set in hierarchal opposition such that men are superior and women are subordinate. Women's position is that of the 'other' and women are the continual outsiders.

Oakley says that there is a constant slippage between sex and gender; for example people are generally asked to declare their gender instead of sex on an application form. In feminist writings, there are references to the close association of gender with the biological or natural as inevitable. Recent writings on sex and gender suggest that feminism has relied too much on the polarization of sex and gender distinctions, showing that the meanings attached to sex differences are themselves socially constructed and changeable. It is dependent on the way we understand them and attach different consequences to these biological 'facts' within our own cultural historical context. At the same time there is an argument that biology does contribute to some behavioural characteristics. Moira Gatens (1996) states that evidence points "that the male body and the female body have quite different social value and significance and cannot but help have a marked effect on

male and female consciousness". Certain bodily events have huge significance especially it they occur only in one sex. She cites the example of menstruation. She points that masculinity is not valued, unless it is performed by biological male; hence the male body itself is imbued with the idea of supremacy in our culture.[6]

Butler (2004) has argued that gender is 'performative' – that is, people's gender is not thing-like, something inhering within the body, but is more like a continuous performance or a work in progress. This means that gender is an unstable social category that can accommodate many variations and can change quite radically. Butler's conception of performativity is perhaps most radical as she asserts that all identity concept are in fact that effects of institutional practices, discourses with multiple and diffuse points of origin . She further states that "sex / gender distinction suggests a radical discontinuity between sexed bodies and culturally constructed gender".[7] This approach questions the way gender identities are constructed. Individual do tend to challenge the way discourses establish and reinforce certain meanings and institutions such as that of compulsory heterosexuality. It is difficult to accept a rigid distinction between sex and gender as either wholly biological or singularly cultural. The debates on sex and gender will continue as some will argue in favour of biological differences while other feminist writers will favour the differences as socially constructed, supported by social institutions like religion, caste, family marriage and so on. The substantial shift in women's lives and expectations clearly explains that the category of feminine has been rather elastic. Women's roles and performances have changed drastically over the past few decades which have added dimensions to the debates by feminists and other on sex / gender distinctions.

2.3.3   Deconstructing Sex and Gender:

The distinction between Sex and gender was introduced to address the general tendency to attribute women's subordination to their anatomy. For ages it was commonly believed that the different characteristics, roles and status accorded to women and men in society are determined by biology (i.e. sex) and they are not changeable because they are natural. As the subordinated status of women and their bodies were naturalized, there was no need to address the gender inequalities and injustice that exist in society (Bhasin 2003: 1). In rethinking gender categories it is necessary to look at sex and gender as conceptually distinct. Each is socially constructed in different ways. Gender is an overarching category – a major social status that organizes almost all areas of social life. Therefore, bodies are gendered and are built into major social institutions of the society such as economy, ideology, polity, family and so on. For an individual, the components of gender are the sex category assigned at birth on the basis of the appearance of the genitalia. Each

category provides a gender identity, gendered sexual orientation, marital and procreative status, a gendered personality structure, gender beliefs and attitudes, gender at work and family roles. All these social components are supposed to be consistent with one's biology. The components may not line up neatly on one side of the binary divide. Without such critical exploration, sex differences can easily be considered as natural of what actually is socially constructed.[8]

The basic distinction between gender and sex is also rejected by some sociologists as misleading, implying that there is a biological core which culture then overlays with gender differences. Rather than seeing sex as biologically determined and gender as culturally learned, some now see both sex and gender as social constructions. It is not just gender identity, but the human body itself, that is the subject of shaping and altering social forces. People choose to construct and reconstruct their bodies almost as they please, from exercise, dieting, piercing and personal fashions to plastic surgery and sex-change operations. Thus, gender identities and sex differences are inextricably linked.[9]

Things to do:

Try to understand what the terms 'sex' and 'gender' imply and how these have been understood by feminist theorists? Find out the ways in which early feminist thinkers have differentiated between sex and gender. Explore how this distinction has been challenged later.

2.4   Sexuality

The concept of gender has become increasingly important in sociology, partly as a result of feminist research, but recent research on sexuality, including queer theory, has also made extensive use of the concept and in the process transformed it. Sexuality has become a dimension of life for each individual to explore and shape. If sexuality once was 'defined' in terms of heterosexuality and monogamy in the context of marital relations, there is now a growing acceptance of diverse forms of sexual behaviour and orientations in a broad variety of contexts (Giddens: 2009).

The terms 'sex' and 'sexual' are subject to constant confusion. 'Sexual' literally means 'of, pertaining to, or based on, sex or the sexes, or on the distinction of sexes; Perhaps it is not surprising that the confusion exists: 'sex' (biological maleness or femaleness) and 'sexuality' (behaviour related to copulation) are very closely connected. Behaviour is 'sexual' if it refers to the kind of relationship between male and female in which copulation is, or could be, or is imagined to be, a factor.

'Sexuality' describes the whole area of personality related to sexual behaviour (Oakley 1985: 99). If 'gender' is used to refer to all aspects of the distinction and division between male and female (as well as departures from the normative binary), the terms 'sex' and 'sexual' for that pertaining to the erotic. While 'sex' denotes carnal acts, 'sexuality' is a broader term referring to all erotically significant aspects of social life and social being, such as desires, practices, relationships and identities. This definition assumes fluidity, since what is sexual (erotic) is not fixed but depends on what is socially defined as such and these definitions are contextually and historically variable. Hence sexuality has no clear boundaries – what is sexual to one person in one context may not be to someone else or somewhere else (Jackson, 2006: 106).

Both male and female must have some propensity for sexual behaviour if copulation is to occur, but this propensity is usually held to be different in male and female. Although there exist analytical divisions between gender and sexuality, one can't neglect the empirical connection between the two. They are important because they exhibit the ways in which sexual practices, desires and identities are embedded within non-sexual social relations[10]. Like every other field, men show greater aggression in the sphere of sexuality. They usually initiate sexual contact and assume the dominant position in intercourse. The female's sexuality is supposed to lie in her receptiveness and this is not just a matter of her reproductive organ, it extends to the whole structure of feminine personality as dependent, passive, unaggressive and submissive. These stereotypes persist because most men and women conform to them in reality. Therefore the linkages between gender and sexuality are crucial for any analysis of heteronormativity since the 'regulation of gender has always been part of the work of heterosexist normativity' (Butler, 2004: 186).

Do you know?

Heteronormativity is the belief that heterosexuality, predicated on the gender binary, is the norm or default sexual orientation. It assumes that sexual and marital relations are most fitting between people of opposite sex. A "heteronormative" view therefore involves alignment of biological sex, sexuality, gender identity, and gender roles. The concept's roots are in Gayle Rubin's notion of the "sex/gender system" and Adrienne Rich's notion of compulsory heterosexuality.

2.4.1   Sexuality, religion and morality

According to Giddens (2009) attitudes towards sexual behaviour are not uniform across the world's societies, and even within a single country they undergo significant

changes throughout history. For example, Western attitudes to sexuality were, for nearly 2,000 years, moulded primarily by Christianity. Although different Christian sects and denominations have held divergent views about the proper place of sexuality in life, the dominant view of the Christian Church has been that all sexual behaviour is suspect except what is needed for reproduction. At some periods, this view produced an extreme prudishness in society at large. But at other times, many people ignored or reacted against the teachings of the Church, commonly engaging in practices (such as adultery) forbidden by religious authorities. The idea that sexual fulfilment can and should be sought only through marriage was rare. In the nineteenth century, religious presumptions about sexuality became partly replaced by medical ones. Most of the early writings by doctors about sexual behaviour, however, were as stern as the views of the Church. Some argued that any type of sexual activity unconnected with reproduction causes serious physical harm. In current times, traditional attitudes exist alongside much more liberal attitudes towards sexuality, which developed particularly strongly in the 1960s. Sexual attitudes have undoubtedly become more permissive over the past 30 years in most Western countries.

2.4.2 Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation concerns the direction of one's sexual or romantic attraction. The term 'sexual preference', which is sometimes incorrectly used instead of sexual orientation, is misleading and is to be avoided, since it implies that one's sexual or romantic attraction is entirely a matter of personal choice. Sexual orientation in all cultures results from a complex interplay of biological and social factors which are not yet fully understood. The most commonly found sexual orientation in all cultures is heterosexuality, a sexual or romantic attraction for persons of the opposite sex ('hetero' comes from the Greek word meaning 'other' or 'different'). Homosexuality involves the sexual or romantic attraction for persons of one's own sex. Today, the term gay is used to refer to male homosexuals, lesbian for female homosexuals, and 'bi' as shorthand for bisexuals, people who experience sexual or romantic attraction for persons of either sex. Orientation of sexual activities or feelings towards others of the same sex exists in all cultures. In some non-Western cultures, homosexual relations are accepted or even encouraged among certain groups. In many societies, however, homosexuality is not so openly accepted or practised. In the Western world, for example, sexuality is linked to individual identity, and the prevailing idea of a homosexual (or heterosexual) is of a person whose sexual orientation lies within themselves and is therefore a very personal matter, not something to be shared with many others.

> **Do you know?**
>
> Kenneth Plummer (1975), in a classic study, distinguished four types of homosexuality within modern Western culture. ***Casual homosexuality*** is a passing encounter that does not substantially structure a person's overall sexual life. ***Situated activities*** refer to circumstances in which homosexual acts are regularly carried out but do not become an individual's overriding preference. ***Personalized homosexuality*** refers to individuals who have a preference for homosexual activities but who are isolated from groups in which this is easily accepted. ***Homosexuality as a way of life*** refers to individuals who have 'come out' and have made associations with others of similar sexual tastes a key part of their lives. Such people usually belong to gay subcultures.

Foucault has shown that before the eighteenth century in Europe, the notion of a homosexual person seems barely to have existed (Foucault: 1979). The act of sodomy was denounced by Church authorities and by the law; in England and several other European countries, it was punishable by death. However, sodomy was not defined, specifically as a homosexual offence. It applied to relations between men and women, men and animals, as well as men among themselves.[11] The term 'homosexuality' was coined in the 1860s, and from then on, homosexuals were increasingly regarded as being a separate type of people with a particular sexual aberration.[12] Homosexuality became part of a 'medicalized' discourse; it was spoken of in clinical terms as a psychiatric disorder or a perversion, rather than a religious 'sin', Homosexuals, along with other 'deviants' such as paedophiles and transvestites, were seen as suffering from a biological pathology that threatened the wholesomeness of mainstream society. The death penalty for 'unnatural acts' was abolished in the United States after independence, and in European countries in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Until just a few decades ago, however, homosexuality remained a criminal activity in virtually all Western countries. The shift of homosexuals from the margins of society to the mainstream is not yet complete, but rapid progress has been seen over recent years.

Since heterosexuality is the norm for most people, a great deal of research has focused on why some people become homosexual. Some scholars argue that biological influences are the most important, predisposing certain people to become homosexual from birth.[13] Biological explanations for homosexuality have included differences in such things as brain characteristics of homosexuals.[14] These have also taken into consideration the impact on foetal development of the mother's in utero hormone production during pregnancy[15]. Such studies, which are based on small numbers of cases, give highly inconclusive (and highly controversial) results.[16] It is

virtually impossible to separate biological from early social influences in determining a person's sexual orientation.

Studies of twins hold some promise for understanding if there is any genetic basis for homosexuality, since identical twins share identical genes. In two related studies, Bailey and PilIard (1991; Bailey 1993) examined 167 pairs of brothers and 143 pairs of sisters, with each pair of siblings raised in the same family, in which at least one sibling defined him- or herself as homosexual.[17] Some of these pairs were identical twins (who share all genes), some were fraternal twins (who share some genes) and some were adoptive brothers or sisters (who share no genes). The researchers reasoned that if sexual orientation is determined entirely by biology, then all the identical twins should be homosexual, since their genetic make-up is identical. Among the fraternal twins, some pairs would be homosexual, since some genes are shared. The lowest rates of homosexuality were predicted for the adoptive brothers and sisters. The results of this study seem to show that homosexuality results from a combination of biological and social factors.

2.4.3   Biological and Social influence on Sexual Behaviour

Sexuality is a challenging area for sociologists to study because it has always been considered a highly personal subject. Until recently, much of what we have known about sexuality came from biologists, medical researchers and sexologists. There is clearly a biological component to sexuality, because female anatomy differs from that of the male. There also exists a biological imperative to reproduce; otherwise, the human species would become extinct (Giddens: 2009). Human sexual behaviour is meaningful as humans use and express their sexuality in a variety of ways. Therefore sexual activity is much more than biological. It is symbolic, reflecting who we are and the emotions we are experiencing. As we shall see, sexuality is far too complicated to be wholly attributable to biological traits. It must be understood in terms of the social meanings which humans ascribe to it.

Most people, in all societies, are heterosexual - they look to the other sex for emotional involvement and sexual pleasure. Heterosexuality in every society has historically been the basis of marriage and family. Yet there are many minority sexual tastes and inclinations too. Judith Lorber (1994) distinguishes as many as ten different sexual identities: straight (heterosexual) woman, straight man, lesbian woman, gay man, bisexual woman, bisexual man, transvestite woman (a woman who regularly dresses as a man), transvestite man (a man who regularly dresses as a woman), transsexual woman (a man who becomes a woman), and transsexual man (a woman who becomes a man). Sexual practices themselves are even more diverse. There are a number of possible sexual practices. For example, a man or woman can

have sexual relations with women, with men or with both. This can happen one at a time or with three or more participating. One can have sex with oneself (masturbation) or with no one (celibacy). One can have sexual relations with transsexuals or with people who erotically cross-dress, use pornography or sexual devices, practise sado-masochism (the erotic use of bondage and the inflicting of pain)' have sex with animals, and so on.[18]

In all societies there are sexual norms that approve of some practices while discouraging or condemning others. Members of a society learn these norms through socialization. Over the last few decades, for example, sexual norms in Western cultures have been linked to ideas of romantic love and family relationships. Such norms, however, vary widely between different cultures. Homosexuality is a case in point. Some cultures have either tolerated or actively encouraged homosexuality in certain contexts. Among the ancient Greeks, for instance, the love of men for boys was idealized as the highest form of sexual love. Accepted types of sexual behaviour also vary between cultures, which is one way we know that most sexual responses are learned rather than innate. The most extensive study was carried out nearly 60 years ago by Clellan Ford and Frank Beach (1951), who surveyed anthropological evidence from more than 200 societies.[19] Striking variations were found in what is regarded as 'natural' sexual behaviour and in norms of sexual attractiveness. In most cultures, norms of sexual attractiveness (held by both females and males) focus more on physical looks for women than for men, a situation that seems to be gradually changing in the West as women increasingly become active in spheres outside the home. The traits seen as most important in female beauty, however, differ greatly. In the modern West, a slim, small body is admired, while in other cultures a much more generous shape is regarded as most attractive. Sometimes certain body parts are not seen as a source of sexual stimulus, whereas in some societies great erotic significance is attached to them. Some societies place great store on the shape of the face, while others emphasize the shape and colour of the eyes or the size and form of the nose and lips.

2.5 Major Studies on Sexuality

Critical, feminist, gay and queer theorists, in seeking to denaturalize gender and sexuality, are generally committed to a social ontology. They do not, however, share a common ontology of the social since they have drawn on a wide range of often divergent perspectives – Marxism, phenomenology, ethnomethodology, interactionist sociology, psychoanalysis, poststructuralism and postmodernism – which focus on different aspects of gender and sexuality informed by differing

conceptualizations of the social.

Documenting the private practices concerning sexuality is challenging because people tend to open up only about public values regarding sexuality. The first major investigation of actual sexual behaviour was carried out by Alfred Kinsey in the United States in the 1940s and 1950s. In spite of facing condemnation from religious organizations, the newspapers and the congress, he eventually obtained sexual life histories of 18,000 people from white American population.[20] Surprisingly Kinsey's study revealed a shocking difference between the public expectations of sexual behaviour prevailing at that time and actual sexual conduct. The reason is that people are much more confident in talking about public values concerning sexuality than they are about private practices. Surveys of sexual behaviour are difficult to conduct because, until quite recently, sex was a taboo subject, not something to be discussed in either the public or the private realm. Sexuality still is seen as a purely personal matter and people are unwilling to discuss such an intimate subject with strangers. This may mean that those who are prepared to come forward to be interviewed are essentially a self-selected sample, which is therefore unrepresentative of the general population (Giddens: 2009).

The social stigma in relation to sexual matters has somewhat lessened since the 1960s when social movements associated with 'hippy' lifestyles and countercultural ideas of 'free love' sought to challenge the existing order of things including the prevalent sexual norms. The impact of this, however, must not be exaggerated. It was clear that some of the older norms relating to sex continued to exert an influence even after the movements of the 1960s got assimilated into mainstream society.

Many studies of sexual behaviour have taken the shape of attitude and behaviour surveys using postal questionnaires or face-to-face interviews. But evidence in this area can also be collected through the analysis and interpretation of documentary materials such as personal diaries, oral history, magazines, newspapers and other published and unpublished historical materials. Combining various research methods produce a richer understanding of changing forms of sexuality within societies. Lillian Rubin in a large scale survey (1990) interviewed 1,000 Americans between the ages of 13 and 48 in order to discover the changes in sexual behaviour and attitudes since the time Kinsey conducted his research. Her study revealed some significant developments. Sexual activity was typically beginning at a younger age than was characteristic of the previous generation and the sexual practices of teenagers tended to be as varied and comprehensive as those of adults. The double standard still hadn't gone away, but it ceased to be prevalent. One of the major changes was that women had come to expect, and actively pursue, sexual pleasure in relationships,

thus becoming not only the providers, but also receivers of sexual satisfaction. Although Rubin (1990) found that women were more sexually liberated than before, most men in the survey found such female assertiveness difficult to accept.[21] Therefore, this finding seems to contradict all that we have come to expect about gender relations. Men continue to dominate in most spheres and they are, in general, much more violent towards women than the other way round.

Things to do:

Explore the complexity of defining sexuality. Try to understand how religion had major impact on sexual practices. Figure out what sexual orientation means and explore the various kinds of sexual orientation. Find out how the norms surrounding sexuality vary across cultures and within one culture, across time. Analyse the ways in which sexuality is influenced by social and biological factors. Explore the various ways in which sexuality has been theorized.

The use of documentary materials to study changing forms of sexuality is well demonstrated in Dutch sociologist Cas Wouters's (2004) 'Sex and Manners', a comparative study of shifting gender relations and sexuality in England, Germany, the Netherlands and the USA.[22] Wouters studied books on 'good manners'. From the end of the nineteenth century to the end of the twentieth, particularly as these pertained to relationships between men and women and 'courting behaviour', the opportunities for and limitations on meetings and 'dating' between men and women. Mannerism Books on mannerism provide advice on how such meetings should be conducted, providing codes of manners on how to meet and behave in relations with 'the opposite sex'. The two studies reported here have many similarities. Both are concerned with changes in gender relations, norms of sexual behaviour alongside private and public attitudes towards sexuality. While Rubin's study tells us something of how people today feel about such changes and what impact they are having on contemporary lifestyles, Wouters's analysis of primary documents sets these contemporary findings into historical and comparative perspective. Bringing together the findings from studies using different methods, which also focus on different aspects of changing sexual behaviour, may give sociologists more confidence in their conclusions in this difficult research area.

2.6   Conclusion

In this unit, the concepts of 'sex', 'gender' and 'sexuality' have been analyzed and problematized. It has been discussed that the sex-gender system, as a concept, is not as simple or obvious as it may first appear. Sociologists have traditionally

distinguished between sex and gender. Sex refers to the biological differences between male and female bodies, while gender concerns the psychological, social and cultural differences between men and women. There is no conclusive evidence to suggest a biological basis to gender differences. This idea has been thoroughly challenged and sociologists now suggest that sex and gender are both socially constructed, and can be shaped and altered in various ways.

2.7   Summary

Gender roles, the relation of 'sex', 'gender' and sexuality with the body and the impossibility of clearly defining categories of 'sex' in scientific or biological terms lead us to think about the actual complexity of these concepts. A brief examination of Rubin's work and Butler's work on these related concepts also aims to approach the sex-gender binary from a critical perspective. We have learnt that while there is a biological component in human sexuality, most sexual behaviour seems to be learned rather than innate. Sexual practices vary widely between and within cultures. Most people in the world are heterosexual, but there are many minority sexual tastes and inclinations. Homosexuality seems to exist in all cultures and in recent years attitudes towards homosexuals have become more relaxed.

2.8   Questions

1. Answer in Detail:

    a. Discuss the relationship between 'sex' and 'gender'.

    b. Discuss the idea of sexual orientation and various types of it.

    c. What are the major works done around the subject of sexuality?

    d. How do the biological and social factors influence sexual behaviour?

2. Answer Briefly:

    a. What is the difference between sex and gender?

    b. How did Judith Butler challenge the sex-gender distinction?

    c. Why does Butler say that gender is performative?

    d. What are the reasons for confusion regarding the term 'sexuality' in sociology?

    e. What does sexuality mean?

    f. Describe the empirical connection between gender and sexuality.

    g. How is sexuality regulated by religious ideals?

3. Answer Very Briefly:

    a. Who developed the concept of gender first?

    b. Define the concept of 'sex'.

    c. What is gender?

    d. Who theorized the cultural construction of gender first?

    e. Define heterosexuality.

    f. Why is sexuality a very challenging research area in sociology?

    g. What is the name of the process through which members of a society learn about socially approved sexual norms and practices?

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2.10 End Notes

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Unit 3 ❑ Gender Stereotyping and Socialization

Structure

3.1 Learning Objectives

After going through the sub units the students will be able to:

    ✓ To understand the nature and implications of gender stereotypes.

✓ To understand the role of biology in creating gender differences.

✓ To know about the implications of gender stereotypes.

✓ To discuss how gender stereotypes facilitate gender expectations.

✓ To know about the mediums through which gender stereotypes perpetuate.

✓ To know about gender socialization and its agents.

✓ To know about the theories of gender socialization.

3.2   Introduction

"Women are from Venus, men are from Mars" is a phrase that is often used to explain observed differences in the way women and men think, feel, and act. It conveys the inevitability of such differences by suggesting that men and women originate from planets that are millions of miles apart, implying that they are as inherently different as they would be if they were separate species. While there is no denying that there are many differences between men and women, these differences, however, are captured in the stereotypical images of these groups. Stereotypes about the way men and women think and behave are widely shared, suggesting a kernel of truth. However, stereotypical expectations not only reflect existing differences, but also impact the way men and women define themselves and are treated by others. This unit explores the origins, nature, contents and implications of gender stereotypes and the role of gender socialization in reinforcing them. This unit reveals how gender differences are internalized by both men and women through the process of socialization and also examines the ways in which gender socialization contributes to the development and perpetuation of gender stereotypes by leading people to treat men and women differently.

3.3   The Nature of Gender Stereotypes

Stereotypes are a reflection of general expectations about members of particular social groups. The stereotypical perception that a particular feature characterizes members of a specific group, typically leads people to overemphasize differences between two genders and underestimate variations. Since gender is considered to be a primary feature of a person, people always tend to cluster individuals in terms of their gender even when this categorization has no relevance in a particular situation and has no informational benefits. Therefore, salient gender categorizations, when detected, seem relatively fixed, thus are easily polarized. This contributes to the formation and perpetuation of gender stereotypes and reinforces perceptions of differences between men and women.

3.4   Behavioural Gender Differences : The Role of Biology

Gender stereotypes reflect the primary importance people attach to task performance when assessing men and to social relationships when considering women. Assertiveness and performance are seen as indicators of greater agency in men. Warmth and care for others, on the other hand, are viewed as signs of greater communality in women.[1] Differences in the emphasis placed on agency versus care are, indeed, visible in the way men and women behave and the life choices they make. There also exists a clear segregation between two genders in terms of occupational roles; certain occupations (such as policing) are dominated by men, whereas other occupations (such as nursing) are dominated by women.[2] Women across different countries and cultures spend more time on household activities than men do, regardless of their employment status.

These observations of behavioural difference between men and women seem easily explainable by referring to inherent biological differences between them.[3] Indeed, the physical strength of men and the ability of women to bear children predispose them for different types of activities. Differences relating to hormonal levels can also impact behaviour. Accordingly, these gender differences are often seen as deeply rooted in evolution and hard-wired in the brain. However, this line of thought does not adequately represent current scientific insights. For instance, recent evidence suggests that there is no simple correlation between specific hormones and specific behaviour.[4] In fact, hormonal changes not only depend on gender but are also triggered by important life events and situational experiences. Furthermore, there is no evidence that the brains of men and women are wired differently. Similarly, a review of hundreds of studies on cognitive performance (e.g., math ability), personality and social behaviors (e.g., leadership), and psychological well-being (e.g., academic self-esteem) reveals more similarities than differences between men and women.[5] Thus, biology does not account for the far-reaching inferences people often make about essential differences between men and women.[6] Instead, research indicates that gender differences develop over the life span, due to the way boys and girls are raised and educated. But research evidence strongly indicates that the different societal roles and power positions of men as economic providers and women as homemakers, rather than biological distinctions between them, emphasize and enlarge initial differences. Social roles have been found to impact hormonal regulation, self-regulation, and social regulation, which ultimately elicit different thoughts, feelings, and behaviours in both men and women.[7]

3.5   The Implications of Gender Stereotypes

Gender stereotypes enable people to make quick estimates of how unknown individuals are likely to behave or when trying to understand how large groups of people generally differ from each other. Instead of evaluating individuals by their own merits, people mostly rely on group-based expectations. Gender stereotypes exaggerate the perceived implications of gender categorizations and seemingly justify the symbolic and social implications of gender for role differentiation and social inequality. Gender stereotypes are shared by women and men. There is overwhelming research evidence that reveals how gender-stereotypical expectations not only influence the perceived potential of men and women, but also the way abilities and performances of women and men are evaluated (Ellamar 2018: 279). These evaluative differences prompted by gender stereotypes can have significant consequences for the career development and income levels of men and women, which can accumulate into substantial gender inequalities in the course of a life span. This has been documented many times, for instance, in census data comparing the differential wages of men and women entering the labour market with equal qualifications and employed in similar job types[8]. Throughout their careers, women are less likely than men to be selected for promotions and prestigious positions because the work performance of women tends to be evaluated less favourably than the performance of men. However, mirroring higher expectations of men in general ability and task performance domains, we see that women are evaluated more favourably than men in terms of warmth, empathy, and altruism.

Thus, even though explicit attitudes toward men and women have become more egalitarian over the years—and, in many countries, legislation to enforce equal treatment, at the implicit level, gender stereotypes continue to shape our judgments and behaviours.[9] The power of implicit beliefs is also visible among parents with regard to the way they raise boys and girls. This often results in differential behaviour towards sons and daughters while disciplining them.[10] Thus, from a very early age, children are implicitly taught about gender stereotypes and reproduce them in their own beliefs and behaviours.[11]

3.6   Gender Stereotypes and Gendered Expectations

Across different domains, gender stereotypes implicitly impact the expectations we have about the qualities, priorities, and needs of individual men and women, as well as the standards to which we hold them. Gender stereotypes also implicitly affect the way we search for romantic partners and the qualities we seek in them. In

general, men don't intend to be romantically interested in women who are perceived to be more intelligent than them and seem to outsmart them.

Finally, parenthood also causes us to perceive men and women differently, with gender stereotypes implicitly guiding our judgment. When women become parents, we tend to assume that caring for their children will be their first priority and should make them less committed and ambitious at work. However, when men become fathers, this does not impact negatively on their perceived suitability as workers. These implicit expectations, even if unwarranted—impact the job and career opportunities that women and men receive.[12] Several studies have shown that mothers are less likely to be recommended for the job than women without children despite having identical qualifications and the lower perceived competence of mothers, causes them to be considered less suitable for promotion at work.[13] Therefore, it can be concluded that both women and men are subjected to implicit gender stereotypes in different ways.[14]

3.7 Mediums through which Stereotypes perpetuate

Perpetuation of the verbal accounts we provide and receive about the behaviours of others and ourselves also implicitly convey and reinforce gender-stereotypical expectations. Non-verbal communications, particularly body posture, may also implicitly convey and reinforce gender stereotypes. In public situations, men and women tend to adopt different body postures, with men displaying more expansive and open postures (arms and legs spread up or out, taking up physical space), whereas women are more likely to show closed and contractive postures (crossed arms and legs, squeezing in).[15] Childhood socialization about proper demeanour for girls and boys contribute to these differences. Open and expansive body postures signify dominance and high power, whereas closed and contractive body postures indicate submission and lack of power. Such postures not only convey information to others but also affect the way people perceive and present themselves.[16] Brief nonverbal displays affect neuroendocrine levels. Media representations also reinforce stereotypical expectations of men and women, for instance, by primarily showing men in expert roles and women in care-giving roles in advertisements, TV series, and news programs.[17] Likewise, media coverage of public figures focuses on the achievements of men, for instance, in sports or politics, while addressing the appearance or personal relationships of women. This happened, for instance, at the Wimbledon tennis tournament of 2016, when news reports elaborated on Serena Williams' tennis dress instead of her stellar play.

3.8   Gender Socialization

Gender socialization refers to the process of learning gender roles through social agencies such as family, school and mass media through which children internalize the social norms and expectations of their biological sex. In this way, gender differences are culturally reproduced through the ways in which men and women are socialized into different roles. Gender-differentiated toys and clothes and stereotypical roles in TV, film and video games are all examples of the cultural encouragement to conform to gender expectations. More recent studies argue that gender socialization is not a simple or one-way process. The fact that people can actively engage with it and can reject or modify expectations makes socialization inherently unstable and open to challenge. Gender socialization appears to be one of the most basic aspects of this large and complex process of gender categorizations. This concept is useful to reflect on the fact that children's realization that they are male or female tends to come at a fairly young age. People throughout the world recognize that there are different sex groups and they assign different roles and responsibilities to members of these groups, as well as different rewards and values (Stockhard 2006: 215). Gender stereotyping, therefore, is closely related to gender socialization.

> **Things to do:**
>
> Try to figure out what stereotypes imply and how they generate gendered expectations. Explore the various mediums through which gender stereotypes perpetuate in society.

3.8.1   Agents of Gender Socialization

Agents of socialization are the people, groups, and social institutions that enable children to become fully functioning members of society. These agents are interdependent and are often inconsistent in the gendered messages they send. In the following paragraphs, those agents that are the most influential in determining gender roles during primary socialization will be briefly discussed.

3.8.1.1 Family

The family is considered to be the most significant agent of socialization. Although social change has increased family diversity and created more opportunities for children to be influenced by other social institutions, the family continues to play the pivotal role in primary socialization. The family is responsible for shaping a child's personality, emerging identity, and self-esteem. Children gain their first values and attitudes, from the family. Gender roles are learnt first in the family and

then reinforced by other social institutions.

3.8.1.2 School

The next major agent of continuing socialization is education. The intimacy and spontaneity of the family and early childhood peer groups are replaced with a school setting in which children are evaluated impersonally with rewards based on academic success. School teachers, although are encouraged to treat boys and girls similarly, often inadvertently perpetuate gender stereotypes. For instance, girls are in their verbal but not mathematical abilities, and consequently, their self-esteem and achievement motivation decrease. Even textbooks encourage gender stereotypes by showing women and girls in a narrow range of roles.[18] On the contrary, boys are rewarded for their athletic skills. Functionalists emphasize the responsibility of schools to socialize children to eventually take on positions necessary to maintain society. Schools are expected to provide experiences that offer technical competence as well as the learning of values and norms appropriate to the culture. Most schools, however, socialize children into acquiring one set of values to the exclusion of others. Since boys are expected to take up the role of a breadwinner, they are taught the value of competitiveness and to fill domestic roles, girls need to be taught the value of nurturance.[19]

3.8.1.3 Television

Television is a commanding source of gender socialization because of the prolonged period of time a child may spend watching TV. Watching television strengthens stereotyped gender views because television portrays established standards of behaviour and creates role models for people, and communicates expectations about every aspect of social life. It has been noticed that gender role portrayals in shows that are deemed acceptable for children are highly stereotyped and children rely on television to learn about gender and sexuality. When television images are reinforced by the other mass media, such as movies, magazines, and popular songs, the impact on socialization becomes profound.

3.9   Theories of Gender Socialization

The theories used to analyze gender socialization were primarily developed to deal with socialization in general. All theories of gender socialization focus on primary socialization and how children learn gender identity, when they become aware that the two sexes (male and female) behave differently. Gender socialization, like socialization in general, is mediated through a number of important elements, such as biology, personality, social interaction context, and the social institutions.

Consequently, different theories give different weight to each element.

3.9.1   Biology and Gender Socialization

In recent years sociologists and other scientists have come to acknowledge the complex relationships between biological, psychological, environmental, and social factors in individuals' lives and development. It has often been suggested that infants are not like clean slate on which "society" simply writes a message. Instead, children are genetically prepared to interact with others and predisposed to exhibit certain behavioural tendencies. For instance, a growing body of literature that have reported data on identical twins, some of whom have been raised together and some apart, document the very large role of genetic background in explaining individuals' personality traits, health, history of mental illness, and even social and political attitudes.[20] Humans also appear to be biologically "programmed" to respond to others in a social manner, to learn language and to interact with others in their environment.[21] At the same time, research increasingly reveals the ways in which social experiences influence biological characteristics and capabilities.

Since socialization refers to the way individuals come to develop an idea of their roles within a society, it is logical to posit that socialization necessarily involves an interplay between biological and social factors (Stockhard 2006: 216). Therefore, biological factors are involved, to at least some extent, in gender socialization. Males and females experience different exposure to hormones prenatally, again at adolescence, and during adulthood. Although evidence is far from complete, data from studies, based on both animal and human populations, indicate that variations in brain structure resulting from these different hormonal dosages can account for some behavioural differences between males and females, such as average levels of aggressiveness and nurturance.[22] Even with such biological influences, many, if not most, aspects of gendered behaviour probably result from social influences. This can be seen most clearly in the ways in individuals vary in the extent to which they adhere to gender roles and exhibit gender typed behaviours. The nature of these gender roles and gender appropriate behaviours has changed over time and can vary from one society to another (Stockhard 2006: 217).

3.9.2   Social Learning Theory

The broad area of social learning theory developed from the tradition of stimulus-response theory or behaviourism. For many years work in this area focused on reinforcements, suggesting that children develop sex-typed behaviours because their parents reinforce activities that conform to expectations for their sex group and do not reinforce those that do not conform. Because children spend so much of

their early years within the family, much of the research in this area focused on parent-child interactions. This work has produced relatively little support for the notion that differential reinforcement can account for children's gender-typed behaviour.[23]

By the 1960s, the social learning tradition had broadened to include the notion of modelling, suggesting that children develop sex-typed behaviours because they choose to model or copy behaviours of other males or females.[24] Note that while the notion of reinforcement focuses on how agents of socialization, such as parents, influence children's behaviours, the idea of modelling tends to focus on the active role of the targets of socialization and their ability to imitate the actions of specific agents. As with the idea of reinforcement, relatively little support has been found for the importance of modelling in the development of gender identity or adherence to gender roles.

3.9.3   Cognitive Developmental Theory

Cognitive developmental theory builds on the research of Jean Piaget and his finding that children gradually develop more complex ways of interacting with others and understanding the world around them. Lawrence Kohlberg (1966) extended Piaget's notions by applying them to gender socialization, suggesting that children's views of appropriate gender roles also change as they grow older, reflecting their changing cognitive development. Kohlberg and others working within this paradigm have documented an increasing cognitive flexibility and complexity of children's views of gender roles with age.[25]

Cognitive developmental theory can be seen as providing two important theoretical advances over social learning theory. First, it seriously incorporates an understanding of the active role of the child and the importance of cognitive processing and understanding in the socialization process. Second, it includes an understanding of developmental changes in the process of gender socialization and specifically describes how children's interpretations and understandings of gender alter and change as their cognitive capabilities become more developed and complex (Stockhard 218).

Certain technical elements of cognitive developmental theory, however, have not withstood empirical test. Specifically, Kohlberg (1966) hypothesized that the child's active involvement in and desire to develop gender-typed behaviours becomes most important once a child has developed a strong notion of gender constancy, the understanding that one is either a boy or a girl and that this categorization will not change. Interestingly enough, however, a number of gender differences, specifically

differences in choices of toys and playmates, appear long before the age at which cognitive developmental theory would expect.

In recent years some scholars have turned to trying to understand these very early aspects of gender socialization.

3.9.4   Gender Schemas and Cognitive Learning Theories:

Recent approaches to understanding gender socialization have often incorporated the notion of schemas, cognitive structures or frameworks that people use to organize and process new knowledge and information they encounter. Schemas provide an efficient way to help individuals maintain consistency and predictability in new situations. Gender schemas are cognitive schemas that are used to organize information on the basis of gender categories. Theorists who use this approach suggest that children develop increasingly more elaborate gender schemas as they develop their gender identity and their understanding of gender roles. As children come across information or new situations pertaining to gender they tend to use their gender schemas as a guide for interpreting this information, a way to simplify information and decisions. Carol Lynn Martin and Charles Halvorsen (1981, 1987) have suggested that there are two types of gender schemas based on an "in-group/out-group" model. Children categorize information based on whether it involves their own sex group (the in-group) or the other (the out-group) and then use this categorization to help choose toys and behaviours and decide whether to attend to new information.[26]

It would be useful to mention that studies of both children and adults suggest that gender schemas are very complex and multidimensional and that children acquire gender schemas in a variety of ways. The notion of gender schemas does not refute other theories of gender socialization, but can potentially help us understand more about the influence of reinforcement, modelling, and cognitive development.[27]

3.9.5   Peer Group Interactions and Culture Of Childhood

One of the earliest manifestations of gender typed behaviour is the tendency for boys and girls to prefer different toys and playmates of the same sex. Sociologists have studied the culture of peer groups to understand more about why boys and girls prefer to associate with others of the same sex and how these associations influence gender socialization. When examining peer groups, scholars have found that boys and girls tend to behave differently depending upon whether they are with other boys, other girls, a mixed-sex peer group, or with adults. Many studies have demonstrated that children spontaneously prefer to play with others of the same sex, when they are not under pressure to make choices. While situations can be structured in which boys and girls interact comfortably together, the general preference for

gender-segregated interactions appears very difficult to change and do not seem to be related to individual level measures of various aspects of masculinity and femininity. Children do maintain cross-sex friendships, but they tend to occur within their homes or neighbourhoods and are often hidden from the larger peer group.[28]

In general, children's activities may be seen as involving a "culture of childhood," a pattern of games, activities, roles, norms, and even jokes and folklore that are passed on from generation to generation of children with little, if any, active involvement by adults. Most important for our purposes, the cultural elements, such as norms, values, and the material elements such as toys and playthings, are highly gender typed. In examining children's interactions, scholars have tried to determine what distinguishes the interactions of groups of boys and groups of girls and have found differences in both games and activities as well as interactional styles (Stockhard 2006: 221). Boys tend to play in larger groups, in rougher activities, and to take up more space when they play. Girls tend to form close, more intimate friendships with one or two other girls and are more likely to express agreements with others, allow others to have a turn in speaking, and to acknowledge points made by others.

3.9.6 Psychoanalytic Theory

It is important to note that other theories used to understand gender socialization can be used to account for processes within peer groups. Psychoanalytic theory directly addresses the issue of gender specific interactive and play styles of children. Psychoanalysis was founded by Sigmund Freud in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. From the very early years of the discipline Freud and his students and followers debated the nature of gender socialization and how childhood experiences influence boys' and girls' ideas about themselves, their gender, and sexuality. Two general perspectives developed. One, based on Freud's own writing, emphasized the centrality of the Oedipus complex and its resolution to differences in male and female development. According to Freud, girls, unlike boys, could never fully resolve the Oedipus complex and were fated to have a weaker superego, Freud's term for the conscience. Even in Freud's lifetime this view was sharply attacked and many of Freud's students developed an alternative perspective, which has come to be accepted by most contemporary psychoanalysts based on their clinical experience.

Writers in this second perspective emphasize the importance of the fact that because, children, both boys and girls, during their early years, develop strong relationships with their mother (or other female caretaker, their first identification is feminine, rather than masculine. As children become older and more independent

they need to lessen the very strong ties that they had with the mother figure during infancy. They also learn what it means to be a male or a female. For a girl, this is relatively easy because the mother was the first person with whom she identified. However, psychoanalytic theorists suggest, achieving gender identity is harder for a boy because in the process he must reject his first identity as feminine. In addition, because fathers and other men often are not such a central part of young boys' lives as are mothers and other women, it may be hard to develop a strong idea of just what masculinity involves. Because the boy knows most intimately what is feminine, he comes to define masculinity as being "not-feminine". To use psychoanalytic terms, he represses the feminine identification developed in his early relationship with the mother. As a result, boys' gender identity tends to be somewhat more tenuous than girls' gender identity.[29]

The sociologist Talcott Parsons (1955, 1970) suggested that the process that psychoanalytic theorists describe as "identification" could actually be seen as learning to play a social role with another person in complementary, reciprocal role interactions. In these terms, children first learn to play the role of child, which is complementary to the role of mother. This role is not gender typed, as both boy and girl infants learn to feel loved and nurtured as well as to nurture others. As children grow older, their role relationships expand and they gradually develop more independence, loosening this first tie with the mother. At the same time, they become more aware of their identity as a boy or a girl and begin to learn roles associated with this gender identity.[30]

Do you know?

Freud first proposed the concept of the oedipal complex in his 1899 book *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Freud named the complex after the character in Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* who accidentally kills his father and marries his mother. The Oedipus complex refers to the child's desire for sexual involvement with the opposite sex parent, particularly a boy's erotic attention to his mother. According to Freud, the boy unconsciously wishes to possess his mother and replace his father, who the child views as a rival for the mother's affections. Freud believed that it had an influence over a child's behaviour. Freud suggested that the Oedipus complex played an important role in the phallic stage of psychosexual development between the ages of three and five. He also believed that successful completion of this stage involved identifying with the same-sex parent which ultimately would lead to developing a mature sexual identity.

Both the traditional psychoanalytic view and the more sociological role-oriented version of this perspective suggest that the motives underlying boys' strong

preferences for gender-segregated play groups and their avoidance of female-typed activities can be traced to these early experiences in the family and, especially, the virtually universal early relationship between infants and a mother or other female caretaker. Building on this premise, these theorists suggest that when fathers are more involved in early child rearing, boys would be less likely to exhibit signs of "compulsive masculinity" and, in adulthood, would be less likely to promote strong patterns of gender stratification (e.g., Chodorow, 1974, 1978, 1989; Johnson, 1988).

> **Things to do:**
>
> Try to understand how stereotypes persist through the process of Socialization. Explore the various mediums of socializations. Critically examine the different theories of approaching gender socialization.

3.10 Conclusion

We use stereotypes to make sense of the world. Our stereotypical expectations prompt us to identify, interpret, and remember the things we see, hear, and learn about others.[31] The verbal accounts we provide and receive about the behaviors of others and ourselves also implicitly convey and reinforce gender-stereotypical expectations (Ellemers 2018: 285). By determining what captures our attention, what information seems valuable, and what should be remembered, stereotypes generally form a very strong and powerful filter through which we process objective information about men and women.[32] Individuals who clearly disconfirm stereotypical expectations tend to be devalued. We decide that they are not representative for their gender group rather than revising stereotypical expectations. Gender stereotypes thus not only capture how we expect men and women to behave, but also communicate how we think they should behave.[33] Indeed, women who behave in line with the stereotype are evaluated more positively than women who seem to challenge gender-stereotypical expectations.[34] For the reasons discussed above, gender stereotypes perform all of these functions even more consistently and pervasively than stereotypes about other groups. Stereotypes are resilient to change because information revealing that they no longer form an adequate means to characterize the group is likely to be ignored, discounted, or forgotten.[35]

3.11 Summary

Understandings of gender socialization have advanced a great deal over the last few decades. Contemporary theories emphasize the importance of the child's

role in developing a gender identity and understanding of gender roles. Contemporary understandings of gender socialization also highlight the ways in which gender development is complex and multidimensional. This complexity suggests that we would be well served by both theory and research that attempt to understand the common ground and linkages between the various theoretical perspectives and research traditions used in this field.

3.12 Questions

1. Answer in Detail:

    a. Discuss the concept of gender stereotypes and the implications of it for social lives of both men and women.

    b. Discuss the various agents of socialization in detail.

    c. Critically examine the major theories of gender socialization.

2. Answer Briefly:

    a. Through which mediums do stereotypes perpetuate?

    b. What is gender socialization?

    c. What are the agents of gender socialization?

    d. What is the significance of schools as an agent of gender socialization?

    e. How does television perpetuate gender stereotypes?

    f. What are the theoretical advances provided by congnitive development theory of gender socialization?

    g. What does the concept of 'identification' mean in psychoanalytic theory of gender socialization?

    h. What is 'oedipus complex'?

3. Answer Very Briefly:

    a. What is the idea of modelling in social learning theory of gender socialization

    b. What are the factors of gender socialization?

    c. Which theorist extended Piaget's research to apply to the study of gender socialization?

    d. What are gender schemas in cognitive learning theory of gender socialization?

    e. What is the crux of cognitive learning theory?

    f. What is the earliest manifestation of gender typed behaviour?

g. Define 'culture of childhood'.

h. Who is the founder of modern psychoanalysis?

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Unit 4 ❑ Gender in Modern Bengali Literature: Tagore and Mahasweta Devi

Structure

4.1 Learning Objectives

After going through the unit the students will be able to:

- ✓ To learn about the women characters from the writings of Rabindranath Tagore and Mahasweta Devi.

- ✓ To know about how these writers have depicted the exiting gender inequalities in society.

- ✓ To understand how the female protagonists of the works of these two writers engage with, subvert, challenge and at times circumvent societal norms and sanctions.

- ✓ To understand how different forms of structural inequality go hand in hand with gender inequality through the works of Mahasweta Devi.

- ✓ To understand how women were oppressed within their families in both upper and lower caste societies.

- ✓ To understand the nature of violence against women of lower castes.

4.2   Introduction

This unit tries to explore the ways in which gender inequality has been addressed in modern Bengali Literature. This unit focuses particularly on the works of two of the greatest writers of modern times, namely, Rabindranath Tagore and Mahasweta Devi with the intent of analysing how gender relations have been portrayed in their works. The purpose would be to locate the feminist consciousness in the works of these two writers. Rabindranath Tagore's writings, his novels in particular, portrayed women's experience with sensitivity and documented the plight of women in a way that was quite rare for his time. Set in the Nineteenth Century Colonial Bengal, Tagore's writings portray the problems within Hindu custom and patriarchy, the uproar of spiritual and intellectual tension between Bengali Renaissance and tradition marked by the emergence of Colonial education and lives of Bengali, Hindu women in the juncture of all these social events. Controversial issues such as remarriage of Hindu window, the need for female education, their emancipation and the oppression caused through social injustice have found significant place in his writing. Thus his writings are valuable documents of societal changes in its relation to larger social context of gender, nation, and politics.

Mahasweta Devi, on the other hand, plays the diversified roles of a fiction writer, a vivid narrator, an interesting dramatist, a true historian and a dynamic social activist and has given voice to the underprivileged through her creative works, exposing diversified forms of exploitation prevailing in the country. She adopts literature as social criticism which attacks the social order where the predominant evils of society are embedded. Her sympathetic portrayal of the subjugation of women and consequent revolt invariably brings out the feminist dimension of her work. She doesn't, however, regard women as a separate entity, but treats their subordination as part of wider systems of class and caste oppression. The women characters in her works are much stronger in comparison to men.

4.3   The Portrayal of Women in Tagore's Works

Tagore's female characters come from diverse social settings and are inspirational as they struggle for space and autonomy. Through his works, Tagore is seen to break the false conventions of his society and thus liberating women from their bondages. In his writings he intended to portray social change through his depiction of women as the most significant transformative factor. This section will focus on the representation of women and issues which are integral to the lives of women in light of some of the writings of Tagore. Rabindranath Tagore has shown a remarkable understanding of female mind and gave ample space to women and their lives and narratives in his novels, short stories and plays. Women from different social class, caste and character are present in his works. Tagore talks about the problems with Hindu patriarchy that facilitates the subjugation of women in terms of power, education, position etc. R.K.Gupta (1993: 4), in his article, Feminism and Modern Indian Literature has said that the traditional literary interpretation of women's role and status in society began to be seriously questioned in Nineteenth century Hindu Indian society. Set in the nineteenth century, most of Tagore's works and their female characters symbolize this changing dynamic. Through his long literary career Tagore explored woman as the most creative transformative factor within social life (Mandhub 2015: 1).

The plight of women in Hindu society, caused by evil practices such as dowry, early marriage, domestic violence and passivity, has been depicted in his stories and novels. In the midst of these social obstructions, female education is shown as a greater need in most of his writings. *Nashtaneer* or *The Broken Nest*, is a good example of that. Then, in the novel *Chokher Bali*, *The Sand of Eye,* Tagore depicts the complexities of conjugal relationship and illicit desires. It demonstrates the wrong treatments and dishonesty of a husband towards his naive and almost uneducated wife who never suspects his betrayal.

In most of the stories and novels, Tagore has shown the possibilities women have of which they themselves are generally kept unaware. His works show how women were denied autonomy and in turn the possibility of their personal growth was also demolished. In *The Broken Nest*, we can see the male ego and false sense of pride is hurt when they come in touch with a woman who is not naive and unintelligible. Tagore has pointed out women's loneliness and imprisonment as a result of the monotonous life of domesticity and economic reliability. In the short fiction, *The Wife's Letter*, we find Mrinal fighting for her suppressed identity. This transformation from being a wife to a male linage to an independent woman does not happen all on a sudden. Tagore gives an extremely plausible explanation in

which he records Mrinal's reaction through her own voice and her coming out of her marital bond which is symbolic in many sense. Not only Mrinal comes out of the family or the lane or the house in particular, she comes out of the long sustained cycle of patriarchy as well.

In the following section it will be analysed how Rabindranath Tagore's popular novel, *The Sand of Eye*, novel, *The Broken Nest*, and short stories, *The Wife's Letter* and *Punishment* portray the problems within the nineteenth century colonial Bengali Hindu patriarchal society which affected the lives of Bengali, Hindu women in the juncture of controversial issues such as remarriage of Hindu window, co-cremation, the need for female education, their emancipation and the oppression and identity crisis.

4.3.1 The Broken Nest as an examination of desire, stigma and isolation of women

In *The Broken Nest* (Nashtaneer) we can see the female character Charulata being a complete facilitated woman with a good, educated, rich and supportive husband, Bhupati.[1] Though being unaffected by all kind of traditional sufferings, the relationship between the husband and wife could not hold its value till the last and the nest turned out to be a Broken nest. In this novella, we can see a triangle Relationship among Charu her husband, Bhupati and brother-in – law, Amol. The friendship between Charu and Amol is stigmatized at one point when Charu is awakened and she becomes conscious of her strong affection towards Amol. This awakening creates problems for both of them and for the marriage as well. But what Tagore explores is not the stigma rather what makes Charu ruin her marital bliss, her nest or neer.

Charu was taken to be a girl of adoration to Bhupati because of their age gap and early marriage. He even could not see that his little wife got maturity and now she wants to be loved and cared like a mature wife. She wants time and recognition. To quote Tagore, in this a moment of self awareness, he identified that, Charu needs a companion; the poor thing has nothing to occupy her all day. He could not even understand that Charu needs him too. He always remained busy with his profession and showed less interest in Charu's works comparing to Amol. On the other hand, because of the absence of proper attention, love and time from the husband, Charu slowly creates a substitute emotional relation with Amol which she for the most part remains unaware.

The patriarchal society never tries to understand why the female characters or Charu was emotional towards Amol and why she cared so much for him that impacted

her her marriage with a seemingly perfect husband Bhupati. In all cases of stigmatized relations the blame is bestowed upon woman without giving it a good thought. Even in the course of *The Broken Nest*, we see Charu's isolation and alienation from her home and her marriage while Amol remains in the safer realm. The study on feminism remains incomplete if we ignore male characters, their perspectives and deeds. In the twentieth century, male used to take female as an ornament of the house. In *The Broken Nest*, Bhupati is represented as an example of obtuse and self centered man who himself destroyed everything. In case of Amol, we can see the reflection of male chauvinism in him. He is seen unable to accept the writing capability of Charu and her appreciation. Amol tried to act as a good friend and well wisher but after a certain time when Charulata came out with her talent of writing literature; he could not bear to see a woman with success.

4.3.2 "The Wife's Letter" and "Punishment": Portrayal the acts of subversions of patriarchy

The Wife's Letter is a wonderful short story written in epistolary form told from the perceptive of a self educated married woman Mrinal who examines her position and her identity within and without her marriage. Mrinal opens the narrative through a letter addressed to her husband explaning and making statement on the cause of her departure from her marriage which was considered as a sacred realm for women. Unlike the other female characters from Tagore's short stories, Mrinal is shown to have intense power and self-confidence in choosing own fate and identity. She is portrayed as an educated woman whose way of thinking and judgments are very different against gender subjugation and violence.[2] This is the reason for which women education in Nineteenth century was not appreciated. Education for women was long abhorred and discouraged as it was thought to ruin martial harmony.

In the very beginning, we have seen Mrinal to get married only for her beauty but not for her talent and intelligence. In the long term of her relationship with her husband and in laws, there is a huge gap between their thoughts and logics. As she had no child to bear and she is unable to bear one, there is a maternity need in her and when she gets Bindu as a submissive and violated girl, her motherhood and womanhood upraises. All the thoughts, logics and questions that Mrinal dealt with has nothing to do with her husband as he never tried to understand her. The starting and end of the letter clarifies all these. In the beginning, Mrinal stated "To Thine Auspicious Lotus-Feet" but when she end describing all her sufferings, humiliation and disagreement with the family, she announces her leave. The decision of breaking the relationship down, she ends with saying she has been removed from the Shelter of her husband's feet. Girls under Hindu Patriarchal domination at that time could

only have the identity of their husband. Husband's house was supposed to be their own house and they were always meant to abide by the decisions of their husbands and in- laws.

Mrinalini's letter to her husband was a result of her sufferings, submissiveness in the in laws house for years. With contravening all the relationship with her husband, Mrinal clarified her need to write a letter to the husband which is an indicator of the gap between the two of them. She was such a disgust to her husband and in laws that she risked her only identity of being a married woman and came out of the shelter. Mrinal opted for going on a pilgrimage to Puri while her husband was back in Kolkata, doing his office work. She also stated that the letter is not from their daughter- in- law but from a woman who has a self-governing relation with the world and its initiator.

Tagore also wonderfully portrayed female homosociality through the relationship shared by Mrinal and Bindu. It is the relation of emotion and identity. The arrival of Bindu actually gives a new way to Mrinal to think out of the boundary of her in laws. With the hide and seek of valuation, beauty and frustration, Mrinal finally declares the death of her relationship with her husband. The death of Bindu makes her independent of all sorts of relationships and through it, she finds her eternity.

In the short story *Punishment,* Tagore talks about the disgraceful condition of women who have been the perpetual victim of gender violence and exclusion. The whole story reflects how women in India are getting victimized by the male members in their day to day life. Through this story, Tagore is questioning the uneven social structure, customs and husband- wife relation. Tagore's Punishment undoubtedly reflects the segregation of women from the main stream society. The man-women relationship is socially constructed by the manipulation of power and the force of domination. The characters, Radha and Chandara are signified as the victim of male supremacy in the cast system of rural Bengal. These two women argue with one another and always rely on the decisions of their husbands. This shows the traditional beliefs and hegemonies of these women and how they push own selves unknowingly towards the control of patriarchal society. Wives are cohaidered so trivial to the male that only for the failure of giving food, Dukhiram easily plunged his knife into Radha's head.Female or wives are just like optional beings or the other sex who are only the object to control and use. The most surprising role is played by Chidam who tried to save his brother by accusing his wife as the executioner of Radha. His pretention to care for Chandara is nothing but the exploitation of the value of women. With that he also abused his duties towards his wife while he took shocking decision for her just to save his brother.[3]

After hearing to her husband, Chandara felt very helpless and surrenders herself modestly. What remains uncanny and concealed is her state of mind as she pushes herself towards the gallows calling it her last bond. Chandara was so shocked, exhausted and disgust that she confessed that she killed her. May be, this was Chandara's escapism from the brutal male dominated household and society. She understood that only death can give her the superiority in her life and can free her from this world of unequal power relation and counterfeit traditional bond.

4.3.3 Defiance of Social Sanctions: Reflection from the novel *The Sand of Eye*

Choker Bali or *The Sand of Eye* is a novel by Tagore published in the early twentieth century where he represented the social condition, clashes in conjugal life and perplexity of human psychology. The whole story centres around three main characters: Binodini, Mahendra and his wife Ashalata. At the very beginning of the novel, we can see Binodini as a well educated girl and whom Mahendra's mother, Rajlakshmi chose for her son. She knew that Binodini's thoughts or choices will get more preferences to Mahendra. It was an irony of fate that Mahendra refused to marry her and Binodini got married to an elderly person and became a widow at a very early age. In a society where girls were like burden, Tagore's Binodini was a painstaking portrayal of Binodini which highlights the social restrictions imposed on widows. Binodini was deprived of all rights, economy, support, care, position as well as love. Binodini is, however, reluctant to accept her fate and she has passion for life and lustful desires. She also desires a family and motherhood. When she saw Asha, an uneducated woman having all this facilities, in her mind, she knew that she had all the ability to have the position of Asha and unintentionally started to feel envious of her. Gradually she and Mahendra got engaged in an illicit affair. At the end, however, her spiritual thoughts got more priority before her desires and needs. With the criticism of the society, she was clear that her desires were wrong and they could never be accepted by the society and that's why, at last, she repented and left for Kashi at last. She found freedom in her retreat.[4]

The other female character, Asha is portrayed as a very naive woman throughout the novel. She implicitly provokes Mahendra to meet with Binodini which proved adequate to ruin her marriage. Unable to bear with her husband's illicit affair with her friend, Binodini, she left for Kashi too. Although she forgave Mahendra towards the end, she doesn't accept him back. The ending of the novel depicted Asha as more critical character and I believe Tagore intentionally did it to represent the power of a woman when she is broken and cheated; how a sudden occurrence can divert a woman from innocence to maturity. Her respect died and she chose the way

of achieving freedom from the burden of marital bond. Tagore has shown the power of a woman through forgiving the guilty and choosing own identity by letting go all the wrong and misdeeds. From the beginning to the middle, Binodini is characterized as a very tough and confident woman. The actions of Binodini might seem to be indulgent and immoral for a widow.

Things to do

Read the stories and novels cited in the unit and crtitically engage with them. Try to analyse how Tagore addressed the inferior status of women in 19th century Bengal. How did the Tagorean heroines challenge societal ideals?

4.4   Feminism in Mahasweta Devi's Stories

Mahasweta Devi is one of India's foremost writers. Her trenchant and powerful fictions have won her the recognitions in the form of Sahitya Academy Award (1979), Jnanpith award (1996), Ramon Magasaysay award (1996) and several other literary honours. She was also awarded Padmasree in 1986 for her activism among the dispossessed tribal communities. She is scrupulous in her consideration towards women and documents moments of the collective struggle in which men and women join together when their condition of work or education suffer from gender and class discrimination. Her first novel 'Nati' was published in 1957.

4.4.1   Intersection of Caste-class discrimination and gender discrimination in Devi's Stories

Among the underprivileged working class women, oppression takes place mainly because of their poverty. These marginalized women are subject to exploitation as they find no means of survival. Devi examines these women who have been segregated by society and thus, forcefully given an inferior position in the social strata.

Do You Know?

Mahasweta Devi raised her voice several times against the discrimination suffered by tribal people in India. Devi's 1977 novel *Aranyer Adhikar* (Right to the Forest) was about the life of Birsa Munda. And in June 2016, consequent to Devi's activism, the Jharkhand State Government finally saw to the removal of the manacles from the figure of Munda, which had been part of the commemorative sculpture of the notable young tribal leader due to its having been based on a photograph dating from the era of British rule.

Mahasweta Devi has brought her experences of working among tribal, particularly children, in Bihar, West Bengal, Gujrat, and Jharkhand to her works. Mahasweta Devi certainly does not ignore gender problem but rather the class gets prioritized in relation to gender. It is true that in novels like *Rudali* and *The Glory of Sri Sri Ganesh,*[5] Even in her short story *Behind the Bodice*, the author shows how women belonging to lower castes and classes as well as tribal women become victims of gender oppression because of their caste and poverty. Her idea of women as a gendered subaltern looms large in Rudali, *Douloti the Bountiful*[6] and *The Hunt.*[7] In *Rudali*, she portrays a low caste Ganju woman as a victim and a potentially subversive agent in a phallocentric Brahmanical patriarchy.[8] In *Douloti the Bountiful* and *The Hunt* she focuses on the sexual exploitation of the tribal women who are used and abused because they are poor. Discarded by society due to their caste and deprived of food and shelter, these women are subject to exploitation and resort to various means of survival.

It is the double oppression of women in the form of class/caste and gender which Mahasweta Devi's writings are concerned with. In some cases, oppression may be faced by women purely because of their gender as seen in Sujata (in *Mother of 1084*) and Pallavi Singh (in *The Glory of Sri Sri Ganesh*) but in most cases, the author fuses the triadic pattern of oppression-caste, class and gender where women suffer oppression because they are women, secondly because they are born into a lower caste or a tribal and thirdly because of their class.But Mahasweta Devi's women are powerful and strong individuals who are passive in the initial stage but retort aggressively against oppression later. Devi defends and protects them at every point be it a privileged woman or a female outcast. Characters like Dulan Ganju of *Rudali* act as Devi's spokesperson.

4.4.2   Portrayal of Oppression of Women in Family

Mahasweta Devi has revealed female oppression in the family which begins with assigning specific roles to the female as seen in the novel of Devi namely *Mother of 1084,*[9] *Water,*[10] and short story *Breast Giver,*[11] which are basically concerned with women's personal, familial, and affective ties. On the one hand, women are assigned duties within home. On the other hand men are assigned duties outside home and have more liberty as compared to women. One should not believe that Mahasweta Devi does not highlight the gendered difference in the upper class environment. In *Mother of 1084*, Sujata is a victim of mental suffering due to the loss of her beloved son Brati and also physical suffering due to her appendix pain. Despite her unhappiness within the family, Sujata is unable to break free from her familial duties and responsibilities.

Breast Giver is the narrative of social self-indulgence and apathy. Jashoda, the protagonist, after her husband is crippled, becomes a nurse breastfeeding an endless stream of new-born of the rich. A surrogate mother of sorts, forced by her husband and circumstances to give birth over and over again just to keep the milk flowing. The money she earns by continuously suckling babies at her milk-rich breasts keeps her own family well fed till breasts give way to cancer and income dries up along with the milk. Jashoda rebels ironically, to succumb to breast cancer, alone, breastless, with not a single surrogate son to light her puneral pyre. In Mahasweta Devi's play *Aajir,*[12] the mistress' mental turmoil evolves from her longing to attain motherhood but gets dampened when her husband seeks happiness in the company of the prostitute Punnashashi.

Child marriage is yet another form of gender oppression which Mahasweta Devi widely discusses in her works. The novel, *The Glory of Sri Sri Ganesh* deals with the theme of child marriage as seen in the early marriage of Ganesha's daughters. Mahasweta Devi also deals with witch-hunting as the worst form of gender oppression that can be traced to superstitions on witch-burning and women's banishment from society once they are branded as witches. The grounds for charges against women as witches arise from women's outspoken attitude and spirit of rebellion. Such women were hunted down and murdered in the most gruesome manner. Acid or hot oil was thrown on them or their genitals were mutilated; they were paraded naked through the town, stoned to death and sometimes were left alone alive to be eaten by wild dogs. *Bayen*[13] reflects such a situation. Malingar's ex-wife Chandidasi is believed to have an 'evil eye' and regarded as a witch and *Bayen* reflects the solitary life led by a witch, the superstitions and the manner in which she is treated by society.

Widowhood can be paralleled to female witch-hunting since both are forms of female ostracization instigated by false religious beliefs, customs, greed and jealousy. Devi's protagonist, Dhouli is not permitted to look at her own reflection in the mirror or to wear shellac bangles, a dot of sindoor on her forehead, and anklets of cheap metal and she is also not allowed to attend weddings and other auspicious occasions. She is forbidden to remarry, and compelled to wear plain and dull clothes, have plain, simple food and move around bare foot. Ecomonic exploitation is one of the prime forms of gender oppression represented in Mahasweta Devi's works where women are denied economic and legal powers and the right to property ownership. *The Glory of Sri Sri Ganesh* represents one such form of economic exploitation in Lachhima. Lacchima, the temporary caretaker of family property of her master Medininarayan Singh gets no reward or encouragement for her loyalty. Economic exploitation is echoed in *Dhouli*[14] a story in which Dhouli is forced to earn a living for her free stay at her in- laws' place. Mahasweta Devi's short story

He Said, Pani brings out this theme with the ill- treatment of Anandi's daughter- in-law by her husband resulting from unhappy marriage.[15]

Mahasweta Devi's literary texts decode the innumerable familial roles assigned to the woman-caretaker, mother, host and so on. These roles demand women of both privileged and underprivileged class/caste to perform a series of familial duties like looking after the family, pregnancy and giving birth despite their reluctance, child rearing, cooking and keeping the household clean. There is no escape from these roles since they are very often linked to the archetypal roles of mythical women characters and it is these roles that seem to elevate the ordinary women to the status of Sita or Savitri. She offers a deeper insight into the gender stereotyping of women's roles when she makes a link between gender stereotyping and Indian cultural role in such a gender stereotyping. She describes how a woman's position and role are tied down to her family.

Mahasweta Devi's reading of gender oppression is revolutionary because she traces the roots of gender oppression to familial and cultural stereotyping of women's roles on the one hand, and on the other hand, she tries to delineate cultural stereotyping of the lower class women from the upper class women. For example gender stereotyping leading to gender oppression is seen as the worst form of oppression in the woman who is illiterate, uneducated and unaware.

4.4.3 Portrayal of Sexual Exploitation and Violence Against Women in Devi's Works

It is in this context that Mahasweta Devi's female characters can be discussed in the context of being victims of physical violence. The author shows how women of royal families as well as those belonging to the oppressed section are churned in the wheel of violence. While women in the former case are yoked under decorum, in the latter, the oppressed are vibrant but not very conscious about being victimized. Their oppression occurs through compliance and willful desire to conform to the feminine ideal. The marginalized women on the other hand, are victims through force, for their families have to carry out their lives at the beck and call of the kings.Physical violence inflicted on women echoes in the novel *Mother of 1084* in Nandini's interrogation by Saroj Pal.

Another unique form of gender oppression discussed by Mahasweta Devi is 'gifting' low class women as bride price to the son in law by the upper classes. These low class women came into the son in law's house with the bride, as a gift for the son in law and used as bonded labourers and objects of lust by the men in the household. Devi's novel, The Glory of Sri Sri Ganesh depicts such a form of

oppression. In *The Glory of Sri Shi Ganesh*, Rukmani's physical oppression occurs in being gifted as bride-price to Ganesha and she endures what Beauvoir termed as 'forced motherhood', when she is sexually exploited and becomes pregnant.[16] The landlord Gajamoti Singh's shameless act of rape of the social worker only encourages more such sickening acts of violence on women of all society, especially those belonging to the lower sections.

Sexual exploitation is also found in *Rudali* where the author highlights the situation of rudalis being subject to seduction and rape and thrown into the whores' quarter. Such exploitation occurs with women finding no other means of survival before they turn to prostitution, are forced to submit to the harsh conditions due to dire poverty. An example of this situation can be seen in Sanchari's daughter- in-law Parbatia, who is compelled to opt for prostitution as a means to survive.

Do You Know?

The title "Rudaali" is a reference to a custom in certain areas of Rajasthan where women of a lower caste are hired as professional mourners upon the death of upper-caste males. These women are referred to as a "rudaali", literally translated as "female weeper" or "weeping woman". In 1993, a feature film "Rudaali" was made in Hindi based on the short story written by Mahasweta Devi.

A similar theme is explored by the author in her short story entitled *Douloti the Beautiful* where the hypocrisy of the upper castes is brought to light. The physical disability of Douloti's father, Ganori Nagesia gives the high caste Paramananda Misra the opportunity to take her as a bonded labour to his place and dump her in the sex market when she is barely thirteen. Her inability to escape occurs partly due to her ethical responsibility and love for her father till she develops fever and red swelling all over her private parts and dies having been denied treatment.

Oppression of the most humiliating form is found in the low class Naxalite tribal woman Dopdi's violent sexual torture and gang-rape in police custody in the short story Draupadi, one of the most famous stories of Mahasweta Devi.[17] It is set among the tribal in Bengal. Draupadi or Dopdi, as her name appears in the dialect, is a rebellious woman who is hunted down by the government in their attempt to subjugate the tribal groups. The government uses all forces available to them including kidnapping, murder, and rape. Tribal deaths in custody are invariably held as accidents. But Dopdi is not scared by these. After continuous days of rape and abuse, deprived of food and water, the story ends with a powerful final scene in which she faces her abusers, fiercely strong. Unlike the historic episode of Mahabharata where Draupadi's honour and chastity could not be stripped to shame with Lord Krishna rising to her rescue, Mahasweta Devi's Dopdi or Draupadi

surpasses shame although she is an oppressed representative of the present day social system. Devi brings in legends and mythical figures onto contemporary setting with the sole objective to capturing the continuities between past and present day happenings of gender oppression. She highlights the position and status of women of the earlier times as well as those of the present times. The name Dopdi reminds one of the mythical princess Draupadi and at the same time the contemporary low caste tribal woman, Dopdi. The name Dopdi also reveals the continued presence of the gender oppression of the past.

Things to do

Try to understand how Mahasweta Devi engaged with the question of caste based discrimination and analysed it in relation to gender oppression among tribal women. Also try to figure out how families are not safe resorts for women rather, mental and physical oppression of women begins at the level of family in both upper and lower-caste societies.

Oppression in the form of rape also appears in Mahasweta Devi's "Behind the Bodice" (Breast Stories).[18] Gangor's repeated gang-rape in Jharoa and Seopura is the rape of her motherhood and innocence where an innocent labour-woman is transformed into a conscious woman filled with bitter experience. Her physical and mental exploitation takes place. Her utter poverty, bitter experience and seclusion from her husband, child as well as public life force her to turn to prostitution for survival. Mahasweta Devi's narrative of female rape and physical exploitation runs home the point that the injustice meted to women like Gangor cannot be looked upon as individual suffering but rather the suffering of many low caste women.

Pallavi's decision to educate the people of Bagha village in the novel *The Glory of Shri Shri Ganesh* is threatened with sexual harassment from Ganesha. A woman's struggle to survive preserving her honour and dignity is highlighted in Devi's short story "The Hunt" taken from Imaginary Maps in the eighteen year old tall, flat featured, light copper skin girl Mary Oraon who is looked upon as an object of lust by the men around her. The contractor Tehsildar Singh's constant advance towards the tribal girl is a clear indication of the exploitation and humiliation of the low class women in society. Oppression is not contained exclusively among the working class women of supposedly lower lineage. Women of upper class and caste are also subjected to continuous violence in the feudal, patriarchal family structure. Picture of such instances can be cited from Devi's novel *The Glory of Sri Sri Ganesh*. Here, one notices Medini Singh's dislike and cruelty towards his two wives due to their failure to produce a male heir and are eventually sent away from the house on the pretext that they may kill their step son Ganesha. This was believed

to be the right of the husband in the feudal system. Ganesha's second wife Puthili is also subjected to regular torture.

4.5   Conclusion

This unit was an attempt to explore how gender was dealt with in two of the most eminent authors of modern Bengal. We have seen that Tagorean novels and short stories are the depiction of female condition and typicality of male chauvinism. In the Nineteenth Indian Hindu society, most of the women were suppressed or deprived. Society used their sentiment or quietness as a tool to restrain them. Tagore has celebrated the triumph of women through his writings and finally taught us that, autonomy or equality is nothing to be given, but matters to earn for own self. While Tagore's heroines are mostly educated, belonging to upper castes, the protagonists of Mahasweta Devi's stories hail mostly from oppressed strata of society. Tagore was depicting a society that cared least about the desires of a widowed woman. While the dignity of Binodini was being questioned, no one pointed fingers at Mahendra.

4.6   Summary

From all the above discussions on gender oppression, one could summarize that Mahasweta Devi treats women's issues with sympathy and concern. Although she keeps harping on the point that she is not a feminist writer and focus on the class rather than gender issues, yet her gendered view of women's oppression could be perceived in the manner in which she attempts female empowerment by voicing women's protest. She acknowledges that a woman tends to be more vulnerable to exploitation because of her body. Devi's works deal with human rights violations through exposure to violation of the female body. Hence, Mahasweta Devi's powerful tales of exploitation and struggle are viewed as extremely rich sites of feminist discourse. Although, Mahasweta Devi takes an affeminist stand when it comes to her commentary on gender oppression, it wouldn't however be completely illegitimate to say that her feminism revolves around the assertion of the woman as an individual in her own right. Several women characters portrayed by Mahasweta Devi belong to the oppressed sections of society who are forced to fight for their basic sustenance. Caught in the grim battle of class, caste and poverty, her women protagonists chart out their own paths of self- realization. Her portrayal is not limited to debunking patriarchy, but attempts a redefinition of woman's role in the adverse situations. Her powerful and haunting tales of exploitation and struggle offer us a rich site for feminist discourse. Mahasweta Devi's works are not a mere record of oppression

but are also mirrors of the subaltern's resistance to the above forms of oppression. Unlike Tagore, the works of Devi were polemical in its approach.

4.7 Questions

1. Answer in Detail:

    a. Explore the Feminist consciousness of Tagore with reference to his Works.

    b. Analyse the ways in which Mahasweta Devi dealt with the issue of gender oppression in her stories.

2. Answer Briefly:

    c. How is the idea of desire explored in "Broken Nest"?

    d. How does Mrinal finally found her own identity in "The Wife's Letter"?

    e. Describe the foremost qualities of women characters of Tagore's stories and novels?

    f. How does "Punishment", the short story by Tagore, portray the victimization of women by the male members of the family?

    g. How did Binodini, the protagonist of "Sand of the Eye", subvert societal norms around widowhood?

    h. Describe the social taboos relating to widowhood with reference to Mahasweta Devi's "Dhouli".

    i. Briefly discuss the intersections of caste-class and gender discrimination in mahasweta Devi's "Draupadi".

3. Answer Very Briefly:

    a. What are the evil practices that are challenged by heroines of Tagore?

    b. In which novels of Mahasweta Devi do we see portrayals of oppression of women within their families?

    c. What are the forms of gender oppression that Mahasweta Devi has depicted in her works?

    d. Which works of Mahasweta Devi depicts the Physical violence against women?

    e. In which stories does Mahasweta Devi portray caste based violence against women?

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UNIT 5 ❑ Production of Masculinity and Femininity

Structure

5.1   Learning Objectives

After going through the sub units the students will be able to:

✓ To know about the idea of gender order in society.

✓ To understand the socio-cultural attributes of gender through the analyses of masculinity and femininity.

✓ To learn how masculinity and femininity vary across cultures, time and space.

✓ To figure out whether biology has any role to play in creating gender differences.

✓ To learn about the theories of social construction of gender

5.2   Introduction

Gender as a social and cultural construct is a primary aspect of one's personal and social identity. It develops in early socialization through the ways that a baby is handled, treated and spoken to. Cultural constructs are model behaviours and attitudes that a particular culture transmits to the members of its society and these are shared beliefs and values that become taken for granted as guiding principles. Childhood learning teaches socially appropriate behaviour and molds personalities to conform to social and cultural norms. There are explicit as well as subtle gender differentiating behaviours. The latter are less conscious but very powerful. These include ways of presenting oneself, such as walking, sitting, body postures, speech styles, and non-verbal communication such as gestures, smiling, eye contact, touch etc. Every culture has two sets of names, one appropriate for females and one appropriate for males. Naming is important in shaping one's personal and cultural identity.

Sociological perspectives on gender assume the variability of gendered identities that anthropological research has explored, the biological "Imperatives" toward gender identity and differentiation (though sociology locates the source of these imperatives less in our bodies and more in our environments), and the psychological imperatives toward both autonomy and connection that modern society requires of individuals in a modern world. Sociology, like other social sciences begins with a critique of biological determinism, i.e. the urge to observe our experiences as the expressions of inborn, interplanetary differences and aims at arriving at an explanation of the social origin of our patterns of development.

Now what does it mean to say that gender identity is socially constructed? Often, the proposition that gender is socially constructed" is taken to mean that individuals are not responsible for what they do, society made them like this (Kimmel: 2011). It indicates that our identities are a fluid assemblage of the meanings and behaviours that we construct from the values, images, and prescriptions we find in the world around us. Our gendered identities are both voluntary and coerced. Social norms and sanctions compel people into conformity to some rules. We neither make up the rules as we go along, nor do we fit casually and without struggle into pre-assigned roles.

5.3   Gender order

The gender order is a patterned system of ideological and material practices, performed by individuals in a society, through which power relations between women and men are made, and remade, as meaningful. It is through the gender order of a

society that forms or codes of masculinities and femininities are created and recreated, and relations between them are organised. The concept of the gender order was first developed by Jill Matthews (1984), in her study of the historical construction of femininity. The idea of the gender order gives recognition to the fact that every known society distinguishes between women and men, while allowing for variations in the nature of the distinctions drawn.[1] According to Matthews (1984: 13), 'As systematic ways of creating social women and men, and of ordering and patterning relations between them, it is not logically necessary that gender orders should be hierarchical, inequitable or oppressive'. This approach counters tendencies to universalism and recognises the active part played by individuals in the creation and recreation of gender relations, and thereby allows for the possibility of social change.

Connell (1987; 1995) has integrated the concept of the gender order into his social theory of gender, and for this reason, the concept has become more closely associated with Connell than with Matthews.[2] For Connell, the relationship between the body and gender is a central issue for gender theory. He argues that gender is the outcome of recurrent interpretations of the reproductive and sexual capacities of the human body. Femininities and masculinities are the multiple effects of these ongoing interpretations and definitions, impacting upon bodies, influencing personalities and shaping culture and institutions. In Connell's (1995, 1987) analysis, gender is a recurring creation of human agency, which at an institutional and structural level also acts to constrain individual agency. For Connell, empirical research has uncovered three major structures of gender relations, or the major ways in which the agency or practice of women and men is constrained. The three structures, of labour, power and cathexis (concerned with emotional relationships, including sexuality) constantly interweave with each other creating the 'gender order', or the overall structure of gender relations in a particular society, at a particular time in history. For Connell (1995) and Matthews (1984), gender relations are regarded as in process, the outcome of human practice or agency, subject to resistance as well as conformity, contestation as well as acceptance.

5.4   Masculinity and Femininity

When asked to define what makes one feminine or masculine, many people would respond with examples of dress, mannerisms, desires, or biological features. In this way, masculinity and femininity are used to describe and compare a person's mannerisms and features based on social expectations. For example, a girl may be said to be feminine if she wears a dress and plays with dolls. Alternatively, a girl may be described as a "tomboy" or more masculine for wearing pants and playing with toy cars. However, masculinity and femininity are more complex than stereotypes.

They are cultural attributes of the intersection of one's sex, gender, and sexuality. Gender is a socially constructed idea of what is male and female, masculine and feminine. It is independent of sex; a biological male can choose to express a "female" gender (known as transgenderism). Furthermore, gender is evolving and culture-specific. Many cultures have very specific and sharply divided genders (Lerner, 2006).

With each construction the biological differences between men and women get translated into social terms and descriptions. Feminist writers argue that biological differences get heightened through social descriptions of masculinity and femininity. Patters of differences by gender is seen when the character is either masculine or feminine. For example, pink and blue are gendered colours, former regarded as feminine and the latter as masculine. Further to be 'strong' and 'tough' is masculine. Being 'weak' and 'soft' are associated with feminine character. There are several other traits that are categorized as masculine and feminine. Masculinity and femininity are concepts which signify the social outcomes of being male or female, the traits and characteristics which describe men and women give men advantage over women. Moira Gatens (1996) points masculinity is not valued unless performed by biological male.[3] Hence the male body is imbued in our culture with certain traits that characterize maleness or masculinity. Similarly femininity is performed by the biological female. The female body is in our culture is imbued with certain traits that characterize female or femininity. According to Judith Butler (1990) any theorization about gender introduces the notion or idea of performance of gender in terms of masculinity and femininity.[4] Thus performance of gender becomes involuntary as gender gets internalized through the socialization process within the dominant discourses of patriarchy and gender is performed at different levels within the family and in the society. We socially enter into our gendered categories of masculine and feminine right from birth. The concepts of masculinity and femininity as need in feminist discourses and writing to explain the differences between men and women. Some argue that these differences are based in their biology while others reject this argument and emphasize that the differences are socially constructed. Therefore, the construction of men and masculinity will accrue exclusively to the bodies of males. The construction of women and femininity will accrue exclusively to the bodies of females.

In contemporary writings there is a recognition that these social categorization of masculinity and femininity are blurring. There is a constant shift in the conceptualization of human beings as controlled by wholly biological or social forces. Women's expectations have changed; women lives and roles have broadened. This explains just how malleable the category of femininity is.

5.4.1   Masculinities and Gender relations

Considering feminists' concern with women's subordination in society, it is perhaps not surprising that most early research on gender concerned itself almost exclusively with women and concepts of femininity. Men and masculinity were regarded as relatively straightforward and unproblematic. Little effort was made to examine masculinity, the experience of being a man or the formation of male identities. Sociologists were more concerned with understanding men's oppression of women and their role in maintaining patriarchy. Since the late 1980s, however, greater attention has been devoted to critical studies of men and masculinity. The fundamental changes affecting the role of women and family patterns in industrialized societies have raised questions about the nature of masculinity and its changing role in society. What does it mean to be a man in late modern society? How are the traditional expectations and pressures on men being transformed in a rapidly changing age? Is masculinity in crisis? In recent years, sociologists have become increasingly interested in the positions and experience of men within the larger order that shapes them. This shift within the sociology of gender and sexuality has led to new emphasis on the study of men and masculinity within the overarching context of gender relations, the societally patterned interactions between men and women. Sociologists are interested to grasp how male identities are constructed and what impact socially prescribed roles have on men's behaviour.

Masculinity is the set of social practices and cultural representations associated with being a man. The plural 'masculinities' is also used in recognition that ways of being a man and cultural representations. of/ about men vary, both historically and culturally, between societies and between different groupings of men within any one society. The feminist critique of masculinity as that against which women are defined as 'the Other' has a long history, but writing on masculinities grew enormously from the 1980s onwards.

In the literature on masculinities, evaluations of masculinity and explanations of the links between masculinity/ masculinities and those people defined as 'men' vary according to theoretical perspective. For example, in accounts drawing on the natural sciences, masculinity/masculinities are the result of physiological factors, such as hormones or chromosomes. Goldberg (1979), for example, identifies the 'neuro-endocrine system' (the interaction of the nervous system with the hormone system) as the biological basis of masculinity/masculinities.[5] Such essentialism is also characteristic of populist 'celebratory' writing about masculinity, in which men are urged to reinvigorate their 'natural' masculinity. In contrast, from the more critical, academic perspective of the social sciences, masculinities are understood as a form

of power relation, both among men themselves and between men and women. Masculinities are argued to arise from the social contexts in which men live, for example, from their positions in the various institutions and organisations of their society and/or in the context of the socially available discourses about gender.

Connell (1995) has developed a social scientific analysis of masculinities as part of his broader, relational theory of gender. For Connell, gender is the end-product of ongoing interpretations of and definitions placed upon the reproductive and sexual capacities of the human body. Masculinities (and femininities) can be understood, therefore, as the effects of these interpretations and definitions: on bodies, on personalities and on a society's culture and institutions. In Connell's account, masculinities occupy a higher ranking than femininity in the 'gender hierarchy' characteristic of modern Western societies. At the top of the gender hierarchy is 'hegemonic masculinity', the culturally dominant ideal of masculinity centred around authority, physical toughness and strength, heterosexuality and paid work. This is an ideal of masculinity that few actual men live up to, but from which most gain advantage and so Connell calls the next level 'complicit masculinity'. Below this in the hierarchy are 'subordinated masculinities', the most important of which is homosexual masculinity. More generally, this form of masculinity includes a range of masculine behaviour which does not fully match up to the macho ideals of hegemonic masculinity. At the bottom of the gender hierarchy are femininities. Although these may take a variety of forms, for example emphasised or compliant femininity and 'resistant' femininity, femininity is always subordinated to masculinity. In Connell's (1995) analysis, the social changes of the twentieth century (in the industrialised West) have undermined the gender hierarchy, and the position of hegemonic masculinity within it.

Do You Know?

Hegemonic" definition of masculinity and the "emphasized" version of femininity are normative constructions, the ones against which others are measured and, almost invariably, found wanting. Hegemonic definition is a "particular variety of masculinity to which others-among them young and effeminate as well as homosexual men-are subordinated.

In his more recent work, Connell (2000) emphasises that masculinities are not simply equivalent to biological men. In other words, 'masculine' bodies, behaviour or attitudes can be the social practices of people who are otherwise defined as 'women'. For Connell, then, masculinitiy is a concept that 'names patterns of gender practice, not just groups of people' (2000 : 17). Elsewhere, he insists that masculinities cannot be understood only as discourses, since 'gender relations are also constituted

in, and shape, non-discursive practices such as labour, violence, sexuality, childcare and so on'.[6]

The hegemonic definition of masculinity is "constructed in relation to various subordinated masculinities as well as in relation to women" writes Connell (1995). Women contend with an equally exaggerated ideal of femininity, which Connell calls "emphasized femininity:' Emphasized femininity is organized around compliance with gender inequality and is "oriented to accommodating the interests and desires of men:' One sees emphasized femininity in the display of sociability rather than technical competence, fragility in mating scenes, compliance with men's desire for titillation and ego-stroking in office relationships, acceptance of marriage and childcare as a response to labour-market discrimination against women. 'Emphasized femininity exaggerates gender difference as a strategy of "adaptation to men's power" stressing empathy and nurturance.

5.4.2   Construction of Femininity

The construction of a gender subject, i.e., carrying the identity of femininity or masculinity is both socially and culturally produced. For example, in every culture the notion of gender difference is thought to be rooted in biology or preordained nature. In Indian Hindu families, the notion of gender difference begins with the sphere of reproduction – both mother and father share different role in relation to procreation. It is culturally considered that father is the provider of seeds and mother provides the platform to receive the seeds and nurture it further. These role differences are culturally imagined, and get reflected in other social institutions like family, marriage, and kinship. The social construction of gender questions the preconceived idea to assign unequal roles to male and female, and to analyse how other gender roles are learnt within the complex of relationships and institutions. It is evident that gender identity is created through learning gender roles and therefore, it becomes essential to understand the process of gender construction in the wider context of family and kinship structure. Family and kinship are central to the understanding of socialization. In the process of socialization, family plays two major roles such as rules of recruitment of members in the family and configuration of roles on the basis of gender and age divisions and providing training in acquisition of future roles. These roles of family have become agencies in imparting the characters of growing up female in Indian society.

The construction of femininity is a continuous and complex process and is conveyed through language, proverbs, and rituals. The context of natal home for both married and unmarried daughters is widely used in form of proverbs in the process of socialization. The desire for a boy child is explicit in day today

conversation in forms of saying. For instance, parents who are having only daughters often commented as future is black as they are not having any support (Dube: 1988). Similarly, in regions like Maharastra, girls are honoured with accomplishments as girls are always associated with home and the household works. In the process of acquiring femininity, the parental home is always refereed to be temporary shelter; therefore, girls grow up with the notion of having their own house in future. Girls grow up with the desire to have own house evaluate and instruct their lives to learning socially appropriate behaviors. Proverbs and rituals give the realization of this inevitable fact of transferring the girls membership from her natal home to the home of the husband.[7]

Dube (1988) has documented some of the proverbs spoken in various parts of India like in Orissa, there is a saying that "equates daughter with ghee". The meaning of the proverb is both the things are valuable, however both start to stink if not disposed of on time. Similarly, there are festivals like Durga puja and Gauri puja which reiterates the idea of 'home coming' in the context of goddess. These festivals are full of rituals which convey the message to young girls of their reality to leave mother's home and will be invited to the natal home in these festivals. In this context, the girls' socialization takes place through rituals, proverbs and festivities that emphasize the need to learn adequate feminine behaviour of obedience, submissiveness.

5.4.3 Cultural Variability of Masculinity and Femininity

But, it would be wrong to assume that there is one simple definition of masculinity and one definition of femininity. One of the important elements of a social constructionist approach, especially if one intends to problematize the notion that gender differences alone are decisive, is to explore the differences among men and among women, because, these are often more decisive than the differences between women and men. Within any one society at any one moment, several meanings of masculinity and femininity co-exist. Each of these axes modifies the others. Just because we make gender visible doesn't mean that we make these other organizing principles of social life invisible. The fact that gender varies across cultures, over historical time, among men and women within any one culture, and over the life course, makes it impossible to speak of masculinity or femininity as though they were constant, universal essences, common to all women and to all men. Gender must be seen as an ever-changing fluid assemblage of meanings and behaviours. The legitimate way to deal with this would be to recognize that there are different definitions of masculinities and femininities that we construct.

5.4.4   Masculinity-Femininity Test

In 1936 Lewis M Terman and Catharine Cox Miles published a book called 'Sex and Personality' which is an account of the attempt to establish scientifically the norms of masculinity and femininity, the differences in personality between the sexes, in our society.[8] The Masculinity- Femininity Test, as they called it, is a pencil and paper test in questionnaire form, consisting of 910 items. The purpose of the test is to measure the extent to which a subject's responses diverge or accord with the average for his or her sex on those items to which the sexes respond differently. The items used are those which experience has shown do differentiate between the sexes. Questions which male and female subjects answer in the same way ('Do you like modern art?') are discarded. Resulting scores show that males and females tend to score within certain specific ranges, and that scores for each sex cluster around a different point (the sex-specific mean) (Oakley 1985: 49).

In word association, females tend to choose words for articles of dress, personal adornment, colours, aesthetic appraisal, domestic things and happenings, and words indicating a 'kind' and 'sympathetic' social orientation. Conversely, the male preference is for words describing outdoor phenomena, activity and adventure, science and machinery, political, business and commercial enterprises. Similarly, Rorschach's ink blot interpretation test inquires into information possessed by males and females about specific items show that the key masculine quality is 'the aggressive, adventurous, enterprising, outwardly directed disposition: the tendency to pugnacity and self assertiveness'. The outstanding feminine traits are 'the actively sympathetic, the inwardly directed disposition, the maternal impulse, tender feelings, concern with domestic affairs etc.

The success of Terman and Miles' (1936) Masculinity- Femininity Test in differentiating between personality types by sex confirms that everyday observations of sex differences are grounded in fact. Men and women are temperamentally different. But what does this 'fact' mean? It means that personality differences between male and female exist within Western society with a certain constancy and stability. But it does not mean that these differences are moulded by biology— indeed, it says nothing at all about how much of the difference is due to biology and how much to culture. The personality differences emerging from the Masculinity-Femininity Test appear in children as well as adults. Not only are temperamental sex differences in evidence from childhood on, but they also exist as conscious ideals of masculinity and femininity by which behaviour is judged. The finding that sex differences in personality can be traced back to childhood suggests that, if they are not moulded in biology, then they must emerge very early in the process of

cultural learning. Terman and Miles (1936), in their early use of the Masculinity-Femininity Test, noted the marked correlation of masculine-feminine scores with certain social-cultural factors, including age, education, measured IQ and social class Length of education, for instance, is correlated with greater femininity for males and greater masculinity for females. This kind of association again suggests that there is a strong component of social learning in the acquisition of masculinity and femininity.

5.5   Role of Biology in Influencing Gender difference

To distinguish more clearly between the biological and cultural causes of gender differences, we must look beyond our own society. How do other cultures define personality differences by sex? Distinction between male and female, and if so do they make the same distinctions as Western culture does? Margaret Mead set out specifically to study the variation in masculine and feminine personality types in different cultures and concluded that different societies define masculinity and femininity differently, emphasising different qualities, interests and occupations as 'male' and 'female'. These various cultural definitions of male and female temperament are associated with different definitions of masculine and feminine tasks. Differing stereotypes of masculine and feminine temperament are often found in other societies, without there being a wholesale reversal of our own cultural patterns (Oakley: 1985: 55-8). Quite often one finds these examples of masculinity and femininity in other societies dismissed as eccentric, deviant, peculiar, and irrelevant to the mainstream of human development. This is an absurdly ethnocentric view. The history of Western culture itself contains within it precisely the same kind of reversal of today's accepted patterns. Women in Anglo-Saxon times were self-assertive and independent, like many women in Africa today, and most writers on the social history of the Middle Ages call attention to the 'masculine character' of women at that time.

Of course, the biological differences between the sexes may have some bearing on the parallel differences in personality types. The problem is one of proving any connection between biology and personality, and of giving a convincing explanation of the impact one has upon the other (Oakley 1985: 75). Professor George Murdock (1937) has surveyed the data for 224 societies (mostly preliterate) and shows that the tendency to segregate economic activities in one way or another according to sex is strong. Taking a list of 46 different activities, he suggests that some are more often masculine than feminine, and vice versa. The conclusion that can be drawn

from Murdock's survey is that every society does have rules about which activities are suitable for males and which for females; but these rules vary a great deal from one society to another, and generalisations about how biology inevitably dictates their form and content are not supported by the data(Oakley 1985: 128).[9] Culturally, therefore, one finds the same biological distinctions between male and female coexisting with great variations in gender roles.

Things to do

Explore how gender identity is constructed in accordance with the established ideas about ideal masculinity and femininity at a given space and time. Also find out how the ideas of masculinity and femininity culturally specific and vary across cultures and times. Find out if biology has any role to play in constructing mascune and feminine traits.

5.6 The Process of Social Construction of Gender

The social constructionist approach upholds that neither gender neither difference nor gender inequality are inevitable in the nature of our biological bodies. Similarly, differential socialization for boys and girls alone cannot explain the differential sex roles typical of men and women. Socialisation theories usefully suggest ways in which individuals learn their femininity or masculinity within social contexts (Kimmel 2011: 162). Socialisation as a concept is widely used to describe how individuals socially acquire their gender identity, and such usage rarely implies an adherence to the wider tenets of role-learning theory. However, it is a concept that must be used with critical awareness, in order to avoid the pitfalls of socialisation theory proper. These include a tendency to depict individuals as socially programmed, voluntary and passive conformers and the downplaying of structural processes and institutional factors which act to constrain individuals. Individuals are not 'cultural dopes', passively accepting pre-written scripts for gender behaviour, but nor are they entirely free to develop and act out their own scripts. The core of gender socialization process is identification. Males usually identify with males and females with females, and so normal male and female gender identities are formed. However, where a male identifies with a female in a persistent and inflexible way, disorders such as homosexuality and transsexuality are more likely to arise. Gender socialization entails how masculinity and femininity of personality, behaviour, attitudes and roles evolve with the culturally-provided experience of gender learning (Oakley 1985: 169- 173). Gender roles and gender identities are not acquired mechanically by the child from

the parent, but because the child identifies with the parent in a variety of ways. Principally it seems that the child wants to be like the parent, and hence is motivated to act like him or her; the child classes himself in the same gender group as the parent, and for this reason imitates the relevant items of behaviour, at first unconsciously and later consciously. Both 'imitation' and 'identification' refer to the tendency for a person to reproduce the actions, attitudes and emotional responses exhibited by real life or symbolic models. (Oakley 1985: 179)

Ruth Hartley (1966) speaks of four processes that she believes to be central to the development of gender roles.[10] These processes are socialisation by manipulation, canalisation, verbal appellation, and activity exposure. All four processes are differentiated by sex, and all are features of the child's socialisation from birth on.

a. The first process (manipulation) was observed by Hartley in children aged from one to five in 22 families. An example of it is the mother's tendency to 'fuss with' the baby girl's hair, dress her in feminine fashion and tell her how pretty she is. Hartley suggests this is essentially the same process as the 'moulding' of infants observed by anthropologists in other cultures. 'Moulding' or 'manipulation' has an enduring effect because the child subsumes the mother's view of her (as 'pretty', as 'feminine') in her own concept of herself.

b. Canalisation, the second process, involves directing the attention of male and female children onto particular objects or aspects of objects. Sex differentiated toys, for example, are an early feature of the child's world, and the opportunity to play with them (and to be rewarded for playing with them in the appropriate way) lays a basis for the adult's pleasure in the things these toys represent. Thus, part of the so-called maternal response may well be the anticipated pleasure females feel in duplicating as mothers the pleasures they received during childhood doll play. The sex-typed objects which play an important part in the child's 'rehearsal' of its gender role will keep their advantage in later life if the child's response to them is reinforced. If children have played with dolls, miniature washing machines and soft toys, or on the other hand with guns, cars and bricks, then objects of these types will have an emotional advantage.

c. Verbal appellations, the third of the four processes, have a capacity, often unnoticed, to be sex-typed too. Data collected by Hartley and others show that this sort of remark acts as a sign leading to a concept of self-identity in which sex is inbuilt. The child learns to think of himself or herself as male or female, and so to identify with all other males or females. Mothers and fathers transmit aspects of gender role directly in the way they talk

even to very young children. For instance, boys and girls are told which postures they should adopt during urination: the notion that the male should stand up while the female should sit down is not one that naturally occurs to the child on its own.

d. The last process is that of activity exposure. Both male and female children are exposed to traditional masculine and feminine activities. Sears, Maccoby and Levin (1957) show that American mothers distinguish between the kind of chores assigned to boys and girls even with five-year-olds.

Parents unknowingly take part in these processes. This unawareness on the part of mothers of the moulding effect of their behaviour coexisted with a strong tendency, noted by Sears, Maccoby and Levin (1957), to differentiate activities and techniques for training and disciplining boys and girls.[11] Ruth Hartley (1966) says that 'From the young subject's point of view, sex role, child role, and self definition are blended in an unselfconscious complex of unobstructed behaviours.' The important word here' unselfconscious' stresses again the absence of awareness, this time on the part of the child. Whatever it is that the child learns, he or she is not aware of learning it, nor aware of its content and implications. As for the effects of these processes, a multitude of studies agree that by the age of four children have a firm knowledge of sex identity and are well able to perceive distinctions of gender role. Sanctions and disapproval against children and adults when they deviate from their gender roles is a powerful way of compelling everyone conform to expected male female behaviour. Social ridicule is one of the common forms of sanction. In our society, some behavioural qualities are defined as masculine and, others feminine. Certain dualities have been characterised as male and female in our societies. Examples of such dualities are following:

Body	Mind
Nature	Culture
Emotion	Reason
Object	Subject
Private	Public

Women belong to the left side of the above mentioned dualities and men to the right. Not only have masculinity and femininity been ranged as polar opposites, a hierarchy has been created between qualities typical to male and female. Mind, for example is considered superior to body, and culture is deemed as an improvement on and superior to nature. Rationality and objectivity are valued more highly than emotionality and subjectivity. Women, then are bodies, and like nature because they

breed and men are thought of thinking rational beings with a mind that can act and can transform nature into culture. Men, therefore, are held as superior to, over and above nature.

5.6.1 Criticism of Gender Socialization and Role Theories

In recent years, socialization and gender role theories have been criticized by a growing number of sociologists. Rather than seeing sex as biologically determined and gender as culturally learned, they argue that we should view both sex and gender as socially constructed products. Not only is gender a purely social creation that lacks a fixed 'essence', but the human body itself is subject to social forces which shape and alter it in various ways. We can give our bodies meanings which challenge what is usually thought of as 'natural'. Individuals can choose to construct and reconstruct their bodies as they please - ranging from exercise, dieting, piercing and personal fashion, to plastic surgery and sex-change operations. Technology is blurring the boundaries of our physical bodies. Thus, the argument goes, the human body and biology are not 'givens', but are subject to human agency and personal choice within different social contexts.

According to such a perspective, writers who focus on gender roles and role learning implicitly accept that there is a biological basis to gender differences. In the socialization approach, a biological distinction between the sexes provides a framework which becomes 'culturally elaborated' in society itself. In contrast to this, some strict social constructionist theorists reject any biological basis for gender differences. Gender identities emerge, they argue, in relation to perceived sex differences in society and in turn help to shape those differences. For example, a society in which ideas of masculinity are characterized by physical strength and 'tough' attitudes will encourage men to cultivate a specific body image and set of mannerisms. In other words, gender identities and sex differences are inextricably linked within individual human bodies (Connell 1987; Butler 1990).

Things to do:

Try to understand how gender identities of children are constructed through primary socialization within family. Carefully go through the stages through which the process of construction happens. Explore how not only have masculinity and femininity been ranged as polar opposites, but a hierarchy has been created between qualities typical to male and female.

Sociologists used to think that the three primary institutions of socialization were family, the school, and church; the three primary bearers of their socializing message

were parents, teachers, and religious figures (priests, ministers, rabbis, imams, and the like). This model has proved inaccurate for two reasons. First, it assumes that socialization is a smooth process that is accomplished by the end of childhood, when family, school, and church have receded in significance in a person's life. Second, it views the socialization process from the point of view of the socialiser, not the socialized. That is, from the point of view of the child, the chief agents of their socialization are their peer group-the other boys and girls, and later men and women-with whom they interact. They also know that the images and messages that daily surround them in the media are constantly giving them messages about what men and women are supposed to look and act like. Media and peer groups are, today, part of the pentagram of socializing institutions. Media and peer groups, however, do not recede after early childhood; indeed, one might say they pick up where family, church, and school leave off. Some of the messages from peer groups and media reinforce what we've learned; other messages directly contradict those earlier messages. Gender socialization continues throughout the life course and it is neither smooth nor finite. What masculinity or femininity might mean to us in our twenties, will mean something dramatically different to us in our forties or our sixties.

5.7   Conclusion

The primary purpose of this unit is to understand how certain behavioural traits are defined as either masculine or feminine. The production of masculinity and femininity is a result of gender order in society. Analysing how masculinity and femininity are produced is imperative to understanding social attributes of gender. The discussions in this unit prompt us to take account of cultural, temporal and spatial variability of masculinity and femininity. It is important to recognize that these two are not universally valid monolithic categories. The role of biology in the construction of traits associated with masculinity and femininity is often overemphasized. The social constructionist approach questions the assumptions of biology about the inevitability of biological influence on gender and emphasizes on the role of socialization in facilitating the construction of masculinity and femininity. Theories of gender socialization and sex roles too have been criticized by theorists who claim both sex and gender to be socially constructed. Although the social constructionist approach and theories of gender roles and socialization, the merit of these in helping us recognize the social basis for gender differences are undisputed.

5.8   Summary

There are a few things that this unit aims to explain. First, we understand that gender is not a "thing" that one possesses, but rather a set of activities that one does. When we do gender, we do it in front of other people; it is validated and legitimated by the evaluations of others. Gender is less a property of the individual than it is a product of our interactions with others. Second, we understand that we do gender in every interaction, in every situation, in every institution in which we find ourselves. Gender is a situated accomplishment, as much an aspect of interaction as it is of identity. Nor do we do gender in a genderless vacuum but, rather, in a gendered world, in gendered institutions. Our social world is built on systemic, structural inequality based on gender; social life reproduces both gender difference and gender inequality. We need to think of masculinity and femininity "not as a single object with its own history, but as being constantly constructed within the history of an evolving social structure:'

Definitions of masculinity and femininity vary, first, from culture to culture, and, second, in any one culture over historical time. Thus social constructionists rely on the work of anthropologists and historians to identify the commonalities and the differences in the meanings of masculinity and femininity from one culture to another and to describe how those differences change over time. Gender definitions also vary over the course of a person's life. Finally, definitions of masculinity and femininity will vary within any one culture at any one time-by race, class, ethnicity, age, sexuality, education, region of the country, etc. Social constructionist perspective thus builds on the other social and behavioural sciences, adding specific dimensions to the exploration of gender.

5.9   Questions

1. Answer in Detail:

   a. Describe the social constructionist approach to gender.

   b. How are masculinities and femininities constructed? Describe with reference to theories of masculinity and femininity.

   c. What are the stages of development of gender roles?

2. Answer Briefly:

   a. How do the definitions of masculinity and femininity vary across cultures?

   b. Describe the purpose of masculinity-femininity test briefly.

   c. What are the two major roles of family in the process of socialization.

   d. What is hegemonic masculinity?

   e. What is emphasized femininity?

   f. Briefly discuss whether biology has a role to play in facilitating gender differences.

   g. What conclusion can be drawn from Murdock's study?

   h. What is gender socialization?

   i. What is the major criticism of socialization and role theory?

   j. What do you mean by 'gender order'?

3. Answer Very Briefly:

   a. What is the core of gender socialization process?

   b. Which are the chief agents of socialization from the perspective of children?

   c. Define the process of canalization.

   d. Which theorists conducted the masculinity-femininity test?

   e. How is the construction of femininity conveyed in Hindu society?

   f. Who developed the idea of gender order first?

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Unit 6 ❑ Gender Discrimination and Patriarchy

Structure

6.1   Learning Objectives

After going through the sub units the students will be able to:

✓ To know the concept of Gender Discrimination
✓ To know the concept of Patriarchy
✓ To know the root of Gender Discrimination in India
✓ To know the causes of Gender Discrimination in India.

6.2   Introduction

Gender is a socio-cultural word that refers to the socially defined roles and behaviours that are allocated to 'males' and 'females' in a given society. Discrimination against women based on their sex is referred to as gender inequality. (Sharma, 2015)

Gender inequality, or gender discrimination, according to Wright & Rogers (2009), refers to unequal rights between male and female based on various gender roles, which leads to unequal treatment in life. The word "gender inequality" has been around for a long time, but it wasn't until the beginning of the twentieth century that it became "one of the most fast, dramatic social shifts." Gender inequality, according to Reeves & Baden (2000), is a societal problem that results in unequal treatment of men and women in society. These differences are distinct from biological variables, particularly differences in life's reproductive roles. Gender discrimination takes on different forms in different places. For example, when entering the job market, gender disparity accelerates, not only because of disparities in pay, but also because of discrepancies in the quantity of money paid to men and women According to Dang, in the past, men were more likely to have more opportunities to attend school. Young women appeared to have less educational chances than young men. (UK Essays, 2012)

6.3   Patriarchy

Patriarchy is a system of relationships, ideas, and values that structure gender inequality between men and women and is rooted in political, social, and economic systems. Attributes that are considered "feminine" or related to women are discounted, whereas attributes that are considered "masculine" or related to men are favoured. Both the private and public realms are structured by patriarchal relationships, guaranteeing that men dominate both. In order to maintain patriarchal ties, feminist studies explore the histories and geographies of patriarchal interactions to show that patriarchy manifests in dynamic and adaptable ways. These theories examine the connections between patriarchy and capitalism, colonialism, and nationalism, proposing that patriarchal relations operate across scales in ways that not only define but also order social relations in hierarchical relationships. Patriarchal relationships at the physical level, along with the public–private divide, nationalism and citizenship, colonialism, and globalisation are all investigated in this way. Patriarchy has been challenged as an analytical tool for being overly universalizing and sweeping in its view of men and women's unequal relationships. (Nash, 2009)

The term 'patriarchy' has a long history, dating back to the male leaders of Israel's tribes, whose power was based on kinship rather than 'contract.' According to Pateman (1988), this shifted as a result of the debate in seventeenth-century England over the legitimate source of power in society and how power relations should be governed and maintained. Pateman (1988) distinguishes between two factions in this debate: patriarchalists and social contract theorists. The patriarchalist approach was exemplified by Sir Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha* (1680), which was

hugely influential at the time. Filmer challenged the biblical tradition of patriarchy being associated with paternal power by claiming that paternal and political power were "not only comparable but same". On the patriarchalist basis that "kings were fathers and fathers were kings," Filmer argued for absolute monarchy. Pateman refers to Filmer's point of view as "classic patriarchalism," as opposed to "traditional patriarchy," which she describes as paternal household dominance. Filmer's innovation was to make the father's procreative power the source of political rights in society. Due to the strength of counter arguments offered by John Locke and Thomas Hobbes, Filmer's idea was short lived.

These philosophers claimed that all men are "naturally" free, and that political rights can only be established by contract, not patriarchal fiat. Hobbes and Locke maintained that 'contract was the source of political right,' separating paternal and political power. They did not, however, include women in their ideas of contract and political rights. (Sanday, 2001)

6.3.1 Patriarchy and women

Women serve a number of important places in patriarchal culture, which vary depending on race, class, and other "differences." The most introductory is the use of women and feminity to define guys and virility. To the extent that they aren't women, males are macho, independent, impregnable, tough, strong, aggressive, important, commanding, in control, rational, and non-emotional. "Real women" are dependent, vulnerable, bendy, weak, probative, compassionate, intuitive, sensitive, and humane. In patriarchal culture," real women" and" genuine men" are principally different. Men's self-esteem is soothed by women, who reflect men at "double their natural size." Women demonstrate that they're real men by postponing to them, allowing them to set the docket and do the utmost of the talking, and stroking their self-esteem in a variety of ways. Men see themselves as they should be in the eyes of women tone-sufficient, independent, strong, and successful. In their connections with individual women, heterosexual men anticipate to see only themselves and their own wants imaged back to them. Men exploit women to unite with one another by demeaning and depreciating women inclusively. 'This can be done in violent ways, similar as gang rape, or in subtle ways, similar as uttering sexist jokes or assessing or ranking women's body as" babes." Participation in council fraternities, football brigades, and other manly- dominated organisations that denigrate women is introductory patriarchal virility training.' Men are prompted to borrow slighting stations toward women, whether active or un-resistant, in these each-manly gatherings in order to prove their class in the virile brotherhood. Males are sexual subjects and women are sexual objects in patriarchy; women's fornication exists to gratify men.

Whether or not a woman craves coitus is constantly unconnected to whether or not she has coitus. Because patriarchal heterosexuality is "man- dominated, manly-linked, and manly-centered," it illustrates and teaches broader patriarchal principles men's demands and gests are important, just as manly pleasure and climax are what make" having coitus" possible. (Becker, 2015)

6.3.2 Patriarchy and men

Patriarchy is a social structure, not a male-dominated conspiracy. It is not necessarily deliberate; men do not have to intend to oppress women. Men, too, are subjected to huge pressures from a societal structure that produces patriarchal avenues of least resistance, such as going along with locker room babe talk. Patriarchy has a negative impact on both men and women. Masculine males, for example, are harmed when they learn to suppress emotions and ignore their needs for connection and intimacy in order to avoid being labelled as sissies and retain the control required to protect themselves from other guys. Although a male can be treated differently than a similarly placed woman (which is sex discrimination as defined by our courts), a guy in a patriarchal culture cannot be oppressed as a member of the group men since men as a group are not oppressed. To be sure, males can be oppressed in small groups. For example, African-American, Latino, and Asian-American men, as well as feminine and gay men, are constantly repressed. Patriarchy, on the other hand, does not oppress men as men. What about men who have been drafted and are obligated to serve in combat? Men must be oppressed as a result of such policies. However, as Allan Johnson has pointed out, 'a community cannot oppress itself" until oppression loses its basic meaning and is merely equated with pain. Of course, a group can "inflict injury on itself", and its members can "suffer from their social position." If "oppression" refers to social inequities between groups, the dominant group of a culture cannot be oppressed as members of that society's dominant group. "Oppression is a relation that exists between groups, not between groups and society as a whole," says Allan Johnson. In a patriarchal culture, males cannot be oppressed as men, yet they do not feel privileged. The fact that patriarchal power has become increasingly institutionalised is part of the answer. (Becker, 2015)

6.4   Gender discrimination and patriarchy in India

Patriarchy is a social structure, not a manly-dominated conspiracy. It isn't inescapably deliberate; men don't have to intend to oppress women. Men, too, are subordinated to huge pressures from a societal structure that produces patriarchal

avenues of least resistance, similar as going along with locker room babe talk. Patriarchy has a negative impact on both men and women. Mannish males, for illustration, are harmed when they learn to suppress feelings and ignore their requirements for connection and closeness in order to avoid being labeled as recreants and retain the control needed to cover themselves from other guys. For illustration, African-American, Latino, and Asian-American men, as well as womanlike and gay men, are constantly repressed. Patriarchy, on the other hand, doesn't oppress men as men. What about men who have been drafted and are obliged to serve in combat? Men must be oppressed as a result of similar programs. Still, as Allan Johnson has refocused out, a community can not oppress itself until oppression loses its introductory meaning and is simply equated with pain. Of course, a group can induce injury on itself" and its members can" suffer from their social position. If "oppression" refers to social injuries between groups, the dominant group of a culture can not be oppressed as members of that society's dominant group. "Oppression is a relation that exists between groups, not between groups and society as a whole," says Allan Johnson. In a patriarchal culture, males can not be oppressed as men, yet they don't feel privileged. The fact that patriarchal power has come decreasingly institutionalised is part of the answer. (Raju, 2014)

6.4.1 Historical approach

The most ingrained kinds of gender inequity were embedded into the traditional Indian social system. Although gender inequality has existed in substantial amounts in society for a long time in many forms, its significance has only recently increased. In traditional culture, there was a great deal of disparity between men and women. Women were socially, economically, and politically marginalised. Many traditions and conventions made women the scapegoats. In the name of *Sati*[1], she was ruthlessly murdered. For generations, society has accepted child marriage, Kanyasulkam[2], and prostitution as normal, and women have had little say in the matter. Women's roles were limited to domestic life, particularly kitchen work and childbearing and rearing. She has no business participating in commercial or political activity. In terms of fundamental essentials of existence, such as food, clothes, and shelter, girl children were discriminated against. The woman in the household is the last to eat. She is the one who performs a variety of menial tasks. Her work is treated with contempt. Outside of the home, most women's work is limited to agricultural labour (in agriculture) and unorganised activities in the urban sector. For a long time, the Indian census ignored their work when measuring the number of economically engaged people in the country. (Raju, 2014)

Indian culture today demonstrates a profound link to the country's ancient past. The history of India sheds light on the current condition of Indian women in society. The Rigveda, an ancient literature dating from around 1,500 to 1,000 B.C., provided textual evidence of Indian women's standing. In addition, archaeological, sculptural, and artistic discoveries shed light on the character of ancient Indian women's life Men and women were created as equals, according to Vedic culture. The word 'Hindu' comes from the Indian region known as the 'Indus Valley' Hindu means "people of the Indus," implying that Hinduism is both a religion and a way of life. Hinduism is supposed to have begun in the fifth and sixth century B.C. Although Hindus worship various gods, there are two fundamental beliefs that influence the position of many women in India: karma and dharma. Karma refers to an individual's deeds in a previous life having an impact on future lives, whereas dharma refers to the application of laws. When the two are combined, it means that practising good dharma in this life increases one's karma in the next. This could explain why disadvantaged women prefer to accept their fate rather than fight for justice. Men and women in the Vedic culture were treated equally. The Vedas, astrology, geography, veterinary science, and martial arts were all studied by women. Ramsha, a female scholar, wrote seven mantras (hymns) and disputed the elevation of women's buddhi (intelligence). They exercised their rights to marry whom they pleased, to follow their faith, to remarry if they became widows, to fight in battles, and to migrate freely. Women who fought in conflicts, such as Mudgalani, show that educated women had assets, independence, and talent. At least twenty accomplished women are mentioned in the Veda. The Vedic literature makes no mention of a preference for boy children or any sexual disparities in rites. India is a sex-segregated traditional civilization whose firmly rooted norms and behaviours are sanctioned by practically all religions. In India, a key turning point altered the trajectory of history in the subjugation of women.

Another Sanskrit scripture, the "Manusmriti" (Laws of Manu), was authored between 1500 B.C. and 200 A.D. and proven to be an important precursor. Manu was the originator of sacred societal laws and the one who enacted them. The Manusmriti was revered by Brahmin (highest caste) priests, who preached its twelve chapters and 2,684 verses to the common people. In various respects, Chapter IX obviously discriminates against women. Separate laws existed for husband and wife, with the husband's job being to "particularly monitor his wife in order to preserve his offspring pure". It has been mentioned that, "A husband must continuously be regarded as a deity by a faithful wife", according to a change from Vedic times. Women's equality was no longer fashionable. Women's bodily and psychological freedoms were restricted as a result of patriarchy's pervasiveness. Every aspect of a woman's existence was regulated, supervised, and guided. She couldn't own anything,

couldn't displease her husband, must be responsible for all the household work and bringing up children, couldn't perform religious duties, must prepare all the food, couldn't have female children, couldn't have her own needs, thoughts, or actions, must be loyal and obedient, and couldn't remarry if she became a widow (Manu). For many poor women, their lives are controlled and monitored from birth to death. Females' marriage ages were decreased, remarriage was prohibited, and women's liberties were severely curtailed. Masani (1973), for example, said that men and women "are products of culturized attitudes, tales, beliefs, and values that are socially generated," and that women's standing in Hindu society is tied to caste and religion. Even in the twenty-first century, this patriarchal perspective of women continues to dominate and affect Indian society. (Rajvi, Roth 2004)

6.4.2 Literacy rate and gender discrimination

Gender biases can be shown in literacy rates. According to Vecchio and Roy (1998), education in India is sexist and biased. Because of patriarchy, according to Medhi (2000), even when education is available, it does not improve women's status. Even if they had a job, 99 percent of female post-graduate women remained to play typical housewife responsibilities, according to a research. Medhi's bleak pronouncement that women's emancipation will "take an unlimited period of time" is rather depressing. Parents prefer to spend in a boy's education because girls are groomed for marriage. A prevalent misconception is that when females marry, they become the property of their in-laws, resulting in a low return on investment in education. Education is unaffordable for girls from low-income homes with restricted budgets. According to Vechhio & Roy (1998), education for economic profit is not available, hence the type of education a female receives is generally insufficient. Because patriarchal ideas predominate in poor households, women from lower socioeconomic groups are sometimes denied access to education.

Education isn't considered vital because the conception is to keep a woman in purdah[3] (covered and isolated). Gender prejudice also means that poor women are denied access to any resource that requires plutocrat, similar as health, nutrition, and education. Still, she suffers immensely due to her lack of education and effects. If a woman's partner dies or abandons her. She doesn't have the fiscal means to support herself. Matters prefer to keep their daughters at home since their work is more useful there. Household tasks are borne primarily by women. This means they get up first, eat last, and sleep late after all of their liabilities have been fulfilled. There's veritably little time or energy left for training. As a result, women's worth in India has declined over time. While Masani argued that artistic views are delicate to alter and may indeed beget new shafts, Vecchio and Roy (1998) agreed that this

problem can be answered with the support of development enterprise acclimatized to women's requirements. Socioeconomic expansion is hampered by a disagreement between liberals and reactionaries. According to Masani (1973), because India is still a youthful republic, "the constitution is fated to be relatively slow". Masani's protestation was written in 1973, lower than thirty times after India's independence. Nevertheless, it might be argued that poor Indian women have made little progress in the fifty times since independence. Women must have equal access to education in order to raise their mindfulness of their rights and employment openings. "Functional knowledge and access to training" can be handed by education. Knowledge can boost a woman's tone- regard and confidence, encouraging her to assert her rights rather than counting on mediators. When it comes to attestation, ignorance becomes a chain for women because they can not read; poor women are at the mercy of officers and employers who deprive them of their rights. "Educated, healthy, and secure individualities" are needed for profitable growth. As long as women struggle for introductory survival while education remains a luxury they can not go, a cycle of poverty will persist. Their income will stay poor as long as they don't admit proper education. Equal education can ameliorate women's prospects of chancing work and earning further plutocrat. (Rajvi, Roth, 2004a)

6.4.3 Causes of gender discrimination in India

The following are the crucial causes of gender demarcation in India

A. Poverty

In India, 70 percent of the 30 percent of people living in poverty are women. In India, women's poverty is linked to a lack of profitable occasion and autonomy, as well as a lack of access to profitable coffers like as loans, land power, and heritage, as well as a lack of access to education and support services, and their limited participation in decision- timber. Women's profitable condition is no more, and men continue to have a lesser portion of the pie. Therefore, in our patriarchal society, poverty is at the base of gender demarcation, and profitable reliance on the manly counterpart is a cause of gender imbalance.

B. Illiteracy

Despite noteworthy efforts by countries around the world to expand basic education, there are around 960 million illiterate individuals, with women accounting for two-thirds of the total. Gender discrimination has arisen as a result of females' educational backwardness.

C. Lack of Employment Facilities

Women are unable to reconcile the tensions between new economic and traditional domestic duties. In both rural and urban India, women spend a significant amount of time doing unpaid domestic chores to support their families. Because of intra-household responsibilities, women's mobility is limited, they are unable to respond to new chances and change to new employment. Within a family, rights and responsibilities are not evenly allocated. The traditional division of labour and male ownership of assets diminishes women's motivation to try new things. Furthermore, childbearing has significant ramifications for women's engagement in the labour force.

De-skilling and the termination of long-term labour contracts are common outcomes of time spent having and rearing children. As a result of unemployment, women are unable to become economically self-sufficient, and their economic dependence on their male counterpart is a source of gender imbalance.

D. Social Customs, Beliefs and Practices

Social conventions, attitudes, and practises do not discriminate against women. Women's roles are primarily confined to the domestic realm in the patrilineal joint family structure, which assigns them an inferior status, authority, and power in comparison to men. Men are seen as the primary providers and guardians of a family, whilst women are seen as only providing assistance and tending to the hearth. Boys and girls are drained in different ways for various adult responsibilities, prestige, and authority. Men have controlled women as a group in Indian culture since ancient times, and their status in the family and society has been poor.

E. Social Altitude

Despite the fact that many social activists and reformers fought against all odds to restore women's honour and dignity, attitudinal discrepancies still plague our rural populations. Despite significant social and technological progress, women continue to be victims of exploitation, superstition, ignorance, and social crimes in our society.

Perhaps a viable source of gender gap is the social stigma that women are housekeepers and should be restricted to the four walls of the house. For the sake of the family's reputation, they should not speak out about their money. Men are given a lot of weight in patriarchal societies.

F. Lack of Awareness of Women

The majority of women are unaware of their fundamental rights and abilities. They also lack a knowledge of how socioeconomic and political forces influence them. Because of their ignorance and unawareness, they tolerate all forms of discriminatory practises that exist in our family and society. (Shuani, n.d)

G. Son preference

Boys are granted exclusive rights to inherit the family name and properties, and they are seen as having a higher standing in the family. Another element is religious acts, which are only conducted by males for the afterlife of their parents. All of these things add to the appeal of sons. Furthermore, the threat of parents' daughters being "lost" to the husband's family, as well as the high cost of a daughter's dowry, deters parents from having daughters.

H. Discrimination against girls

Boys are granted exclusive rights to inherit the family name and properties, and they are seen as having special significance within the family. Religious acts, which can only be conducted by males for the afterlife of their parents, are another reason. Sons are more attractive due to all of these qualities. Furthermore, the threat of parents' daughters being "lost" to the husband's family, as well as the high cost of a dowry for daughters deters parents from having daughters.

I. Dowry

Dowry is a monetary payment or a gift given to the bridegroom's family in addition to the bride. In India, the dowry system contributes to gender inequality by instilling the belief that females are a financial burden on their families. Parents' resources invested in their daughters are limited by such ideas, as is her negotiating power within the family. (Sharma, 2015)

6.5　Conclusion

Women's participation is essential for a nation's or society's growth. Women will deliver all of the potentials, talents, and information needed to improve the family, the nation, and the entire planet if gender prejudice is eliminated. (Marimuthu, 2008)

Gender demarcation must be addressed at all situations so that no bone is denied the occasion to study and flourish. As a result, everyone, anyhow of gender, needs to gain a head start in life in terms of education and other chances. To negotiate this, we must unite as a society. (Topps, n.d.)

6.6   Summary

Gender is a socio-cultural word that refers to the socially defined roles and behaviours that are allocated to males and females in a given society. Gender inequality, or gender discrimination, refers to unequal rights between male and female based on various gender roles, which leads to unequal treatment in life. The word gender inequality has been around for a long time, but it wasn't until the beginning of the twentieth century that it became one of the most fast, dramatic social shifts. Gender inequality is a societal problem that results in unequal treatment of men and women in society. Patriarchy is a system of relationships, ideas, and values that structure gender inequality between men and women and is rooted in political, social, and economic systems. Although a male can be treated differently than a similarly placed woman, a guy in a patriarchal culture cannot be oppressed as a member of the group men since men as a group are not oppressed. In a patriarchal culture, males can not be oppressed as men, yet they don't feel privileged. Although gender inequality has existed in substantial amounts in society for a long time in many forms, its significance has only recently increased. Because patriarchal ideas predominate in poor households, women from lower socioeconomic groups are sometimes denied access to education. Men have controlled women as a group in Indian culture since ancient times, and their status in the family and society has been poor. Boys are granted exclusive rights to inherit the family name and properties, and they are seen as having a higher standing in the family Another element is religious acts, which are only conducted by males for the afterlife of their parents.

6.7   Questions

1. Answer Briefly:

    a. How and why did patriarchy dominate society?

    b. Why patriarchy should not be considered as male dominated conspiracy?

    c. Narrate briefly historical approach of gender discrimination in India in view of patriarchy.

    d. How literacy is associated with gender decimation in India?

    e. What are the causes of gender discrimination in India?

2. Answer Very Briefly:

    a. What is meant by gender inequality?

    b. What is meant by Patriarchy?

    c. How did Filmer challenge the biblical tradition of patriarchy?

d. What are the features of 'real women' in the patriarchic culture or society?

e. How patriarchies have a negative impact on both men and women?

f. What were the restrictions and responsibilities of women as prescribed in Manusmriti?

g. For which qualities boys are more attractive in Indian families?

3. Answer in details:

a. Evaluate the position of women in patriarchal society.

b. Compare in detail the social status of Indian women in post Vedic period with that of Vedic period.

c. Describe the causes of gender discrimination in India.

6.8   Reference

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6.9 End Notes

1. **Sati** is a historical Hindu practice in which a widow sacrificed herself by sitting atop her deceased husband's funeral pyre

2. **Kanyasulkam** is a practice of parents, chiefly in South India, for arranging marriage of their pre-pubescent daughters to old men for cash.

3. **Purdah** is a practice that was inaugurated by Muslims and later adopted by various Hindus, especially in India which involves the seclusion of women from public observation by means of concealing clothing (including the veil) and by the use of high-walled enclosures, screens, and curtains within the home.

6.10 Suggested Readings

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6.11 Glossary

Hierarchical : Of the nature of a hierarchy; arranged in order of rank.

Kinship : Blood relationship.

Legitimate : Conforming to the law or to rules.

Virility : The quality of having strength, energy, and a strong sex drive; manliness.

Heterosexual : Sexually attracted to people of the opposite sex.

Sissies : Effeminate or cowardly boys or men.

Menial : Not requiring much skill and lacking prestige.

Pervasiveness : The quality of spreading widely or being present throughout an area or a group of people.

Plutocrat : A person whose power derives from their wealth.

Patrilineal : Relating to or based on relationship to the father or descent through the male line.

Unit 7 ◻ Family, Work : Sites of Inequality

Structure

7.1   Learning Objectives

After going through the sub units the students will be able to:

- ✓ To know the nature of gender inequality in the families.
- ✓ To know about wage differentials of women.
- ✓ To know about nature of work of women in India
- ✓ To know about the legislative status of women in India.

7.2   Introduction

Despite the expansion of democratic and egalitarian principles, girls and young women continue to be disadvantaged in many parts of the world. In terms of economic, social, educational, and career prospects, millions of girls and women's lives are marked by a lack of gender equality. Girls and women, particularly in the developing world or the global South, often lack access to resources and have limited decision-making power within the family, household, and community. This is because gender inequality, or the uneven connection between men and women, is still ingrained in cultural ideas and social ties. (Trask, n.d.)

Gender difficulties and concerns were one of the issues that drew policymakers' attention after India gained independence. Gender concerns have raised to the top of the policy agenda. In the setting of the intersection between new economic policy perceptions and gender relations, questions of gender equality and justice took on new significance. Gender equality has been a part of the country's poverty and human misery-eradication policy. Because women may offer new energy and new insights, policymakers believe that a positive commitment to gender equality and equity will boost every area of action to eliminate poverty. Since the last few decades, there has been a lot of discussion about women and growth. Several initiatives, both at the national and international levels, resulted in the passage of several loss statutes, notably IPC Section 498 (a) for loss against physical violence and Section 125 for maintenance. Feminism's influence has been continuously increasing and acquiring intellectual respectability. (Raju, 2014)

7.3   Family and gender inequality

Families continue to be the most important unit through which to effect change, as well as to protect and empower girls and women. While empirical research has shown that education, work, and political participation are essential for gender equality, access to these resources is influenced by culturally defined social ties. To put it another way, a girl or a woman must be able to access educational opportunities, a job, and civic and community activity in order to benefit from them. A girl's or a woman's ability to take advantage of opportunities afforded by local, national, or international efforts might be influenced by her family relationships. Fathers, brothers, and husbands decide the life choices that girls and women are allowed to make in many societal situations around the world. As a result, educating boys and men about the value of girls and women, as well as encouraging them to promote gender equality in their homes, is vital.

Currently, a predominant Western understanding of social existence centres on particular social projects, programmes, and policies. That viewpoint obscures the continuing global significance of families in people's lives. Families serve as an important protective mechanism for girls and women in many societies and among many ethnic and cultural groupings. Girls and women are protected by the family group from prejudice, oppression, and violence in the greater community.

Families are a fundamental component in understanding social behaviour in every civilization, both socio-historically and globally. Families have an essential role in any society's economic and political processes. They are a key site where big changes can be achieved that has an impact on the rest of society. The family serves as a bridge between individuals and the greater society, which includes economic and political systems and policies. Despite their centrality to the running of most communities, other entities such as educational systems, political and religious groups, and other institutions have not replaced families. Families continue to be at the core of social life, serving as the major means of coping with social, economic, and political adversities, as well as the socialisation and education of children. In all societies families are the major location for people integration into society. (Trask, n.d.)

7.3.1   Gender discrimination in family : In the context of India

The most ingrained kinds of gender inequity were embedded into the traditional Indian social system. Although gender inequality has existed in substantial amounts in society for a long time in many forms, its significance has only recently increased. In traditional culture, there was a great deal of disparity between men and women. Women were socially, economically, and politically marginalised. Many traditions and conventions made women the scapegoats. In the name of Sati[1], she was ruthlessly murdered.

For generations, society has accepted child marriage, Kanyasulkam[2], and prostitution as normal, and women have had little say in the matter. Women's roles were limited to domestic life, particularly kitchen work and childbearing and rearing. She has no business participating in commercial or political activity. In terms of fundamental essentials of existence, such as food, clothes, and shelter, girl children were discriminated against. The woman in the household is the last to eat. She is the one who performs a variety of menial tasks. Her work is treated with contempt. Outside of the home, most women's work is limited to agricultural labour (in agriculture) and unorganised activities in the urban area. For a long time, the Indian census ignored their work when calculating the number of economically active people in the country. (Raju, 2014)

Male and female are equal and play an important part in the creation and development of their families, communities, and society in general. Nonetheless, the battle for equality became a central focus for the movement around the world. In the discrepancy between sex and physical shape, there is no distinction of status. A woman is the equal of a man, not the inferior. Women in India have always been considered oppressed members of society, and they have been ignored for ages. The birth of the son is celebrated; however the child of the daughter is bereft of joy. Children are trained to be conscientious and thorough. Girls who are homebound and shy, on the other hand, are welcomed. Both of these distinctions are based on sexual and societal factors. This has a detrimental influence on sustainability goals and, as a result, economic growth is restricted. It obstructs overall well-being since preventing women from participating in social, political, and economic activities can have a negative impact on society as a whole. As a result, gender inequality is distinct from other types of socioeconomic disparity. In India, gender inequality is a major issue. In today's world, women are particularly successful in a variety of fields. Many Indian women are also subjected to sexism and gender discrimination. (Khan, 2014)

7.3.1.1 Causes of gender discrimination in family

The following are some examples of how gender inequality manifests in many Indian households:

Birth:

The situation is currently graver than in previous decades. Previously, families would continue to have children until they had boys. The birth of a girl was frowned upon, and is still frowned upon now, but foeticide was not as common. It was normal to see families with a large number of children, both males and girls. The younger children would be boys when the elder children were girls (the girls being born while waiting for the son). The value of having only two children (represented in commercials as a boy and a girl) was widely popularized during the 1980s and 1990s as a result of family planning and population control campaigns.

Many Indian families have grasped the importance of being able to offer resources to fewer children, and would prefer to have no more than two children. It's not a problem if the first child is a girl and the second is a male. It's also OK if both children are boys. What concerns me the most is what will happen if the second child is also a female? Many families (typically financially well-off households) turn to female foeticide in this situation (which is illegal but rampant). When this isn't the case, the lady is pressured to have a third kid in the hopes that

the third will be a son. When all else fails, some families seek to adopt a male child as a final resort. When a married woman becomes a mother, she is appreciated and (relatively) powerful for the first time. This empowerment, on the other hand, comes only when she becomes the mother of a male (rather than a daughter). She would have ensured the family's economic, lineage, and food security, as well as the power dynamics, for a long time by bringing the son into the world (the groom's family is socially more powerful than the bride's family).

Education and growing up

1. The son(s) would frequently receive a better education than the daughter (s). This involves sending sons to better, private schools and sending daughters to public institutions. When there was no male sibling to give up resources to and just girl siblings, girls had a better chance of getting a good education. In recent years, this pattern has begun to reverse, with both sons and daughters being sent to top schools (this is, of course, also linked to economic prosperity and being able to afford quality schools for all children). 2) Daughters are expected to take on more domestic responsibilities than sons. 3) When daughters have a university degree, they are under pressure to study and work in the same city, but sons have more options to pursue their studies in another location. This, too, is gradually changing.

Marriage and property

The requirement for daughters to leave their parents house and live with their husband's family is an important aspect of Indian cultural ethos and a major source of inequity. Attempting to change the status quo would necessitate a shift in Indian society's core structure. This is also why daughters (as opposed to sons) are viewed as a "risky investment," resulting to concerns such as foeticide and a lack of or poor education. Many of the problems originate from living with the husband's family, ranging from 1) dowry to 2) subordination to 3) lack of right to work. Personality and power dynamics are frequently involved. After marriage, a woman is obligated to follow a certain dress code, whereas a man is free to dress as he pleases. If a woman loses her husband, she is compelled to abandon the dress code she has become accustomed to in favour of a new, more difficult dress code and lifestyle. In the form of wedding expenditures, a daughter is handed less than 5% of her parents' property. Even yet, a significant portion of the day is spent in pomp and display. A daughter's gold jewels, which she receives from her parents and in-laws, are frequently her only source of protection. The remainder of the funds is spent on the daughter's wedding expenditures. The son(s) inherits a large portion of his parents' (father's) estate. While Indian law provides for property rights for daughters, this is frequently ignored. As a result, if a daughter is abused by her in-laws, she often has

nowhere to turn. This, combined with the societal assumption that she "leaves her husband's house only after death," leaves her with no financial security. (Agarwal, 2014)

7.3.1.2 Family laws

Personal laws are another name for family laws. Religious beliefs and women are the foundations of family law. There is a danger that their laws will be misconstrued. These laws contain a number of inequities in terms of marriage, divorce, child support, and property rights.

1) Marriage combines the elements of a sacrament and a contract. The qualities of a sacrament can be seen in different religious rites. The contract qualities are visible on both parties' consent and are of some, if not great, relevance.

2) Both parties must adhere to the Hindu faith.

3) The marriage must be monogamous because bigamy is illegal.

4) The Hindu Marriage Act does not make marriage registration mandatory. Marriage registration, on the other hand, is proof of marriage.

5) After marriage, having a physical relationship with a third party.

6) Cruelty to the body and mind.

7) Desertion for a period of a minimum of two years.

8) Conversion to a different faith.

9) Having leprosy, which is contagious and incurable.

10) The couple has not cohabited for a year following their legal separation.

11) A wife can file for divorce based on marital rape.

12) Bigamy is one of the most common reasons for divorce. (Ramaswami, n.d)

7.4   Work and gender inequality

Work as an activity is characterised as a gendered definition of work when it is defined, understood, acknowledged, valued, and distributed according to genders. There is a contrast drawn between the types of job done by women and men. Some of the key aspects of gendered employment are as follows.

1) It had always been accepted that any activity or task which was done by men was considered as work and men had the right to work.

2) On the other hand, all activities or tasks which were done by women within the house were not considered as work and hence were never given any

value. These were not considered as economic activities.

3) It was observed that household work always took more than 16 hours of women s day. However this work was not recognized as work but was only considered as their duty. This housework was unpaid work and hence it led to visibility of women s work.

4) It basically meant that only men's labour done outside the home was considered visible work. As a result, men became the breadwinners, while women who performed domestic duties were considered as dependents.

5) As a result, employment in the house was gendered. When women started working outside the home, they carried this gendered view of work with them.

6) Women are chosen for activities and tasks that need abilities similar to those used by women in housework and servicing the family. When women engage in such activities, it is regarded as low-paying and referred to as "feminine labour". Study conducted on women working in the prawns unit found key features of work that were discovered in a study.

7) Women are chosen for tasks that require constant focus and are very repetitious, unskilled, or less skilled.

8) Women are chosen since they are more productive and focused on completing tasks. They are, however, disorganised, fragile, and their labour is regarded as second-class. As a result, individuals may be obliged to work for poor pay.

9) When technological advancements are made, males are selected for positions that require greater control and decision-making.

10) Women are more likely to work from home. This is because it is thought that women can contribute to the family's income without having to leave the house. Women, on the other hand, do not perceive themselves to be employees in this position. As a result, their worker invisibility grows.

11) Women are preferred in positions with second-class status, poor pay, and male disinterest. This exemplifies the types of biases that work against women.

12) Men are favoured in occupations that involve a certain level of competence and automation.

13) It has been noted that when a new technology is launched, males are motivated to participate in training to enhance their skills. Women are not encouraged to take part in any training or skill development programmes. This type of prejudice makes it harder for women to stay employed in the

organised sector, where talents are valued.

14) In the agricultural sector, this gendered concept of work is also evident. When contemporary technology is utilised in agriculture, women are removed from the activities. (Ramaswami, n.d)

7.4.1 Women and wage differentials

7.4.1.1 Causes

1) The home is regarded to be a woman's true workplace. When women leave the house to work, they are viewed as second-class citizens. Her work is given a lesser amount of weight. As a result, she is paid less.

2) Women's work is connected with having no or few talents, whereas men's labour is considered highly competent. As a result, it is assumed that women do not deserve to be paid equally to males.

3) Women's labour is shrouded in invisibility. In a study, it was discovered that certain actions performed by women at work were not specified in the state government's notification for wage payment. As a result, they were paid less.

4) Women workers are frequently hired on a temporary or contractual basis rather than on a permanent basis. As a result, it becomes easier to exploit them, and one common form of exploitation is paying women workers lower wages.

5) Because the women workers were dispersed, they lacked organisation. They do not form their own union but were members of the men's union. This has an impact on their ability to find work. It aided their exploitation by creating salary disparities.

6) Due to financial constraints, women participated at lower levels of work. Women labourers may be readily influenced to work for lower wages because there was less demand and more supply of labour.

7) Because of patriarchal attitudes, there is a gender disparity in education, skills, and opportunities for women. Women's bargaining capacity to demand better wages was harmed as a result of this. They had no choice but to accept lower pay.

8) Women workers were not provided any incentives or opportunities to improve their abilities. It suggests they were put on the job at a lesser level on purpose. Employers justified the lower wages paid to women workers in this way.

9) Separation of gender in society is also an important aspect. Gender inequality

is a common issue that can also be seen in the workplace. As a result, female employees confront a range of challenges, including lower pay.

10) The lack of effective action by the government and trade unions in favour of women employees has also contributed to the persistence of wage disparities.

7.4.1.2 Effects

1) Wage disparities put women employees at a disadvantage in the labour market. It implies that women workers are not valued highly.

2) Women's job is regarded as second-class since they are paid less. Furthermore, because their employment is secondary, they are underpaid. As a result, women employees are trapped in a vicious cycle.

3) Women workers are denied equal pay despite working as much as men. This causes individuals to lose their self-esteem and confidence.

4) Women are frequently forced to work due to financial constraints. Despite their lower pay, they put up with the discrimination. They don't protest because they're afraid of losing their meagre earnings. As a result, there is little incentive to defy the system.

5) Wage disparities reinforce women's subjugation at work, in the home, in the community, and in public life. (Ramaswami, n.d)

7.5   Women & work in India

In India, women are the unseen workers. Women can't participate in better-paying jobs because they don't have equal access to the job market, therefore their economic standing remains stagnant. India has squandered a vast pool of undeveloped human capital with enormous potential. Women's exploitation in the workplace was substantiated in a report by India's Ministry of Social Welfare in 1987, which highlighted women's low earnings, gender prejudices in the workplace, prolonged hours, and terrible working conditions. Women workers compete with technology as machines take over manual labour previously performed by unskilled women.

In India, 90 percent of women work in the informal sector due to a lack of job possibilities. Women's economic engagement is complicated by a variety of cultural and regional constraints. The true situation of women's economic growth in India is clouded by differing definitions and reporting methodologies.

Amartya Sen (1999) investigated economic reforms in India and discovered that income facilitates the development of other skills. Although this may be true

for upper-class women seeking personal fulfilment, poor women's primary motivation for working outside the home is to earn money to meet their fundamental requirements. Inability of the main earner to provide for the family, family emergency requiring more income, death of the main earner, and the female's desire for economic independence or raising the standard of living are the four main reasons for women's participation in work, according to Khanna & Varghese (1978).

Poor working women are India's backbone, but their contributions are rarely recognised. Women are enslaved by patriarchal attitudes, which force them to work in gender-specific jobs. Gender inequities deprive women of their ability to earn a living and survive. Purdah prohibits women from working "outside the house." A woman with insufficient abilities will struggle to cope if the male head of the household dies. She has little choice but to rely on subsistence employment and her family's generosity. Women's labour is feminised as a result of gender discrimination. Dhobis (launderers) in Rajasthan, for example, will wash but not iron the clothes. Dhobis in Uttar Pradesh require that women do all of the washing while they iron. In the event of any contradictions, men's wishes take precedence. Despite the fact that women are the primary breadwinners in 35% of Indian households, society prefers to see them as housewives. (Razvi, Roth, 2004)

In India, women employees account for only 22% of the total labour force, whereas men workers account for three-quarters of the whole labour market. Regardless of their sector or style of work, men workers earn significantly more than women workers. Furthermore, wage disparities between men and women workers are far bigger. In India, the contribution of within-group inequality is likewise much higher when the workforce is divided by gender. Rural workers in India make up more than 70% of the entire workforce, but they earn less than a third of what average urban workers do.

There is a greater income disparity between urban and rural workers in India, but there is also a greater wage disparity between the two. The informal sector is the primary source of employment in India's expanding labour market. However, salary disparities in the official sector are greater than in the informal sector. (Lama, Majumder, 2018)

7.6 Legislation

Several laws, legislations, policies, and institutional reforms have been passed in India to implement the gender action plan for women's development. Legislation is a crucial tool for bringing about change in India's unequal economic and social standing. Few laws were passed in pre-independence India in response to societal

demands and humanitarian considerations. The Bengal Sati Regulation Act of 1829[3], as well as analogous Anti-Sati laws in Madras and Bombay, the Hindu Widow Remarriage Act of 1856[4], the Hindu Women's Right to Property Act of 1937[5], (The Muslim Personal Law), the Shariat Act 1937[6], and the Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act 1939[7] are among them. Following independence, significant changes in legislation and litigation have permitted increased participation of women in political and socio-economic development activities, with the increase appearing to be more likely at the lower levels of decision-making than at the top levels.

Article 14 of the Indian Constitution states that, the state shall not deny to any person equality before the law or equal protection of the law. Article 15 states that, no woman shall be discriminated against on the basis of sex. Article 15 (3) states that, the state shall make special provisions for women and children and Article 16 states that, the state shall not deny to any person equality before or equal protection of the law. Article 39(a) emphasises that all citizens, men and women alike, have the right to a sufficient means of subsistence; Article 39(d) states that the state should ensure equal pay for equal work for both men and women; and Article 34 states that the state shall provide for just and humane working conditions and maternity relief. The 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Indian Constitution, enacted in 1993, represent a watershed moment in India's history, granting local governments a slew of new powers. It lays the door for decentralisation and empowers both men and women. (Sivkumar, 2008)

7.7   Conclusion

Women's participation is essential for a nation's or society's growth. Women will deliver all of the potentials, talents, and information needed to improve the family, the nation, and the entire planet if gender prejudice is eliminated. Indian society has a history of male chauvinism, but it has just begun to recognise the value of women and has acknowledged women's empowerment, women as active agents for development, and participation in and guidance of their own development.

7.8   Summary

Despite the expansion of democratic and egalitarian principles, girls and young women continue to be disadvantaged. Girls and women often lack access to resources and limited decision-making power. Policymakers believe that a commitment to gender equality and equity will boost every area of action to eliminate poverty.

7.9. Questions

1. Answer Briefly :

   a. What is the role of a family to protect a girl of the family?

   b. Describe the gender discrimination in Indian families.

   c. Describe briefly the causes of gender discrimination in Indian family.

   d. Write a note about family laws in India.

   e. Describe gender inequality in Indian workplaces.

   f. What are the causes of wage differentials in India?

   g. What are the effects of wage differentials in India?

   h. What kind of discrimination do Indian women face in family and livelihood work?

   i. Describe the legislative measures that have been taken to save Indian women from gender inequality.

2. Answer Very Briefly :

   a. Why is educating boys and men about the value of girls and women vital?

   b. In which respect are families considered as an important protective mechanism for girls and women?

   c. What rights are Indian women deprived of?

   d. What are the major problems for a woman that originate from living with the husband's family?

   e. What are the main origins of domestic violence on married women in India?

   f. Name three major acts that have been passed to protect women from gender discrimination.

3. Answer in Detail :

   a. Describe in details what kind of inequality do the Indian women face in their families and workplaces.

   b. Describe the causes and effects of detraction of women in Indian society. Discuss briefly the laws that have been passed to prevent this devaluation.

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7.11 End Notes

1. **Sati** is a historical Hindu practice in which a widow sacrificed herself by sitting atop her deceased husband's funeral pyre

2. **Kanyasulkam** is a practice of parents, chiefly in South India, for arranging marriage of their pre-pubescent daughters to old men for cash. Bengal Sati Regulation Act of 1829

3. **The Bengal Sati Regulation Act of 1829**, signed by then-Governor-General Lord William Bentinck on December 4, 1829, abolished the practise of Sati (an evil Hindu practice of ancient time to burn a widow alive on her husband's funeral pyre) in all British Indian jurisdictions. Sati was classified

in the legislation as "revolting to human nature's sensibilities." Raja Ram Mohan Roy's role to the passage of this bill will be remembered forever**.**

4. **The Hindu Widow Remarriage Act of 1856** was a landmark piece of legislation that allowed widows to remarry. This Act is also known as Act XV, 1856and was passed on July 16, 1856. It made widow remarriage possible in all Indian jurisdictions under East India Company administration. The law came into effect from July 26, 1856. Before the Indian Rebellion of 1857, it was prepared by Lord Dalhousie and passed by Lord Canning. The most well-known campaigner was Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar. He petitioned the Legislative Council, but Radhakanta Deb and the Dharma Sabha responded with a counter petition with nearly four times the number of signatures. Despite the objections and the fact that it was seen as a flagrant breach of customs at the time, Lord Dalhousie himself finalised the law.

5. **Right to Property Act** or **The Hindu Women's Right to Properties Act 1937** was a landmark piece of legislation that allowed widows, right on their husbands' property. Under this Act, the widow of a deceased coparcener of a Mithakshara (A joint Hindu family consists of a male member of a family with his sons, grandsons and great-grandsons) undivided family will have the same interest which her husband had while he was alive.

6. **Shariat Act 1937** or **Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937** deals with marriage, succession, inheritance and charities among Muslims.

7. **Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act, 1939** addresses the situations under which Muslim women can get divorce as well as the rights of Muslim women who have been divorced by their husbands, as well as other relevant issues.

7.12 Suggested Reading

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7.13 Glossary

Egalitarian: Believing in or based on the principle that all people are equal and deserve equal rights and opportunities

Bereft: Deprived of or lacking (something).

Frowned: Disapproved of.

Foeticide: Destruction or abortion of a fetus.

Unit 8 □ Class and Caste : Sites of Inequality

Structure

8.1 Learning Objectives

After going through the sub units the students will be able to:

✓ To know about class system in India.

✓ To know about caste system in India.

    ✓ To determine the role of caste system in inequality in India.

    ✓ To find interaction among caste, class, ethnicity and gender.

8.2   Introduction

The ordering of social distinctions based on a set of criteria or simply one criterion is known as social stratification. In many countries, caste, class, race, ethnicity, and gender are some of the relevant categories of social hierarchy and distinction. When used by various people in different settings, the term 'Caste' signifies different things. Caste has different meanings in everyday life than it does in traditional literature or what people assume to be its conventional and orthodox meaning. People often use the term 'caste' to refer to a tiny, more or less localised group, but it can also apply to a collection of such groups. (Subedi, 2013)

The term 'Social Class' refers to a common sort of social stratification observed in modern developed countries. The class system is universal in nature, even though the caste system is deemed to be unique to India. The term 'class' is sometimes used to refer to groupings of professors, artists, engineers, doctors, students, and so on. (Rao, 2004)

8.3   Class system

The term 'social class' refers to a common sort of social stratification observed in modern civilised societies. If it is discovered that the caste system is unique to India, the class system is global in nature. Professors, artists, engineers, surgeons, students, and other professionals are sometimes referred to as a "class." In the second, one belongs to the proletariat if all one has to offer is their labour power. Marx and Engels argued that society as a whole was increasingly dividing into two main groups, the Bourgeoisie[1] and the Proletariat[2], who were directly facing each other and had sharply opposing economic and political objectives. As a result, society, according to Marxist reasoning, is made up of structures defined by class and rife with contradictions displayed as class conflicts. Class is primarily concerned with objective material situations as well as a sense of social class distinctions. This class consciousness emerges from political processes that present competing interests and identities. A 'class in itself' is not always a 'class for itself,' according to Marx. The proletariat could only hope to become a revolutionary class once it became aware of its common interests and antagonism to the capitalist. People may experience 'false consciousness,' failing to recognise their genuine class interest. The history of civilizations, according to Karl Marx, has been a history of class struggle: between oppressor and oppressed, freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf,

and bourgeoisie and proletariat.

Max Weber outlines a clear distinction between a status group and a class. For him, prestige is established by more than just class rank. Money or being an entrepreneur are not in and of themselves status qualifications, though they can be; property lessens is not in and of itself a status disqualifier, though it can be.

Modernity has had a significant impact on the world of labour and occupation in various ways. Enormous professional positions and patterns of relationships emerge as a result of the rise of contemporary technology and the new scale of modern social organisation. On different levels, modern social theorists such as Durkheim and Marx felt that class identification tended to be broad in size and gradually dissolved more localised and segmented traditional identities with which individuals worked in politics. The functionalist concept of modernity predicted that as industrialization progressed and democratic parliamentary politics took hold, caste identities would erode and be replaced by indeterminate contemporary identities. Traditional stratification was based on caste, while modern industrial stratification is based on class. As a result, the relationship between caste and class is one of the major issues in historical sociology. (Nath, Choudhary, 2019)

8.3.1 Definition

A social class, according to P. Gisbert, is a category or group of people who have a specific rank in society that permanently affects their relationship to other people. According to Ogburn and Nimkoff, a social class is a group of people in a society who have essentially the same social rank. A social class, according to MacIver and Page, is any segment of the community that is separated from the remainder by social status. (Rao,2004)

8.3.2 Class as Subjective location

"How do people, individually and collectively, situate themselves and others within a social structure of inequality?" is a question that is frequently answered with the word 'class'. One of the possible solutions to this question is class. "Classes are social categories sharing subjectively prominent features used by people to rank those categories within a system of economic stratification". The number of classes will vary depending on how the participants in a social environment define class distinctions themselves. The shared subjective understandings of people regarding rankings within social inequity establish class, not a set of objective features of a person's social condition.

8.3.3 Class as objective position within distributions

'How are persons objectively placed in distributions of material inequality'? is a question that frequently revolves around class. Class is a gradational notion in this agenda; the common visual is of rungs on a ladder, and the names for locations are upper class, upper middle class, medium class, middle class, lower middle class, lower class, and bottom class. Although subjective characteristics of people's placement within systems of stratification may still be essential in sociological studies; based on this concept of class, the term class is being used to represent objective properties of economic disparity rather than only subjective classifications.

8.3.4 Class as the relational explanation of economic life chance

What explains disparities in people's and families' economic life chances and material standards of living? Class could be part of the answer. Rather than simply descriptively locating people inside some form of system of stratification — either subjectively or objectively — the goal here is to uncover specific causal mechanisms that help establish the prominent elements of that system. This is a trickier and more demanding question than the previous two. When class is used to explain inequality; it is usually defined by people's connections to various income-generating resources or assets, rather than by subjectively discernible social location characteristics. As a result, rather than being a simple gradational idea, class becomes a relational one. Both the Weberian and Marxist social theory traditions use this concept of class. In this context, class is contrasted with a variety of other factors that influence a person's life chances, such as geographic location, types of discrimination based on ascriptive qualities such as race or gender, or genetic endowments. Of fact, geography, discrimination, and genetic endowments may still play a part in class analysis – they may, for example, explain why various types of people end up in different classes – but the notion of class as such focuses on how people are tied to those income-generating assets.

8.3.5 Class as a dimension of historical variation in systems of inequality

In response to the issue, how should we characterise and explain the differences in the social organisation of disparities across history, class plays a role. This question necessitates a macro-level idea, rather than a micro-level concept that captures the causal processes of individual lives; it also necessitates a notion that allows for macro-level fluctuations through time and space. This topic is essential in both Marxist and Weberian traditions, but the two traditions have very different responses, as we will discover later. The most conspicuous component of historical variation in inequality, according to the Marxist tradition, is the ways in which economic

systems differ in the method in which an economic surplus is produced and appropriated, and classes are thus defined in terms of surplus extraction mechanisms. Weber, on the other hand, sees the degree of rationalisation of different dimensions of inequality as the essential problem of historical variation. This creates a conceptual space in which class and status are opposed as distinct types of inequality on the one hand, and class is compared with non-rationalized ways in which individual life-chances are moulded on the other.

8.3.6 Class as a foundation of economic oppression and exploitation

What kinds of transformations are needed to eradicate economic injustice and exploitation inside capitalist societies is an issue that revolves around class. This is the foremost contentious question because it entails not only an explanatory agenda about the mechanisms that produce economic inequalities, but also a normative judgment about those inequalities – they are forms of oppression and exploitation – and a normative vision of how those inequalities can be transformed. This is the question that is distinctly Marxist, and it implies an understanding of class that is filled with normative content. It promotes a concept of class that is not merely defined in terms of social ties to economic resources, but also plays a major role in an emancipatory social change political goal. (Wright, 2003)

8.4   Caste system

According to Beteille, a small and identified group of individuals defined by endogamy, hereditary membership, and a particular way of life that occasionally involves the practice of a selected occupation by custom and is typically including a more or less distinguished ritual rank during a hierarchical system. Berreman defines the caste structure as a system of stratification supported birth, socio-cultural heterogeneity, and hierarchical interaction. Sinha defines caste as a hierarchical system of endogamous groupings organized during a traditional hereditary division of labour. Hutton presents a functional picture of the caste structure in terms of individual members, community roles, and state and society functions. Ghurye provides a radical concept of caste. Segmental division of society, hierarchy of groups, restriction of feeding and intercourse, allied and non secular disabilities and privileges of various sections, lack of unrestricted choice of occupation, and restriction on marriage, consistent with him, are the six main features of the caste structure. A caste system's stable feature is endogamy. However, inter-caste and inter-religious marriages became more common in recent years.

The term "caste" is employed by sociologists and social anthropologists in two alternative ways. On the one hand, it is used without reference to geography to

explain a category system during which the hierarchy is well established and therefore the boundaries between the varied strata of the hierarchy are firmly delineated. When class endogamy is obvious and privilege inheritance has been narrowly restricted to members of that caste in perpetuity, a governing class could be defined as a caste. The term 'caste' additionally describes the social order found in traditional regional societies in India, also as within surrounding Hindu and related populations in Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, and which has survived to a substantial extent to this day. (Subedi, 2013a)

8.4.1 Definition

According to S.C. Dube, the name Jati is favoured to indicate an endogamous union with a more or less established ceremonial status and customary employment. According to D.N. Majumdar and T.N. Madan, caste is a "closed group." According to Mac-Iver and Page, men's status becomes caste when it is completely fixed, and they are born into it with little chance of changing it. We can designate a caste, according to C.H. Cooley, when it is strictly hereditary. Sir Herbert Risley defines caste as a group of families with a common name who claim common descent from a mythical ancestor, both human and divine, who profess to follow the same hereditary calling, and who are regarded as forming a single homogeneous community by those who are competent to give an option. (Rao, 2004a)

8.4.2 Caste in a Comparative Perspective

Caste, as a structural phenomenon, is viewed as a category or type within a broader framework of social stratification, similar to hierarchical organisations in other contexts. In this line, Berreman claimed that defining caste in terms of its distinctively Indian characteristics renders it useless as cross-culturally comparable phenomena, or at the very least reduces its utility. He opted to use a broader definition of caste to allow for comparison with similar social stratification systems found in other civilizations. Berreman stated that a caste system resembles a plural society with vertically stratified separate parts. As a result, Indian caste is similar to other social institutions in which rank is assigned, such as racial distinction in the United States. Caste systems are often regarded by comparative social theorists as a matter of social division and stratification, rather than as a distinct religious ideological or structural category. There are various theoretical approaches among anthropologists studying caste in India, including those who consider it as an extreme type of social stratification equivalent to other forms of inequality based on social classes, wealth, or political power. This perspective highlights that the caste system is held together by power concentrated in a few groups (the landholding and dominating castes), rather than by population consensus. Quigley considers caste in terms of restricted

groups, arguing that very rigid isolation and endogamy are only effective in specific situations and for specific communities. As this is an inherently fluid profession, those who want to dominate must identify themselves. Castes are usually bounded in a relative rather than absolute sense. According to Quigley, one approach to begin defining caste is to state what it is not — that is, to put it in context.

Berreman claimed that caste is a strange institution with strange implications. He proposed a more, thorough technique that allows for cross-cultural comparisons while preserving cultural variables and social integration patterns. As a result, when a society is made up of hierarchically organised and culturally distinct birth-ascribed groups, a category structure emerges. Differential appraisal, rewards, and affiliation are all part of the hierarchy. He wanted to learn more about caste systems, how they work, and the effects they have on people. When viewed as compared and structurally - rigid, birth assigned, and permitting no individual mobility, but nonetheless samples of ranked aggregates of people - caste systems have usually been classified as stratification systems. Every system of stratification distributes power and privilege inside the society in which it exists, according to comparative social theorists, and most, if not all, of those systems are tied to some type of ranking division of labour that supports interdependence. While caste systems are distinct in that they are based on birth-ascription, they have many of the same traits as other stratification systems. Berreman pointed out that studies of caste systems frequently overlook the reality that they are essentially rigid stratification systems. As a result, castes are recognised as different groups with distinct names, albeit they are in some respects interconnected. Social interaction is hampered by cultural differences, as well as varying degrees of power and privileges amongst castes. Caste is frequently, but not always, linked to a degree of occupational specialisation. They're also cultural pluralism systems that enforce differentiated associations between culturally differing groups. (Subedi, 2013a)

8.5   Differences between Class and Caste system

Caste system	Class system
1. The caste system is unique in its design.	1. The nature of the class system is universal.
2. Individuals' status is determined by their birth.	2. Individuals are the ones who earn status.
3. It's a closed loop.	3. It's a free and open system.
4. The caste system is thought to have been created by God.	4. The social structure is secular.
5. The caste system is linked to the concepts of purity and impurity.	5. There is a sense of unequal treatment among members of a class.
6. Caste is a social entity that is endogamous.	6. There is no such thing as an endogamous unit in a class.
7. It's a complicated system.	7. The class system is well-known for its ease of use.
8. Caste consciousness is more dangerous to democracy.	8. Democracy is not harmed by class consciousness.

(Rao, 2004b)

8.6   Caste system and inequality in India

Caste has long been a distinguishing characteristic of Indian civilization, laying the groundwork for the Brahmanical social system. Based on their occupation in society, the community is separated into four castes.; Brahmins are priests, Kshatriyas are rulers, Vaisyas are farmers and merchants, and Shudras are servants to the first three. Their social standing was also determined by this. The first three are referred to as 'dwij' (twice born) and have the right to wear terrified thread, whereas Shudras do not. These 'varna' castes were subdivided into various sub-castes and structured in an internal hierarchy. The purity and pollution principles guided the operation of this varna system. Inter-caste dining and marriage are strictly forbidden, and the Shudras are not even permitted to interact with the upper castes. Individual mobility in terms of labour existed among the upper castes, but shudras were denied the same opportunity. G.S. Ghurye has accurately described the characteristics of India's caste structure. Brahmins had a crucial part in the formation of the caste system. He goes on to enumerate six features of Hindu society depending on caste:

(i) Societal Segmentation: Society was split into distinct divisions, with each caste forming a well-developed social group with membership determined by birth.

(ii) Hierarchy: Hierarchical order is a feature of the caste system. The Brahmins are at the apex of the hierarchy, while the Shudras are at the bottom.

(iii) Feeding and Social Intercourse Limits: There were various restrictions on food, drink, and social intercourse. Members of the upper caste are not permitted to take food or water from members of the lower caste.

(iv) Civil and Religious Disabilities: The upper castes have all of the privileges, while the lower castes are subjected to a variety of restrictions.

 (v) Lack of Unrestricted Occupation Choice: Each caste has a traditional occupation that is determined at birth, and members of that caste are obligated to pursue that caste's occupation.

(vi) Marriage Restrictions: The norms of endogamy are rigidly followed in the caste system, suggesting that marriages can only take place within one's own caste and sub-caste.

If we view it in a Weberian sense, caste in India is essentially a class because it determines one's place in Indian society based on Brahamnical tradition. However, it is crucial to highlight that a person is born into a caste, and the lack of pathways for mobility from lower to higher caste ensures that your caste-related position will always remain intact, even in modern society, despite development in class based on vocational sophistication.

Hereditary specialisation of employment, according to early sociologists like Nesfield, was at the basis of the caste system. What were formerly guilds became castes in a hierarchical order; the more primitive the occupation, the lower the caste's position. According to Bougle (1970), caste was developed on the basis of three principles: hereditary speciality, hierarchy, and isolation from other groups. People who work on the land or in agriculture, as well as those who work in allied industries such as dairy, fishing, and so on, are disproportionately from the lower castes in India.

Even though there are thousands of caste groups, D.D. Kosambi maintained that there are only four castes in theory: the Brahmin or priest caste; the Kshatriya - warrior caste; Vaisya - trader and husbandman caste; and sudra, the lowest caste, which corresponds to the working class in general. The observed castes and sub-castes definitely emerge from tribal groups of various ethnic origins, although the theoretical system is roughly that of classes.

The colonial rule may also be blamed for the disintegration of the old caste-occupation link. The spread of jatis was aided by the division of labour and specialisation, but anti-jati campaigns grew stronger with the arrival of capitalism in

Indian society. In dismantling the village community system, foreign imperialism was a much bigger force than indigenous capitalism. After that, colonial rule entrenched the existing caste relations.

In British India, the property class, which included big landlords, moneylenders, wholesale traders, and others, was almost always made up of upper castes, while most small-scale peasants, artisans, and others came from the middle class, and the castes at the lowest economic level were considered the lowest. In modern India, castes and class have become inextricably linked. (Nath, Choudhary, 2019a)

8.6.1   Caste and Jajmani System

The term 'Jajmani' is derived from the Vedic term 'Yajman,' who, in Vedic times performed 'Yajna,' or fire sacrifice, to appease the Gods. The phrase refers to a significant individual in the hamlet, specifically a landowner. The persons who assisted him, the priest, the carpenter, ironsmith, washerman, barber, and potter were collectively referred to as 'praja' (and later, as 'Kamins'). The upper castes, like as Brahmins and Rajputs, remained jajmans in general. The praja or 'Kamins' got remuneration in kind (grains, cloth, fodder, buttermilk, ghee, etc.) in exchange for their services to the Yajmans, which offered economic security. (Rao, 2004b)

8.7   Caste, Class, Ethnicity and Gender

When hardship caused by one category interacts with deprivation caused by another, social inequality grows rapidly. In the same way that caste dictates one's rank in India, ethnicity determines one's place in a majoritarian society. Some minority have long alleged that they are not treated equally to the majority and that they are treated as second-class citizens. When we evaluate this idea in terms of women, we may likewise argue that they were relegated to second-class citizens in patriarchal societies. As a result, regardless of any differences in women as a group, gender interaction with other categories exposes multifaceted oppression and exploitation. The Indian socioeconomic-politico-cultural system serves as a testing and validation ground for these claims. The caste-gender interaction is most severe for Dalit[3] women, who face discrimination not only from men of their own patriarchal caste, but also from upper caste men who assign themselves the job of defending the social order and therefore get self-licence over all women's acts, labour, and sexuality. As a result, women from lower castes stay at the bottom of the social hierarchy, with no access to privacy, decision-making authority, financial resources, or protection against sexual exploitation by males from the same or higher castes. As a result, according to Gopal Guru (1995), Dalit women face not only external forces of non-dalits attempting to homogenise the issue of Dalit women within the larger women's

representation movement, but also internal patriarchal forces within the Dalit representation movement, which consider Dalit women to be no different than Dalit men.

The Brahmanical Hindu social order, according to Uma Chakravarti, believes in excessive stratification in the form of humiliating inferior status assigned to women and lower castes. As a result, women's enslavement becomes a crucial condition for patriarchy's survival. This subjection contributes to the preservation of caste purity, necessitating the control of women's sexuality through customs such as endogamy. The caste system was articulated by Dipankar Gupta in terms of marriage relations. He sees caste as a type of differentiation in which the system's constituent units justify endogamy based on ostensible biological disparities that are semaphored by the ritualization of diverse social activities. Women's sexuality provides both a material and conceptual foundation for the caste-based patriarchal Hindu social order, and control over it then sustains the unique structure of production, reproduction, and social production.

Several Brahmanical texts state that the caste system must be strictly followed, and that violating it is not only forbidden but also punishable. As a result, marriages between members of the same caste are the most viable, while inter-caste marriage is seen as a threat to the blood line and ritual order. The worst type of marriage is one in which an upper caste woman marries a lower caste man which is fraught with societal prejudice and punishment.

The violation of endogamy has two significant consequences :

   (i) Impact on the property relations; and
   (ii) Impact on caste group exclusivity.

The violation of endogamy has an impact on property relations within the caste group since property is inherited and property ownership is unclear. This could have major ramifications for the caste's overall economic situation. At the family level, the woman can seek her portion of the property under today's inheritance laws, which provide children an equal share regardless of gender. Women, on the other hand, are denied their share of the ancestral property within the caste community, and there are no attempts by women to gain their share. Such societal conventions may not be maintained in an inter-caste marriage, resulting in the concern that the lady or her kid may demand their part.

Because the caste of the marital partner or the children is not clearly determined, inter-caste marriages have an impact on the exclusivity of caste membership. While social customs dictate that it is the male caste, there is no legal definition. If inter-

caste marriages grow prevalent, membership in the caste group would inevitably become ambiguous. (Nath, Choudhary, 2019a)

8.8 Conclusion

The Jajmani system governed interactions between different caste groups. Caste identification became a tool to mobilise people for economic and political advantages as the Jajmani system faded away and livelihood diversification increased. In caste, a fundamental transformation occurred: from ritual hierarchy to identity politics, from ascribed and designated status to negotiated power positions, and from ritual definitions of roles and positions to civic and political conceptions of the same (Kothari 1994). At the ritual level, the caste system was eroding, but it resurfaced in the political and economic realms. (Subedi, 2013b)

8.9 Summary

When used by various people in different settings, the term 'caste' signifies different things. Caste has different meanings in everyday life than it does in traditional literature or what people assume to be its conventional and orthodox meaning . People often use the term 'caste' to refer to a tiny, more or less localised group, but it can also apply to a collection of such groups. The class system is universal in nature, even though the caste system is deemed to be unique to India. The Jajmani system governed interactions between different caste groups. Caste identification became a tool to mobilise people for economic and political advantages as the Jajmani system faded away and livelihood diversification increased. At the ritual level, the caste system was eroding, but it resurfaced in the political and economic realms.

9.10 Questions

1. Answer Briefly :

a) What are the characteristics of Class System?

b) What are the characteristics of Caste System?

c) Distinguish between Class System and Caste System.

d) How Caste System affects Indian Society?

e) Determine interaction among caste, class, ethnicity and gender in India.

2. Answer Very Briefly :

a. What does 'social class' refer to?

b. What is meant by the Bourgeoisie and the Proletariat?

c. How did Max Weber distinct between a status group and a class?

d. What is the impact of modernity on the world of labour and occupation?

e) In which ways did the sociologists employ the term 'the caste'?

f) Mention three differences between Caste system and Class system.

g) What is Jajmani System?

3. Answer in Detail :

a) Describe Class System and its effect on Indian Society.

b) Describe Caste system and its effect on Indian Society.

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8.12 End Notes

1. The Bourgeoisie (in Marxism) is the class in society that controls the majority of the wealth and exploits regular workers.

2. The Proletariat (in Marxism) is a social class of people who work in industry doing low-wage occupations and own little or no property.

3. Dalit is a term used to describe people from India's lowest castes, historically referred to as "untouchables."

8.13 Suggested readings

1. C.N. Shankar Rao, 2004, *Sociology of Indian Society*, S.Chand & Company LTD

2. Veena Das, 2006, *Handbook of Indian Sociology*, Oxford.

3. Madhusudan Subedi , 2013, *Some Theoretical Considerations on Caste*, 'Dhaulagiri Journal of Sociology and Anthropology'

4. Abhishek Nath & Abhishek Choudhary, 2019, *Caste, Gender, Ethnicity and Class as Distinct Categories and their Interconnection,* Human Rights, Gender and Environment', Scholar Tech Press, Delhi.

5. K.L. Sharma,1994, *Caste and Class in India*, South Asia Books

8.14 Glossary

Ascriptive   : Relating to arbitrary placement (as at birth) in a particular social status.

Heterogeneity : The quality or state of being diverse in character or content.

Homogenize : Make uniform or similar.

UNIT 9 ◻ Third Gender

Structure

9.14 Suggested Readings

9.15 End Notes

9.16 Glossary

9.1   Learning Objectives

After going through the sub units the students will be able to:

- ✓ To have a brief understanding about the concept of third gender
- ✓ To know about the definition, types and feminism aspects of Lesbian
- ✓ To draw a deep focus on the definition, types and movements of Gay
- ✓ To learn about the definition, types and movements of Bisexual
- ✓ To have a deepening knowledge of the definition, types and movements of Transgender and Queer
- ✓ To throw light on the meaning of Hijras and initiatives for their inclusion within the mainstream Indian society.

9.2   Introduction

The term third sex or third gender originated in the late nineteenth century among sexologists[1] as a way to describe homosexual men and lesbians. It did not carry the moral or legal stigma of sodomite[2] and suggested an innate or biological factor existed in behaviours that fell outside traditional categories of male and female. However, it also conflated same-sex desire with gender variance (Hovey, 2007).

The following sections would focus on a detailed analysis of LQBTQ within the western world and then highlight on the Hijras which has been recognised within the Indian context as Third Gender.

9.3   LGBTQ

LGBTQ is an acronym that stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer. This would be discussed in detail that would cover on different aspects of LGBTQ.

9.4   Lesbian

This section would focus on the definition and types of lesbian and also on lesbian feminism.

9.4.1 Defining the term

A lesbian denotes a homosexual woman. The word 'lesbian'is also used for women in relation to their sexual identity or sexual behaviour, regardless of sexual orientation, or as an adjective to characterize or associate nouns with female homosexuality or same-sex attraction. The concept of 'lesbian' to differentiate women with a shared sexual orientation evolved in the 20th century ("Lesbian", n.d.).

9.4.2 Types of Lesbian

There are different types of lesbians that are found. These are discussed briefly below:

(a) The activist lesbian

The activist lesbian is characterized by her passion for social justice especially as it pertains to being a lesbian. The activist lesbian can look like any other type of lesbian. She is inspirational, passionate and a lover of justice.

(b) The lipstick lesbian

A lipstick lesbian or femme lesbian loves to dress in a highly feminized or 'girly' manner. These ladies wear skirts, dresses, jewellery, lipstick, elaborate blowouts(Stokes, 2016).

(c) The chapstick lesbian

The chapstick lesbian is the dividing line between a lipstick lesbian and a butch lesbian. While butch lesbians revel in looking masculine and lipstick lesbians like looking ultra girly, a chapstick lesbian can go either way.

(d) The butch lesbian

The butch lesbian presents herself as tough, make-up free and masculine to one degree or another. This doesn't mean she's trying to look like a man but she's just subverting the idea of what a woman should look like and looking sexually attractive in the process(Stokes, 2016).

(e) The stone butch lesbian

A stone butch lesbian is a butch lesbian who derives sexual pleasure from giving other women pleasure. She is a giver and not a receiver.

(f) The boi lesbian

There are bois in the gay community and the lesbian community. In the lesbian community, the boi lesbian is biologically female but presents as looking boyish. Bois tend to date older partners(Stokes, 2016).

(g) The power lesbian

The power lesbian is a lesbian who is the leader in her field and the top of the tops. She is the best surgeon, the best lawyer and the most influential policy maker.

(h) The hasbian lesbian

A 'hasbian' is a woman who once identified as a lesbian but now dates men and doesn't identify themselves as being straight or bi(Stokes, 2016).

(i) The LUG lesbian

LUG stands for 'lesbian until graduation'. This is the undergraduate lesbian-curious girl who is finally exploring her sexuality and discovering that she is attracted to women. It could be a phase, but that's up to them.

(j) The sport dyke lesbian

The sport dyke isn't characterized so much as being attracted to other women as much as she is obsessed with her sport of choice. Not all lesbians are sport dykes, but all sport dykes are definitely lesbians(Stokes, 2016).

(k) The baby dyke lesbian

The baby dyke lesbian is a fond title given to a woman who has just come out of the closet and started becoming a part of the lesbian community. She could be femme, butch, chapstick or anything else(Stokes, 2016).

9.4.3 Lesbian Feminism

Lesbian feminism emerged in the mid-to-late 20th century at the convergence of the women's movement, the gay rights movement and the sexual revolution. Lesbian feminists consider same-sex relationships legitimate and use their lesbian identity as a basis for community building and collective action. Lesbian feminism challenges the perception of heterosexuality and male supremacy as 'normal' and presents alternative ways of thinking about gender and power(Valk,2018). Before the 1960s, thriving gay and lesbian communities developed across the United States, especially in urban areas, where they often centred on bars or private homes. During that era, many lesbians assumed feminine ('femme' or 'fem') or masculine ('butch') gender roles and often manners of dress. Many of those communities functioned underground as a means of protection from pervasive hostility, physical violence, social ostracism, harassment and loss of employment(Valk,2018). Lesbians played a prominent role in many new feminist organizations, helping to organize for equity in the workplace, the home and the courts. However, many taboos still

surrounded lesbianism within feminist organizations in the 1960s and male sexism constrained lesbians within the gay rights movement. Betty Friedan, the founder of the National Organization for Women (NOW) [3], famously called lesbians a 'lavender menace[4]'(Valk,2018). She asserted that they threatened to taint the reputation of the feminist movement, driving women away out of fear of association and diverting attention from more-important campaigns for women's equality.

Lesbian feminism presented one way for women to free themselves from both male domination and heterosexism. Its analysis of society was based on two central claims(Valk,2018). The first was an assertion that heterosexuality encompassed much more than a form of sexual desire and it also functioned as an institution that supported male supremacy and female subordination. Romantic love, familial structures, traditional gender roles and even the U.S. economic structure reinforced heterosexuality making it compulsory and leaving its putative normalcy unquestioned(Valk,2018). At the same time that heterosexuality helped perpetuate the subordination of women, it reinforced the benefits that women could gain from participation in partnerships with men which gave them added status and economic privileges. The threat of losing those advantages kept women from challenging the status quo and acting in ways that might jeopardize their status(Valk,2018).

The second claim of lesbian feminists given the central importance of heterosexuality and marriage (then confined to male-female relationships) to the maintenance of male supremacy was that lesbian individuals and relationships presented a profound challenge to the social and economic order. They rejected male privilege and rejected the notions of male superiority and female inferiority(Valk,2018). Indeed, lesbian feminists asserted that lesbians exemplified women's liberation, demonstrating the personal, economic and sexual independence that feminists believed all women should possess. This analysis helped provide insight into the way that society constructed its notion of womanhood recognizing that lesbians conformed to many traits commonly construed as masculine(Valk,2018). Moreover, some lesbian feminists asserted the superiority of women's ways of living suggesting that women who challenged society's views of male supremacy could discover more egalitarian and less superficial ways of relating to each other. Using that rationale, many lesbian feminists criticized butch-and-femme role-playing as mere imitation of an oppressive heterosexuality(Valk,2018). Within the context of the late 1960s and the 1970s, lesbian feminists translated these ideas into a mass movement for women's liberation. As a branch of the broader feminist movement, lesbian feminism remained both connected to the larger struggle for women's liberation and highly critical of it(Valk,2018). Support for women's liberation, however led some activists to identify as 'political lesbians' which is an expression

of their commitment to gender equality without an accompanying sexual attraction to women. Along those lines, lesbian poet Adrienne Rich spoke of a 'lesbian continuum' and sought to expand the meaning of lesbianism and include a range of ways in which women experience intimacy and community(Valk,2018).

9.5   Gay

This section would focus on the definition, types and movements related with gays.

9.5.1 Defining the term

Gay is preferred to homosexual because homosexual implicitly emphasizes the sexual and diminishes the other aspects of gender orientation. The history of the word gay is confused. It is thought that gay was used in eighteenth-century England to connote the conduct of a playboy. Later, in the nineteenth century, gay when applied to women, came to mean 'of loose morals; a prostitute'(Stewart, 2003).

9.5.2 Types of Gay

There are various types of Gay. The following deals with this:-

(a) Otter

In the gay world, an otter is considered a thin gay male that is hairy and may or may not use a trimmer to shorten body hair. Some otters have beards and some do not. Otters usually have smaller frames when compared to the heavier cub or bear and look a lot like what we would see in a picture of an otter, hairy(Hollywood, 2019).

(b) Wolf

Wolves as semi-hairy, muscular, lean, attractive and sexually aggressive are sometimes considered as part of the larger bear community or on the bear spectrum. They can be of any age and normally have facial hair. Some might also describe wolves as slimmer bears but there is a lot of disagreement on this (Hollywood, 2019). Subgroups of wolves can be found in aging wolves which are gay men with wolf-like features that are starting to turn a bit gray and then there are full-on silver or gray wolves that describe an older wolf with gray or white facial and body hair.

(c) Bear

Characteristically, a bear is a large, possibly heavy gay man that could also be muscular and having a fairly large protruding belly.Masculinity is also a key feature of bears and some bears are so caught up in projecting a masculine image that they

shun other would-be bears who appear to be too effeminate (Hollywood, 2019). Thus, many bears consider themselves to be harmless and even playful. There are several subtypes of bear which include Muscle Bears,[5] Polar Bears[6] and also Sugar Bears.[7]

(d) Cub

For gay men, the term cub is used to describe a younger or younger-looking male that is usually husky or heavier in body type and is almost always hairy. While many cubs have a beard, it is not a requirement to fit this category since body hair and huskiness are the dominant features for this gay descriptor (Hollywood, 2019). Cubs are sometimes partnered with bears in passive relationships or with other cubs and they can sometimes be considered an apprentice to a bear. Here are a few subtypes of cubs which are the Muscle Cubs[8] and Sugar Cubs.[9]

(e) Chub

In the gay world, chubs are a distinct subgroup within the gay male population and are often confused with bears (Hollywood, 2019). Many bears reject extremely large or obese chubs and do not consider them as part of their subgroup.

(f) Pup

A pup is a gay male who is fairly young that is late teens to early 20s more or less. Pups are known for their lack of experience in the gay world as well as for being naive, energetic and cute (Hollywood, 2019). They may have similar body types to twinks and however, pups usually are super new to the gay world whereas twinks are not. Though they share some similarities to cubs, pups are not involved in the bear community and likely do not even know this community exists.

(g) Bull

In the gay community, bulls are body builders that weigh between 215 and 300 pounds. They are not necessarily part of the bear community and usually herd together as a bull might in its natural environment (Hollywood, 2019).

(h) The Twink and the Twunk

In gay terms, twinks are younger, slim men with minimal body hair and no hair on the face. They're usually between 18 and the mid-20s. A wrap on the twink is that many think the world revolves around them (Hollywood, 2019).

Twunks are a more muscular version of twinks and some have assigned feminine and masculine characteristics to twunks. For example, sugar twunk describes an affectionate twunk.

(i) Gym Bunny

Gym bunnies are native to both straight and gay worlds. They can be of any age but are usually younger than 50 (Hollywood, 2019). Gym bunnies spend an obsessive amount of time working on their physique and are muscular and sculpted as a result. Gym bunnies are often found at the beach and they are typically considered pretty.

(j) Jock

For gay men, jocks are almost always considered attractive, muscular males with low body fat (Hollywood, 2019). A jock can be of any age but they are generally considered to be younger because of their athletic abilities and they are usually linked to playing sports and being active.

(k) Gym Rat

Gym rats are somewhat similar to gym bunnies but are distinguished by their addiction to working out. While they may enjoy attention from others in public but that is not their motivation for being fit (Hollywood, 2019). Their primary motive for long, daily lifting sessions relates more to an obsessive need to get bigger. They are typically lean and very well-built. Like a rat lives in the basement, gym rats live at the gym and are always there. The straight equivalent would be a muscle head (Hollywood, 2019).

9.5.3 Gay Rights Movement

Gay rights movement also called homosexual rights movement or gay liberation movement and civil rights movement that advocates equal rights for gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender persons seeks to eliminate sodomy laws barring homosexual acts between consenting adults and also calls for an end to discrimination against gay men, lesbians and transgender persons in employment, credit, housing, public accommodations and other areas of life (Levy, 2020).

Before the end of the 19th century, there were scarcely any "movements" for gay rights. Homosexual men and women were given voice in 1897 with the founding of the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee in Berlin. Their first activity was a petition to call for the repeal of Paragraph 175 of the Imperial Penal Code (submitted 1898, 1922 and 1925). The committee published emancipation literature, sponsored rallies and campaigned for legal reform throughout Germany as well as in the Netherlands and Austria and by 1922 it had developed some 25 local chapters (Levy, 2020). Its founder was Magnus Hirschfeld who in 1919 opened the Institute for Sexual Science which anticipated by decades other scientific centres that specialized in sex research.

The gay rights movement was beginning to win victories for legal reform, particularly in Western Europe but perhaps the single defining event of gay activism occurred in the United States. In the early morning hours of June 28,1969, the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in New York City's Greenwich Village, was raided by the police (Levy, 2020). Nearly 400 people joined a riot that lasted 45 minutes and resumed on succeeding nights. 'Stonewall' came to be commemorated annually in June with Gay Pride celebrations, not only in U.S cities but also in several other countries. In the 1970s and'80s, gay political organizations proliferated particularly in the United States and Europe and spread to other parts of the globe, though their relative size, strength and success and toleration by authorities varied significantly. Groups such as the Human Rights Campaign, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) in the United States and Stonewall and Outrage! in the United Kingdom and dozens and dozens of similar organizations in Europe and elsewhere began agitating for legal and social reforms (Levy, 2020). In addition, the transnational International Lesbian and Gay Association was founded in Coventry, England in 1978. Now headquartered in Brussels, it plays a significant role in coordinating international efforts to promote human rights and fight discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons (Levy, 2020).

9.6   Bisexual

This would give a brief idea on the definition and types of Bisexual and also reflect on Bisexual movements.

9.6.1 Defining the term

Definitions of bisexuality have varied over time and there is no single widely accepted meaning for the term. At present, it is commonly defined as a sexual preference or orientation or sexual identity in which an individual's sexual, romantic and or emotional attraction is not limited to one sex or gender that is categories such as female or male (Pennington, 2009).

9.6.2 Types of Bisexual

Bisexuals comprises of many types which are discussed below:

a) Alternating Bisexuals : This means one relationship at a time in which the first might be exclusively straight and the next exclusively gay and vice versa. Alternating Bisexuals are usually monogamous ("13 Types", 2011).

b) Circumstantial Bisexuals : This is primarily heterosexual but bisexual because of circumstances. For e.g, Prison where there are no women or men available.

c) Concurrent relationship Bisexuals : These have a primary relationship with one gender but may have multiple casual relationships with partners of the other gender ("13 Types",2011).

d) Conditional Bisexuals : This will switch sexuality for personal gain as for e.g, Gay for Pay.

e) Emotional Bisexuals : These have intimate emotional relationships with both genders but only have sex with one gender.

f) Integrated Bisexuals : These have two or more concurrent primary relationships involving one with a man and one with a woman.

g) Exploratory Bisexuals : These are testing the water seeing if they like it.

h) Hedonistic Bisexuals : These are primarily straight or gay or lesbian but will switch purely for sexual pleasure.

i) Recreational Bisexuals : This means bi only when drunk or high. In other words, 'Party Bisexual' ("13 Types", 2011).

j) Isolated Bisexuals : currently straight or gay or lesbian but had one off sexual encounter in the past which qualifies them as bisexual.

k) Latent Bisexuals : This has strong yet so far unsatisfied urges to go the other way ("13 Types", 2011).

l) Motivational Bisexuals : This will go bi to satisfy a partner. For e.g. straight women agreeing to MFF threesome.

m) Transitional Bisexuals : This is the one 'going through a phrase' ("13 Types", 2011).

9.6.3 Bisexual Movements

The modern bisexual movement in the United States originated during the lesbian-feminist, gay and sexual liberation movements of the 1970s. Bisexuals participated in these movements and also created exclusive bisexual organizations which were initially social or informal support groups. As bisexuality became increasingly more invisible as well as stigmatized, some social groups became increasingly political (Pennington, 2009). Bisexual activists seek to increase the visibility of bisexuals as a sexual minority identity and to decrease social

discrimination and the negative stereotyping of bisexuals. Bisexual activists do not agree on whether or not to form coalitions and work within existing gay and lesbian activist agendas. Some bisexuals think it is necessary to organize separately from 'monosexuals' or heterosexuals and homosexuals who are attracted to one sex or gender (Pennington, 2009). Propelled by increasing tension between especially bisexual women and lesbian feminists, some bisexual activists sought the formation of exclusive bisexual organizations. In 1983, the first political bisexual organization, BiPOL was formed by bisexual feminists in San Francisco. Other bisexual activists work within and alongside lesbian and gay groups and efforts began in the 1980s to change the names of many lesbian and gay organizations and events to formally include bisexuals (Pennington, 2009). For example, a 1993 political rally was renamed 'March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay, and Bi Equal Rights and Liberation' which is a change toward greater inclusion that many bisexual activists perceived as crucial to success. Bisexual activism began to spread during the 1980s from the United States to other regions, such as Canada, the United Kingdom, Europe and New Zealand (Pennington, 2009). The bisexual movement in the United States began to solidify with the start of regional conferences in the mid-1980s, followed by the first national bisexual conference in 1990. The first international conference on bisexuality was held in 1991. Also in the 1990s, some bisexual activists formed coalitions with the transgender movement (Pennington, 2009).

9.7 Transgender

This would discuss on the definition, types and movements with regard to transgender.

9.7.1 Defining the term

Transgender indicates a diverse group of individuals whose gender does not match their biological sex at birth. In 1969, Virginia Prince in the 'Transvestia' magazine meant for cross-dressers first used a version of the term 'transgender' but in 1992, with the printing of Leslie Feinberg's pamphlet 'Transgender Liberation: A Movement Whose Time Has Come,' the term took on a broader scope as Feinberg used transgender to refer to all people who were gender variant. This meaning of the word is currently used (Tauches, 2009).

9.7.2 Types of Transgender

There are various types of transgenders which are mentioned below:

a) Transsexuals

Transsexuals are individuals who decide to undergo either partial or complete sex reassignment surgery. The process of changing from one sex to another is called transitioning. It is possible for a male to transition into a female (MTF) and for a female to transition into a male (FTM).

b) Transgenderists

Transgenderists are individuals who live full time as the gender opposite their biological sex but have no desire to change their bodies through sex reassignment surgery (Tauches, 2009). A person is considered to be a transgenderist if he or she has been living full time as the opposite gender for over two years.

c) Genderqueers

Genderqueer is a more recent term that is used by people who engage in a variety of gender-variant behaviours but do not agree with the term transgender.Genderqueers usually combine elements of both masculinity and femininity (Tauches, 2009). In addition, genderqueer individuals might have either male or female bodies.

d) Androgynes

Androgynes are individuals who combine elements of masculinity and femininity. An androgyne can be either a male- or female-bodied individual who incorporates aspects of femininity and masculinity in her or his gender identity and presentation (Tauches, 2009).

e) Cross-Dressers

Cross-dressers are those who occasionally dress as the opposite sex, though they show no desire to change their sex or to adopt cross-gendered behaviour for extended periods of time. A person may crossdress from either sex into the opposite gender, though generally cross-dressers are thought to be men who dress as women. This is because female-to-malecross-dressing is thought to be more common and socially acceptable (Tauches, 2009).

f) Drag Performers

Drag performers can be either female or malebodied individuals or those in transition. They perform onstage the gender opposite the sex they were born, in an exaggerated or campy fashion. A drag king is a person who was born with a female body and performs onstage in a hypermasculine style while a drag queen is a person born with a male body and performs on stage as a hyperfeminine woman (Tauches, 2009).

9.7.3 Transgender Movement

It was not until the 1990s, however that a vibrant and increasingly globalized transgender movement bolted forward into the public eye and onto the political stage. In contrast to other forms of identity politics, the transgender movement is unique because it builds communities around gender identities while simultaneously working to deconstruct and denaturalize oppressive gender identity categories. In the international context, the transgender label is not universally embraced because it does not account for mutable and fluid gender constructs across cultures (Jauk,2016). Latin American activists, for instance, speak of 'travesti' identities, whereas indigenous activists of 'hijras' or 'metis'. Some Asian and Oceanic cultures embrace forms of a 'third gender'.

Transgender movements address numerous issues for gender non-conforming populations across the globe. Trans people face massive discrimination and marginalization in all social institutions including the family, labour market, housing, health, education and religion (Jauk,2016). Trans folk deal with great levels of hate and violence across societies which leads some authors to suggest that a transgender genocide is taking place worldwide. The majority of countries in the world make it difficult or do not allow trans people to amend identity documents such as birth certificates, passports and national ID cards to reflect their gender identities. Without proper identity documentation, trans people are denied citizenship rights (Jauk,2016). Trans people have less access to healthcare than the general population due to discrimination and harassment by providers, inability to pay, lack of insurance and a host of other socioeconomic barriers. It is difficult for trans people to navigate gender-segregated services, including public restrooms, homeless shelters, drug therapy facilities and prisons. Trans people in prison face challenges not only related to gender segregation and violence but also due to lack of access to proper clinical care and medication especially in relation to transition-related medical care (Jauk,2016). Transgender social activism made gains in the 1960s when transgender issues resonated with larger cultural shifts such as the rise of feminism, the anti-war movement, the civil rights movement and sexual liberation (Jauk,2016)..The movement's momentum increased over the last three decades, spurred by, inter alia, the new political concept of queerness, the AIDS epidemic and the development of the Internet as an outlet for transgender networking 'that has not yet reached its crest', according to Susan Stryker in her classic work 'Transgender History' (Stryker, 2008).One of the first recorded trans riots in US history took place in 1966 around the Compton Cafeteria in the Tenderloin district of San Francisco. Trans people were also heavily involved in the New York City Stonewall Riots of 1969 which marked the onset of the contemporary lesbian gay bisexual transgender (LGBT)

movement. Trans activists of the Stonewall era such as Sylvia Rivera distanced themselves later from the usurpation of trans issues by the LGBT umbrella (Jauk,2016).Transgender activists point out that despite the gains made, trans people particularly trans people of colour, sex workers and those who are incarcerated remain vulnerable to social and medico-legal regulation and violence. Yet transgender movements fight injustice by remembering history, creating common denominators and establishing movement platforms for the future (Jauk,2016). For example, the Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) is an international day of commemoration for the victims of transphobic killings. The event is held in November.The TDOR is simultaneously critical and political in its content, yet creates community and identity across borders (Jauk,2016).

9.8   Queer

This section would highlight on defining Queer and also provide a detailed understanding on the Queer Movements.

9.8.1 Defining the term

Queer was probably the most common mid-twentieth-century U.S abusive slang term for homosexual.Queer implied not being authentic. When applied to male homosexuals, queer meant that the man was not an authentic male and not normal. Queer was rarely applied to women. In the early 1990s, the word began to be appropriated by the lesbian and gay community (Stewart, 2003).

9.8.2 Queer Movement

While the queer movement gained momentum since the mid-20th century, one can trace its genealogy from the 18th century itself in several European countries. It is true that any movement cannot be singled out to carry forward one stream of objective or ideology. Similar is the case of the queer movement, which since 150 years of its commencement since the 1870s developed by multiple groups and subgroups, hasgiven rise to different ideologies. As a result, they have voiced different concerns and issues pertaining to the identity of gay men, lesbian women and other gender variant or non-binary groups (Ghosh, 2020).

Efforts to promote queer rights started quite early in European countries like Germany through the works of Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, Karl Maria Kertbeny, Adolf Brand, Magnus Hirschfeld and others (Ghosh, 2020). Ulrichs' writing was the first of its kind on gay love in Germany. Then Hirschfeld started two institutes, first the 'Scientific Humanitarian Committee' in 1987 to study and protect homosexuals and

then the Institute for Sexual Science in 1919 thereby launching 'the homosexual emancipation movement' (Ghosh, 2020). In 1928, the first international organization called 'World League for Sexual Reform' was formed in Germany by Hirschfeld to champion queer rights (Ghosh, 2020).

The Stonewall incident occurred in 28 June 1969 in the United States is often seen as a central event igniting the queer liberation movement and a special intersection in the history of non-heteronormative identities (Ghosh, 2020). The incident is remembered by next generation queer activists in parades, pride marches and other programmes worldwide (Ghosh, 2020). It is, therefore, mundane to demarcate the history of gay rights movement into two aeons: 'before Stonewall' and 'after Stonewall'. Although there were movements prior to Stonewall, scholars have noted distinctive origins of the queer movement in this event (Ghosh, 2020). Some however feel that the event was neither one in which the sexual minorities opposed the police action nor was it such that a political organization for the same purpose had not been formed before (Ghosh, 2020). In this context, it is important to trace the genealogy of the queer movement in USA in the light of string of events that took place before the Stonewall.

a) Compton's Cafeteria Riot in San Francisco : In 1966, San Francisco observed one of the earliest transgender flare-ups in the history of the United States. It occurred through the members of the transgender community in particular, who started picketing in protest against the cafeteria's policy of not allowing transgender people inside. The riots grew in shape and intensity and gradually led to the birth of several organizations to support and advocate the rights of the LGBTQ community in San Francisco and later in the whole of US (Ghosh, 2020).

b) Protest in Los Angeles : The LGBTQ movement in Los Angeles took up different strategies since they faced a more hostile police and also lacked in proper institutional support to take forward their cause (Ghosh, 2020). Thus, they decided to organise a march to the police station and hold a public meeting against two incidents that evoked feelings of alarm, fury and disappointment (Ghosh, 2020). Incidentally, in 1966-1967, during New Year's celebrations, two Bars in Los Angles with predominantly gay clientele were blocked by police officers. Two months later, a homosexual man was beaten to death by police in front of a hotel. Surprisingly despite having enough evidence and witnesses of the extreme brutality of the police, the court verdict of 'excusable homicide' shocked everyone (Ghosh, 2020). Although the activists could not manage any tangible accomplishment, they nonetheless put forward a brave resistance (Ghosh, 2020).

9.9 *Hijra*

The present section would draw focus on the definition and types of Hijras and also throw light on the Hijra movements that occurred even after the landmark judgement of the Supreme Court that aimed towards inclusion of transgenders within the mainstream Indian society.

9.9.1 Defining the term

Hijras recognised as an institutionalised third gender role in the Indian context is 'neither male nor female', but comprises of both elements. They are considered by the larger society to be intersexed and impotent men that undergoes emasculation in which all or genital parts are removed (Nanda, 1999). Due to their identification with the Bahuchara Mata,[10] hijras held a special place in Indian society and believed to possess the power to curse or confer blessings on new born infants (Nanda, 1999). There are certain evidences of Hijras in Ramayana and Mahabharata.

9.9.2 Initiatives adopted for social inclusion of Hijras in India

Despite the discrimination that continues to plague the hijra community, 2016 marked a distinct development in their cause. Their voices started to be heard by the masses. For the first time in Indian history, a social movement has begun to address the problems faced by India's transgender and hijra communities (Khatri, 2017). The movement is backed by India's leading production house, Yash Raj Films and Unilever's tea brand, Red Label and features Sonu Nigam as a major proponent of the campaign that they have launched. The band is comprised of six transgender people and are known by the name of 'Six Pack Band', which reverses a common abuse for the community. While the band has only launched one song, it has gained traction and has begun the dialogue as to what place India's hijras hold in the larger society (Khatri, 2017). Currently, the hijra community is stricken with sickness and sexual health concerns. For many, castration presents the first of a host of health concerns and for others their lives as prostitutes make them prone to contracting sexually transmitted diseases such as AIDS. Additionally, the lack of knowledge or awareness regarding sexual health further adds to the health concerns facing India's hijras (Khatri, 2017). By providing greater access to health care and treatment resources, India will be helping its community by decreasing the spread of such sexual diseases, thereby also decreasing its mortality rate. As depicted by the lack of understanding with relation to health, many hijras also do not have access to India's education system. Such inconsistency led to the high rate of illiteracy that India saw as a result of the caste system, which kept many in the scheduled castes out of schools (Khatri, 2017).

Currently, hijras do not participate in the democratic process of India. Including hijras in the electoral process can prove to be just as beneficial as including persons from lower castes into the system which has been undergoing in recent years. Furthermore, by establishing a third gender through its 2014 decision, the court unequivocally declared that hijras cannot be precluded from enjoying the same rights as all others, which includes the right to be a part of the democratic process (Khatri, 2017). A year after that decision, the Rajya Sabha, the upper house of the Indian Parliament, passed the private Rights of Transgender Persons Bill which aims at promoting the rights of transgender people, including their access to health, education and employment services. Relatedly, Kerala became the first state in India to unveil its much-awaited Transgender Policy in the latter half of 2015.The goal of the policy was to put an end to the social stigma attached to the sexual minority group of hijras by aiming to ensure them non-discriminatory treatment (Khatri, 2017).

9.10 Conclusion

While the Rajya Sabha took a monumental step by passing the Right to Transgender Persons Bill, it is still relatively ineffectual. For one, it is a private member's bill that does not speak to the propriety of procedures or fully develop the policies on a state level. In order for legislation to exist, it is imperative for the Supreme Court to clarify the definition of India's third gender and transgender persons. Officials are worried that the current scheme of protection proposed by the Court and supported by the Rajya Sabha asks for people to 'self-declare' and identify themselves as trans (Khatri, 2017). This is problematic because it 'could lead to ineligible people availing themselves of the reservation benefits' and it could be unfair to those who are in the process of or have transitioned themselves from the male-to-female gender and now identify strictly as a woman within the current definition. In order to address these issues, the Court must modify the definition so as to include partially and fully transitioned individuals as well as all castrated men, eunuchs and self-identifying hijras to further de-stigmatize the association with a third gender. Using that definition, the central government must then incorporate all people into its legislation to recognize the rights of the trans community. This will craft the framework necessary to govern the rights of transgender persons in India at a national level, while developing a multipronged approach to allow the states to further effectuate change on a local level (Khatri, 2017). This can take form in a number of ways. Initially, as proposed in the current bill, each district in the nation can create a committee to ensure the newly enumerated rights of trans people are not abused. Moreover, if the localized governments earmark funds to run awareness campaigns and law enforcement trainings to include hijras into the common folds

of society, they can help fight the social stigma facing the community. Given the List III Concurrent powers allotted to the States, it is within their purview to adopt its own legislation that furthers the cause of the hijra community (Khatri, 2017). As such, much like Kerala's proposal, all other states ought to propose legislation that would complement legislation that is passed by the central government. Activists in South India have been heading the charge to generate legislative action over the last couple of years. While such efforts have not picked up traction in North India, the momentum from the South and the suggested policy changes at both the national and local level could succeed at incorporating the transgender community into the major folds of society (Khatri, 2017).

9.11 Summary

Third gender indicates to those behaviours that existed outside the traditional categories of male and female. This paper points towards Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer abbreviated as LGBTQ in which Lesbian refers to homosexual women, Gay refers to homosexual men, Bisexual refers to homosexual and heterosexual relationships, Transgenders which appears to be dissimilar from their biological sex at birth and Queer that points on those who are homosexuals. Apart from this, hijras in the Indian context are also designated as third genders who are regarded as neither male or female but comprising of both male and female. The author has also stressed on LGBTQ movements occurred in the western countries and also within the Indian framework has laid emphasis on the Hijra movements.

9.12 Questions

1. Answer Briefly :

    a. Throw light on the types of lesbian.

    b. Elaborate in detail on the Gay Rights Movement.

    c. Give an overview on the Transgender.

    d. Discuss about the initiatives adopted for inclusion of Hijras within the domain of Indian society.

2. Answer in Detail :

    a. What is Lesbian?

    b. Discuss in brief about the butch lesbian.

    c. State some differences between Otter gay and Wolf gay.

    d. Mention the features of Emotional Bisexuals.

e. Write in short about Androgynes.

f. Briefly explain about the events that occurred before the Stonewall incident.

g. Who are Hijras?

3. Essay type Questions :

a. Highlight on the Lesbian feminism that originated at the convergence of the women's movement, the gay rights movement and the sexual revolution.

b. Give an estimate on the typologies of Gay.

c. Define Transgender? Explain the Transgender Movement

d. Give a detailed explanation on the Queer Movement.

e. Who are Bisexuals? Discuss about the Bisexual Movement.

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9.15 End Notes

[1]A Sexologist is a specialist well versed in the field of sexology which is the scientific study of human sexuality.

[2]Sodomite is the term taken from the city of Sodom. The definition of sodomite refers to anyone who actively engages in homosexual or lesbian acts.

[3]National Organization for Women (NOW) is an American activist organization founded in 1966 that promotes equal rights for women.

[4]The phrase 'lavender menace' was coined by NOW leader Betty Friedan who used it at a NOW meeting in 1969, claiming that outspoken lesbians were a threat to the feminist movement, arguing that the presence of these women distracted from the goals of gaining economic and social equality for women. The colour lavender is associated with the LGBT or gay rights movement in general.

[5]Muscle Bears are the bear subtypes of gay whose size comes from muscle and not from fat.

[6]Polar Bears are the bear subtypes of gay who are older with gray or white facial and body hair.

[7]Sugar Bears as the bear subtypes of gay are effeminate bears that are shunned by more masculine bears.

[8]Muscle Cubs are the cub subtypes of gay whose body size is attributable to muscular composition as opposed to body fat.

[9]Sugar Cubs are the cub subtypes of gay who are effeminate cubs.

[10]Bahuchara Mata is a Hindu goddess. She was a daughter of a Charan by the name of Bapal dan Detha. Currently, Bahuchara Mata is considered patroness of the hijra community in India, and worshipped by them and many other communities in Gujarat.

9.16 Glossary

Third gender or third sex is a concept in which individuals are categorized either by themselves or by society as neither man nor woman.

Lesbian is usually a woman whose primary sexual and affectional orientation is toward people of the same gender. However, some nonbinary people also identify as lesbians often because they have some connection to womanhood and are primarily attracted to women.

Gay is a term used to describe a man who is attracted to men, but often used and embraced by women to describe their same-sex relationships as well.

Bisexual is a person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical and or spiritual attraction to people of their own gender as well as another gender.

Transgender is a term for people whose gender identity is different from their assigned sex at birth.

Queer is an umbrella term to refer to all LGBTQ people. It is also a political statement as well as a sexual orientation which advocates breaking binary thinking and seeing both sexual orientation and gender identity as potentially fluid.

MTF is a term for a transgender individual who was assigned male at birth and currently identifies as a woman.

FTM is a term for a transgender individual who was assigned female at birth and currently identifies as a man.

Hijra is a term used in South Asia, particularly in India to refer to transwomen that is male-to-female transsexual or transgender individuals.

UNIT 10 ☐ Sexual Violence

Structure

10.14 End Notes

10.15 Glossary

10.1 Learning Objectives

After going through the sub units the students will be able to:

  ✓ To know about the concept of 'Sexual Violence'

  ✓ To know about different types of 'Sexual Violence'..

  ✓ To determine vulnerability to sexual abuse

  ✓ To find out different .factors behind 'Sexual Violence'.

  ✓ To know about the legal measures those have been taken to prevent 'Sexual Violence' in India.

10.2 Introduction

The biological difference between men and women is referred to as sex. Even while this differentiation should have no bearing on how people are perceived and treated, it is assigned by gender and does make a difference. Gender violence refers to a wide range of crimes that include both physical and sexual aspects, such as sexual assault in public and sexual abuse in prison. Gender violence, which manifests itself in various forms in various social circumstances around the world, disproportionately affects women.

Rape is a highly gendered violent behaviour, with men constituting the majority of perpetrators and women constituting the majority of victims. Rape, the most common type of violence against women, has been a part of human civilization for thousands of years. It is a grave violation of a woman's bodily integrity and can be considered torture. Rape encompasses more than just the physical act; it also encompasses a variety of aspects such as legislation and customs, social and political events, and so on. While the physical reality of rape has remained constant over time and space, rape's perceptions, beliefs, and laws have evolved. (Ignatius, 2013)

10.3 Concept of Sexual Violence

Sexual violence is a type of gender-based violence that includes any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, acts to traffic, or other acts of coercion directed against an individual's sexuality by anyone, no matter their relationship to the victim, in any setting. Rape, sexual abuse, forced pregnancy, forced sterilization, forced abortion, forced prostitution, trafficking, sexual

servitude, forced circumcision, castration, and forced nudity are all examples of sexual violence. This gender-based violence is defined as any damaging act committed against a person or a group of people because of their gender. Sexual assault, domestic violence, human trafficking, forced/early marriage, and damaging traditional customs are all examples. (United Nations Human Rights, 2014)

The 2012 Delhi gang-rape case sparked a widespread public outcry, pressuring the government to take action. India has a long history of well-publicized episodes of violence against women, but it was the recent 2012 Delhi gang-rape case that sparked a large-scale public response, pressuring the government to take effective action. In India, the police system plays an important role in defending women and reducing gender-based violence. However, there have been reports in India of authorities tasked with safeguarding victims of sexual violence violating the law and discriminating against them based on their gender, class, or caste, preventing the rape from being investigated or discouraging the victim from filing a complaint. In India, both the state and society have a vital role in determining the status of women in the vast country. (Source: The Times of India, 10 April 2013). Rape is the fastest-growing crime in India, according to reports, and rape of women and young girls has climbed significantly in recent years. Between 1971 and 2011, the number of rape cases registered in India surged by 873.3 percent, according to the National Crime Records Bureau of India (NCRB). (Dec 27, 2012, The Times of India). Experts contend, however, that the true number of rape events is much higher than what is reported because the percentage of cases that go undetected is extremely high. For a multitude of reasons, including fear of vengeance from their abusers, a lack of solutions for the victims' plight, concern of skepticism, and cultural stigmatisation, rape remains one of the world's most underreported crimes. (Ignatius, 2013)

Between 1971 and 2013, the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), India's central body for collecting, compiling, and disseminating crime data, reveals a 5.6 percent increase in recorded rape cases. Similarly, the NCRB found that between 1995 and 2013, incidences of cruelty by husbands and relatives, as well as dowry killings, grew at a 6.8% annual rate. According to Gupta (2014), the rate of increase in violence against women between 1971 and 2011 was faster than India's population growth rate of 2% during the same period.

In addition, the NCRB finds an alarming increase in child rape case. Multiple duplicities must be confronted in order to comprehend sexual violence: cultural, legal, and political. However, the first problem is to avoid a conceptual misunderstanding between reporting and incidence. The number of crimes reported may not reflect the overall number of crimes committed. By comparing data from the NCRB and the National Family Health Survey, Gupta (2014) demonstrates the

discrepancy between reporting and the occurrence of violence against women (NFHS, a survey of sample households in India). Gupta reveals that less than 1% of sexual violence instances were reported to the police, using crime data from the NCRB to estimate reporting and the NFHS to estimate incidence. (Cherukuri, 2021)

10.4 Types of Sexual Violence

10.4.1 Rape

Because it ignores the violence that follows the activity, the term rape is primarily perceived as a sexual conduct. Any act of gender-based violence that causes or is likely to cause physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life, is prohibited by the United Nations (General Assembly Resolution 48/104). Rape, often known as forcible intercourse, is a felony in which a man forces another person to have sexual intercourse against their consent.

Even though rape is not always the result of a strong or obsessive need for sexual fulfilment, most men use sexual violence or rape as a tactic to exert their dominance over women in order to retain their positions of power. Men, especially in patriarchal societies, who are motivated by a combination of power and rage, demonstrate their masculinity by committing sexual violence against women. (Ignatius, 2013)

10.4.1.1 Custodial Rape

Custodial rape is a more severe type of rape. It is an assault by people who are supposed to be guardians of the ladies in question, who have been entrusted with their safety and welfare. When it comes to custodial rape, men's physical dominance over women is amplified by their legally sanctioned authority and power. Because they are already deprived of supportive mechanisms, single women, widows with small children and women from lower socioeconomic groups who must eke out a life against all odds become easy prey for custodial rape. Fortunately, reports of incarcerated rape are uncommon in this country. In 2002, three incidences of rape in police custody were reported, and one case was registered in 2003 — both in Tamil Nadu. Even if only one such occurrence occurs, it tarnishes the criminal justice system as a whole.

10.4.1.2 Gang Rape

Gang rape is defined as the rape of a woman by one or more people acting in concert to achieve a shared goal. It is the foremost extreme and vulgar sort of

chauvinism, and it is classified as an aggravated sort of rape by the Indian legal code . It may be only a deliberate and cold-blooded instrument of tyranny or revenge for a male, whether directed at a single woman, a caste, or a class, but it is a dreadful experience for the woman. Rape by gangs, particularly by criminals in uniform, has become commonplace. In India, it is routinely employed as a tool of intimidation. It's also used as a vengeance weapon, used to settle scores with other men and their families. It is a major offence. The minimum sentence for this crime is ten years in jail, but it can be increased to life in prison. (Chattoraj, 2010)

10.4.1.2.1 "Nirbhaya" Rape Case

A rape and fatal assault happened on December 16, 2012, in Munirka, a neighbourhood in South West Delhi, in the 2012 Delhi gang rape and murder case. On Sunday, December 16, 2012, a 22-year-old female physiotherapy intern, and Awindra Pandey, a long-time male friend, went to see Life of Pi at a theatre in South Delhi.. Unfortunately, no rickshaw driver was willing to go the great distance to their respective homes because of the late hour when the movie ended. "Nirbhaya" and Awindra made the mistake of assuming that the bus and riders that eventually picked them up had solely professional motives. According to Awindra, the altercation began immediately after the false attendant collected the bus payment; the five guys posing as passengers knocked him down and then took turns rapping, biting, and sodomising "Nirbhaya" with a metal pipe. The driver then took a turn abusing her. The attackers tossed the two nude, lifeless victims off the rolling bus and attempted to run them over when it came to a stop over two hours later. Protests started the day after her rape and lasted for more than a month. Awindra lived, but "Nirbhaya" died in a Singapore hospital less than two weeks later. Some speculated that because of the fear of retribution, government authorities aided in her medical treatment in Singapore; paradoxically, the same high-quality medical care and doctoring were accessible in India.

The violation and death of "Nirbhaya" were taken on a very personal level by India's women. People gave the Delhi gang rape victim alternate names that inspired them and conveyed thoughts about a personal connection, despite Indian legislation prohibiting the public revelation of rape victims' names. "'Jagruti' (awareness), 'Amanat' (precious possession), 'Nirbhaya' (fearless), 'Damini' (lightning), and 'India's brave heart daughter'" were some of the most popular names. People treated her as if she had been adopted into their family after she died; her rape trauma and background made her relate to their own goals and situations. (Sullivan, 2015)

10.4.2 Trafficking of Women and Girls for Commercial Sexual Purposes

Women's and children's trafficking and enslavement in the sex trade is a growing form of organised crime. This has become the polar opposite of globalisation in recent years. According to the International Organization for Migration, the worldwide trafficking industry produces up to $ 8 billion per year from what is known as "human misery trade." The trafficking industry is driven by both increasing demand and decreasing supply. Inadequate job possibilities, a lack of a social safety net, globalisation, feminization of poverty, the rise of sex tourism, and other factors are all contributing to the trade.

10.4.3 Sexual Harassment in Work Places

In India, sexual harassment in public and at work is very common. During the last few years, the number of sexual harassment instances reported to the police has skyrocketed. Sexual harassment is defined by the Supreme Court guidelines (Vishakha vs. the State of Rajasthan, August 1997) as unwelcome sexually determined behaviour such as physical contact, a demand or request for sexual favours, sexually coloured remarks, showing pornography, and any other unwelcome physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct of a sexual nature, such as leering, dirty jokes, sexual remarks about a person's body, and so on. Any avoidable sexual advances, whether verbal or through gestures, or through the utilization of sexually suggestive or pornographic material, whistling, sexually slanting and obscene remarks or jokes; demands for sexual favours, threats, avoidable physical contact, touching, patting, pinching, physical assaults, and molestation of and towards women workers by male colleagues or anyone who is currently during a position to sexually harangue them; comments about physical appearance; demands for sexual favour. In 2003, there were 12,325 reports of sexual harassment, a considerable rise of 21.4 percent over the previous year (10,155). Delhi has the greatest percentage of sexual harassment cases, accounting for 76.08 percent of all union territories.

10.4.4 Sexual Violence by Intimate Partners

In many nations, a large percentage of women who are physically abused are also sexually abused. According to research in Mexico and the United States, 40-52 percent of women who have been physically abused by an intimate partner have also been sexually abused by the same (Campbell, 1999). Sexual violence can sometimes occur in the absence of physical violence. In a representative sample of nearly 6000 women in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, 17 percent said their husbands had sexually and physically abused them. (Chattoraj, 2010)

10.5 Vulnerability to sexual abuse

10.5.1 Age

Rape is more common among young women than it is among older women (Acierno et al. 1999). According to data from the US Department of Justice, two-thirds of all sexual assault victims are under the age of 15. (Greenfeld, L. A.). Certain types of sexual violence, for example, are strongly linked to adolescence, particularly violence in schools and universities, as well as the trafficking of women for sexual exploitation.

10.5.2 Drugs and Alcohol

The use of alcohol and other drugs makes people more vulnerable to sexual violence. Women's ability to defend themselves by perceiving and effectively acting on warning indicators is harmed when they consume alcohol or drugs. Drinking alcohol may also put women in situations where they are more likely to encounter a potential criminal. Alcohol, as well as some drugs, such as cocaine, has been proven to play a substantial influence in certain types of sexual assault.

10.5.3 Poverty

Poor women and girls are more likely than better-off women and girls to be raped in the course of their daily activities, such as when they walk home alone late at night after work, work in the fields, or collect firewood alone. Children of poor women may have less parental supervision when their mothers are at work and unable to afford child care when they are not in school. It's possible that the minors are employed and so vulnerable to exploitation. Poverty forces many women and girls into jobs that put them at danger of sexual violence, especially sex work.

10.5.4 Isolation

The conditions for the commission of rape are considerably aided by isolation. Isolation can be physical, social, psychological, religious, or even cultural in nature. The majority of rape cases in India have occurred when victims were found alone in isolated locations such as lonely and insufficiently illuminated parks, streets, alleys, and other such locations.

10.6 Casual explanation

10.6.1 Psychological Factors

There has been a lot of research in recent years on the role of cognitive elements in the set of circumstances that might lead to rape. Sexually violent men are more prone to blame the victims for the rape and are less aware about the consequences of rape, according to research. They have coercive sexual fantasies, which are frequently fueled by access to pornography, and they are more hostile to women than non-sexually violent men. Males who are sexually violent are regarded to be more impulsive and antisocial than other men, in addition to these qualities. They also have an exaggerated sense of masculinity.

10.6.2 Early Childhood Environment

Sexual aggression appears to be a learned behaviour in certain individuals, particularly when it comes to child sexual assault, according to data. According to studies on sexually abused boys, about one in five go on to molest youngsters themselves later in life. Such events may develop to a pattern of behaviour in which the guy excuses his violence, denies wrongdoing, and has erroneous and unhealthy sexual conceptions. Early erroneous indoctrination continues to have an impact on future sexual behaviour.

10.6.3 Physical and Social Environment

While dread of rape is often connected with being outside the home, the vast majority of sexual assault occurs in the victim's or abuser's own home. Nonetheless, stranger abduction is frequently the precursor to rape, and the likelihood of such abduction is impacted by the physical context. However, in most cases, the social environment inside a community is more essential than the physical surrounds. Rape, for example, can occur in public in some locales, with passers-by refusing to intervene. Rape complaints may be treated more leniently by the authorities, especially if the assault occurred during a date or was carried out by the victim's spouse or close relatives. When police investigations and court proceedings do go forward, the procedures may be either exceedingly lax or corrupt, such as when legal papers are "lost" in exchange for a bribe.

10.6.4 Societal Factors

Laws and national policies dealing to gender equality in general and sexual violence in particular, as well as conventions relating to the use of violence, are all socio-cultural factors that influence sexual violence. While the numerous elements generally function at a local level, within families, schools, businesses, and communities, there are also national and international laws and conventions that have an impact. In India, there are some small communities where it is common

practise for husbands to sexually attack their wives. Assaulted women are also not particularly sad because they view the assault as a sign of affection from their spouses.

10.6.5 Global Trends and Economic Factors

Many forces that operate on a national level also have an international component. Global trends, such as free trade, have been accompanied by an increase in the mobility of women and girls for labour, including sex work, all over the world. International organisations' economic structural adjustment programmes have exacerbated poverty and unemployment in a number of nations, increasing the risk of sexual trafficking and sexual assault in Central America, the Caribbean, and Southeast Asia. (Chattoraj, 2010)

10.7 Sexual Violence and HIV / AIDS

Sexual activity that is violent or coerced can raise the risk of HIV[1] transmission. Abrasions and wounds are prevalent during forced vaginal penetration, making it easier for the virus to enter the vaginal mucosa if it is present. Because their vaginal mucous membrane has not yet developed the cellular density that provides an effective barrier, adolescent females are more vulnerable to HIV transmission through forced sex, and even through unforced sex. Anal rape victims, both boys and men, as well as girls and women, are far more susceptible to HIV than would be the case if the sex was not forced, because anal tissues are easily destroyed, allowing the virus to enter the body more easily. Being a victim of sexual abuse and being HIV-positive have a lot of risk factors in common. Forcing sex in childhood or adolescence, for example, raises the risk of unprotected intercourse, multiple partners, sex work, and substance abuse. People who have been subjected to forced sex in intimate relationships frequently find it difficult to negotiate condom use, either because using a condom could be taken as a sign of distrust in their spouse or an admission of promiscuity, or because they fear violence from their partner. Sexual coercion is linked to low self-esteem and depression in adolescents and adults, two variables that are linked to many of the risk behaviours for HIV infection. Sexual violence is more likely for women who are HIV-positive or have HIV-positive family members. An infected lady may be evicted from her house due to the stigma surrounding HIV and AIDS in many countries. Furthermore, an AIDS-related illness or death in a low-income family might destabilise the economy. Women who are coerced into sex work are more likely to contract HIV/AIDS and experience sexual assault. Children who have been orphaned by AIDS, who are poor and have no one to look after them, may be forced to live on the streets, where they are vulnerable to sexual abuse. Education is likely the most important method for reducing both sexual assault and HIV infection.

Comprehensive interventions in schools and other educational institutions, youth clubs, and businesses must be made for young people first and foremost. Sexual and reproductive health, relationships, and violence should all be covered in school curricula. They should also teach life skills, such as how to avoid potentially dangerous or scary situations involving violence, sex, or drugs, and how to negotiate safe sexual behaviour. Adults should have access to comprehensive knowledge about sexual health and the repercussions of specific sexual practises, as well as interventions to change harmful patterns of behaviour and social conventions that obstruct sexual communication. Gender and reproductive health, including gender-based violence and sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV infection, require integrated training for health care workers and other service providers. Screening and referral for HIV infection should be available to rape victims. Also, post-attack HIV prophylaxis —- administered promptly after the assault, together with counselling —- should be explored. Women living with HIV should also be evaluated for a history of sexual violence. Violence prevention techniques should be considered in HIV voluntary counselling programmes. (Krug, Dahlberg , Mercy , Zwi , Lozano, 2002)

10.8 Legal Measures in India

Because of orthodox tradition, superstitions, myths, and beliefs in India, where women are revered as goddesses and symbols of energy and the spirit of the cosmos, countless women are exploited socially, economically, and sexually. The constitutional guarantee of equality before the law and equal protection under the law for men and women is the foundation upon which the Indian Penal Code is built (IPC). Special legislation for the prevention and control of sexual exploitation of women and girls has been enacted from time to time. The central government and state governments in India have taken a number of initiatives to safeguard women, including enacting legislation and prosecuting individuals who commit acts of violence against them. The Indian Penal Code (IPC) has been revised multiple times in connection to crimes against women, owing largely to anti-violence initiatives led by the country's women's movement. In the 1980s, almost every movement against gender-based violence against women culminated in new legislation protecting women. Each act increased the severity of the sentencing provisions, set time restrictions for outstanding cases, and increased compensation to victims. Legislative reforms, innovations in the organisation and operation of the police force, steps to sensitise the bureaucracy, media campaigns, and new institutional structures have all been tried to combat violence in its various forms. According to section 375 of the IPC, a man commits rape when he has sexual intercourse with a woman in one of the six circumstances listed below: I sexual intercourse against the victim's will, (ii) without the victim's consent, (iii) with her consent, when her consent was obtained by putting her or any

other person she may be interested in fear of death or harm, (iv) with her consent, when the man knows he is not her husband Following that, the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1983 was enacted to enhance the rape-related prohibitions. The Act was passed by Parliament in response to public outcry for more rigorous anti-rape legislation. It changes section 376 of the Indian Penal Code to increase the penalty for rape to a maximum of seven years. If the sentence is for a period of less than seven years, the court must state in its decision the adequate and special reasons for this. It also stipulates that police officers or employees of jails, remand homes, or other legal places of detention face a minimum of ten years in prison. The Act also adds a new section to the Indian Evidence Act, Section 114A, which states that if the accused has been proven to have engaged in sexual intercourse with the victim and the victim states before the court that she did not consent, the court will presume that there was no consent and the onus will be on the accused to prove that the woman consented to the act. The Act modifies the Code of Criminal Procedure to allow for closed-door trials. It also adds a new section 228(a) to the IPC, which makes revealing the victim's identify in rape cases a crime punishable by two years in prison. Sections 366A and 366B of the Child Prostitution Act are meant to penalise the export and import of girls for prostitution. The procurement of minor girls from one part of India to another for illicit sex usage is dealt with in Section 366A. It is illegal to bring girls under the age of twenty-one years into India for the purpose of prostitution, according to Section 366B. Anyone who, by any means, induces a minor girl under the age of eighteen to travel from one location to another or to perform any act with the intent or knowledge that such girl will be forced or seduced to illicit intercourse with another person is subject to a ten-year prison sentence and a fine, according to Section 366A.

Selling or abducting any female under the age of eighteen years for the purpose of prostitution or other illicit acts is punishable by 10 years under Section 372 of the IPC. Selling or displaying any published or printed matter containing pornographic material in any public or private place is prohibited under Section 292 of the Indian Penal Code. For the first conviction, it stipulates two years of rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 2000, and for the second or subsequent convictions, it stipulates five years of rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 5000. If any offence under this subsection is performed against a person's will, the sentence of seven years in prison is increased to fourteen years in prison for a person or persons found guilty of causing or inducing any woman or girl.

In 2003, the National Commission for Women of India introduced a Bill for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment of Women at Work, which resulted in the 'Sexual Harassment of Women at Work (Prevention) Act, 2003.According to the

Act, sexual harassment includes any avoidable sexual advances made through the use of sexually suggestive or pornographic material, as well as comments about physical appearance, demands for sexual favours, threats, avoidable physical contact, patting, pinching, physical assaults, and molestation of women by male colleagues or anyone who is currently in a position to sexually harass women. (Chattoraj, 2010)

10.9 Conclusion

Sexual assault is a widespread and serious public health issue that affects millions of individuals worldwide each year. Many forces operate in a variety of social, cultural, and economic contexts to drive it. Gender inequality is at the root of sexual violence against women. Many countries lack statistics on most types of sexual assault, and study on all facets of sexual violence is desperately needed everywhere. Interventions are equally important. These are of various types, but the most important ones concern primary prevention of sexual violence, which targets both women and men, interventions to support sexual assault victims, measures to increase the likelihood of rape perpetrators being caught and punished, and strategies to change social norms and raise women's status. Interventions for resource-poor contexts must be developed, and programmes must be properly evaluated in both developed and developing countries.

10.10 Summary

The biological difference between men and women is referred to as sex. Even while this differentiation should have no bearing on how people are perceived and treated, it is assigned by gender and does make a difference. Gender violence refers to a wide range of crimes that include both physical and sexual aspects, such as sexual assault in public and sexual abuse in prison. Rape, the most common type of violence against women, has been a part of human civilization for thousands of years. It is a grave violation of a woman's bodily integrity and can be considered torture. Rape encompasses more than just the physical act; it also encompasses a variety of aspects such as legislation and customs, social and political events, and so on. Many forces operate in a variety of social, cultural, and economic contexts to drive it. Gender inequality is at the root of sexual violence against women. Many countries lack statistics on most types of sexual assault, and study on all facets of sexual violence is desperately needed everywhere. Interventions are equally important.

10.11 Questions

1. Answer Briefly:

   a. What is meant by 'Sexual Violence'? Describe different types of 'Sexual Violence'.

   b. Describe different vulnerabilities to sexual abuse.

   c. Describe different casual factors related to Sexual Violence.

   d. How can Sexual Violence raise the risk of HIV / AIDS transmission?

   e. What legal measures have been taken in India to resist Sexual Violence?

2. Answer Very Briefly:

   a. What is Gender Violence?

   b. What kind of violence is considered as 'sexual violence'?

   c. Define 'Rape'.

   d. What is Custodial Rape?

   e. What is 'Gang Rape'?

   f. What are the social factors behind sexual violence?

   g. Write a short note on 'Sexual Harassment of Women at Work (Prevention) Act, 2003.

3. Answer in Detail:

   a. Describe Sexual Violence with its causes and effects.

   b. Write an essay on Sexual Violence in India and measures taken by the Indian Legislation to prevent it.

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10.13 Suggested Readings

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10.14 End Notes

[1]**HIV**: Human immunodeficiency viruses (HIV) are two Lentivirus (a retrovirus subgroup) species that infect people.They produce acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), a disorder in which the immune system gradually fails, allowing life-threatening opportunistic infections to take hold.

10.15 Glossary

Skepticism : A skeptical attitude; doubt as to the truth of something.

Stigmatization : The action of describing or regarding someone or something as worthy of disgrace or great disapproval.

Vulnerability : The quality or state of being exposed to the possibility of being attacked or harmed, either physically or emotionally.

UNIT 11 ❑ Power and Subordination

Structure

11.1   Learning Objectives

This unit focusses on the concepts of power, authority, patriarchy and gender. How women fare in the patriarchal society is an aspect that requires attention and

addressing. Excessive power in the hands of the male results in subordination and subjugation of the women which further leads to their rights and privileges being violated. This violence is manifested in the family through religion, property and other cultural morals. The working women also face enough prejudice and stigma and leads to their subordination. Last we have discussed how power can also be a source for empowerment.

11.2 Introduction

This unit provides an introductory overview of the ways in which gender subordination is upheld in societies throughout the world. It looks at some of the social, political, and economic institutions which divide resources, opportunity, and power differently between the two genders. It cannot hope to provide anything more than pointers, since in each society, North and South, different political, cultural and democratic traditions dictate how gender relations will be structured. It begins by arguing that gender subordination on such a broad scale can only be understood if we view it as a structural problem, beyond individual intentions, and shaping thought and action through the social institutions we occupy, and the political, cultural, and economic institutions that shape our social worlds. The chapter starts by looking at the family, giving as examples of its impact the questions of son preference and sexuality, both of which have become important issues to women's movements around the world. It then moves on to look at the related issues of access to property, ritual, tradition, and cultural taboo. Violence against women is one of the most potent weapons to ensure their compliance with gender norms, while religion has been used to legitimise subordination in every tradition.

11.3 Power Definitions

Power is a key sociological concept with several meanings and considerable disagreement surrounding them. Lord Acton famously noted, "Power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely." While many in power have, indeed, become corrupted and even despotic, others have used their influence to fight for injustice and to aid the oppressed. As some definitions of power show, society as a whole may be the true holders of power.

Weber's Definition

The most common definition comes from Max Weber, who defined it as the ability to control others, events, or resources; to make happen what one wants to happen in spite of obstacles, resistance, or opposition.

Power is a thing that is held, coveted, seized, taken away, lost, or stolen, and it is used in what are essentially adversarial relationships involving conflict between those with power and those without. Weber laid out three types of authority from which power is derived: Traditional, Charismatic and Legal/Rational.

Britain's Queen Elizabeth would be an example of traditional authority. She holds power because the monarchy has done so for centuries, and she inherited her title.

A charismatic authority would be someone who gets their power through their personal abilities to sway people. Such a person can vary widely from a spiritual or ethical leader like Jesus Christ, Gandhi or Martin Luther King Jr. all the way to a tyrant like Adolf Hitler.

A legal/rational authority is the type put in place by democratic governments or even what might be seen on a smaller level in the workplace in a relationship between a supervisor and subordinate.

Marx's Definition

In contrast, Karl Marx used the concept of power in relation to social classes and social systems rather than individuals. He argued that power rests in a social class's position in the relations of production.

Power does not lie in the relationship between individuals, but in domination and subordination of social classes based on the relations of production. According to Marx, only one person or group at a time can have power—the working class or the ruling class.

In capitalism, according to Marx, the ruling class wields power over the working class, with the ruling class owning the means of production. Capitalist values, therefore, spill down throughout society.

Parsons' Definition

A third definition comes from Talcott Parsons who argued that power is not a matter of social coercion and domination. Instead, he said, power flows from a social system's potential to coordinate human activity and resources to accomplish goals.

Parsons' view is sometimes called the "variable-sum" approach, as opposed to other views, which are seen as a constant-sum. In Parsons' view, power is not constant or fixed but capable of increasing or decreasing.

This is best seen in democracies where voters can give power to a politician in

one election, then take it away again in the next. Parsons compares voters in this way to depositors at a bank, who can deposit their money but are free to remove it as well. To Parsons, then, power resides in society as a whole, not with a single individual or small group of the powerful elite.

11.4 A Structural Problem

Most people who are born and grow up in those countries in the North with liberal democratic traditions share certain assumptions about behaviour. Put simply, we believe that we do what we do because we want to, and behave in certain ways because we have chosen them. If we were to stop and consider how much of our behaviour is conditioned by our gender, and how much of that gender role we have not in fact chosen for ourselves, we might be surprised. In order to understand how gender affects us, our belief in the self-sufficient individual needs to be modified by another one — that people are fundamentally social beings. The young Karl Marx made the point with telling bluntness when he said 'It is society which thinks in me'. Obviously this does not mean that we cannot, up to a point, arrange our thoughts in our own way and have original ideas. But, while there is indeed 'a person, an individual and unique experience; it is in large part made up of common elements'. If we were to tear from ourselves our social material, we would as Louis Dumont expressed it, have little left other than the 'potentiality for personal organisation'.

The social institutions that we enter as individuals, from our arrival in our families at birth, through our education, youth culture, and into the worlds of work and leisure, marriage and starting families of our own, give us clear messages about how 'normal' people behave, according to their gender. We learn the options open to us. Although, for example, a white middle-class professional woman will be offered more life chances and choices than the young black woman who cleans her office, nonetheless, for both women, the choices will be limited by appropriate gender behaviour.

When we look at societies outside the industrialised North, where the ideology of individuality and the belief in an individual's freedom do not hold so much power, the fact that gender roles do not rest on individual inclination but on the very structure of society becomes much clearer. Women writing in the dossier, Women living under Muslim laws write that'... many ... women have no choice at all in the direction their adult lives take — they are directed first by their fathers and mothers, and then by their husbands and mothers-in-law'. Religion dictates particular ways of behaving. To an outsider from another culture, the fact that a woman is expected to restrict her freedom of movement during menstruation may appear highly unnatural

and unacceptably restrictive. For the society which insists on this seclusion, the practice will appear a natural and normal part of being a woman. Such practices show that nothing in the human world is 'natural', least of all the way in which we perceive bodily events such as menstruation.

We need a theory of gender which goes beyond our individual intentions. By seeing it as an ideological, social, and structural issue, built into our lives with the same force and firmness as the fact that we are born into families, we can understand it as preexisting us and defining us, rather than the other way round. The reason why it is often so hard to challenge gender roles is because most societies in the world are patriarchal, and through this power structure, traditional gender roles in which women are subordinate are upheld and perpetuated.

11.5 Why People talk about Patriarchy?

The word 'patriarchy' originally had a narrow meaning, referring to the system, historically derived from Greek and Roman law, in which the male head of household had absolute legal and economic power over his dependent female and male family members and his male and female slaves. It is sometimes argued that patriarchy, in this sense of the word, came to an end in most of Western Europe in the nineteenth century with the granting of civil rights to women, particularly married women. More recently, the term 'patriarchy' has come to be used around the world to describe the situation of male dominance over women and children within the family and the extension of this into male dominance in all other areas of society. 'Patriarchy' is the concept that men hold power in all the important roles in societies — in government, the military, education, industry, business, health care, advertising, religion — and that women are, in the main, deprived of access to that power. It does not imply that women are totally powerless, or totally deprived of rights, influences, and resources; rather, that the balance of power is in men's favor.

This has important implications when we consider why traditional gender roles are difficult to alter. It is a basic feature of societies organised along patriarchal lines that the gender relations between women and men are unequal. Challenging gender inequality is threatening because it challenges the whole social structure. Patriarchy permeates all aspects of society and social systems; and we will now look at some of these and see how their structures, which give men privileges at the expense of women, uphold gender differences.

11.6 The Family

The 'nuclear family' unit, consisting of a mother, a father and two or three children, is the perfect unit for an industrial society because it means that the demand for products will go on expanding indefinitely as nuclear families reproduce themselves. The nuclear family is only one form of household grouping, however. Different societies around the world organise themselves in other ways. For a typical Ashanti girl growing up in Ghana the immediate family group consists of her mother, grandmother, mother's brothers, and mother's sisters and their children. She calls all the women in the household 'mother' and, when she visits her father's house where he lives with his mother and siblings, she calls everyone in the household father. In many parts of South Asia, people live in extended families — grandparents live with sons, their wives and their children, under one roof.

Despite the variations in family structure, and despite a growing number of woman-headed households, many societies expect women to be subordinate in marriage to a male head of household. This has important implications for women in the control of their reproductive lives, in a preference for male children, and in the autonomy they have over household affairs. In the rural community in north India, studied by Patricia Jeffrey and her colleagues, brides were referred to as 'someone else's property', and after marriage, young women had to adopt forms of behaviour that demonstrate their subordinate status: a young bride would rarely initiate a conversation with her father-in-law, but would use a child as a go-between. Daughters-in-law cannot go far from their homes, and can go nowhere without permission. Husbands expect obedient wives and may enforce their authority with physical violence. Her own parents will be very reluctant to interfere, even if they suspect their daughter is being ill-treated. Only when a woman has daughters-in-law of her own, or if she and her husband set up their own household, will she experience any power and influence over the running of her life. Rural north India is not an isolated, though an extreme, example of the subordinate position of married women in their husband's households.

Within a patriarchal family unit, the interests, needs and power of the various family members will be different, which is why gender sensitive development planners argue that taking the family as a unit in development planning cannot guarantee the distribution of benefits equally to all the members of the family. Yet the family unit remains a dominant focus in much development planning, particularly among some agencies with a Christian agenda and an ideological commitment to upholding the integrity of the family. Considering the income of family members separately reveals how increases in income affect both family dynamics and patterns of consumption.

It has been shown, for example, that increases in the mother's income tend to improve both the quality and quantity of food available for her children, whereas increases in men's income tend to go in 'productive investments, consumer goods and entertainment'.

11.6.1 Son Preference

One consequence of the subordinate position of women is the development of son-preference, a preference so advanced in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh that it has had a significant effect on the sex-ratio in the population. Currently in India there are only 929 women to every 1,000 men; in the UK there are 1,060 women per 1,000 men. It is not difficult to see why women prefer sons; daughters will one day leave home, taking a significant proportion of the family's wealth in the form of dowry, whereas sons offer the promise of future autonomy and authority over daughters-in-law and grandchildren. Women who produce sons are treated better than women who only give birth to daughters. And this preferential treatment is passed on to their children. There is widespread evidence that boys are breastfed more often and for longer than their sisters; boys are taken to doctors more promptly than are girls; boys are fed before girls, and educated more seriously. Among middle-class Indians son-preference expresses itself in the growth of clinics which offer amniocentesis for sex-testing, and the abortion of unwanted female foetuses. In some villages in Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan, infanticide of baby girls is still practiced.

By bearing in mind our description of gender subordination as a structural problem, these extreme forms of discrimination are more understandable. If the social definition and value of maleness and femaleness is extremely polarised, it is not surprising if we find people acting in accordance with these definitions.

In the early 1980s the use of amniocentesis for determining the sex of foetuses gained considerable popularity in urban centres in India. Advertised as a 'humane service for women who do not want any more daughters', an estimated 78,000 female foetuses were aborted between 1978 and 1982. The women's movement in India was quick to respond, seeing in the growing trend — presented as an expansion of women's reproductive choices — a serious threat to the status of Indian women. They began to talk back in the media, arguing that sex-choice was another form of oppression, and that 'under the guise of a choice we may indeed exacerbate our own oppression'. The analysis that grew out of the women's movement linked together class, race and sex in its challenge to the growing institutionalization of son-preference. Journalists, women's organisations, and voluntary health organisations, lawyers and doctors, formed the 'Forum Against Sex Determination and Sex-preselection Techniques' and organised an effective campaign using films, exhibitions,

public meetings and television coverage, to convey the social implications of the tests. They organised pickets in front of hospitals carrying out the tests and put up thousands of posters. Some of the most successful actions were the demonstrations by parents with daughters, and activities undertaken by school-girls, challenging the view of girls as less valuable than boys. As pressure mounted, the Government of Maharashtra was forced to make the practice illegal in the State.

11.6.2 Sexuality

Sexuality is another area in which women in patriarchal societies find themselves highly controlled. The use of language often makes explicit the idea of a husband's rights over his wife's childbearing capacity. He alone plants seeds in her. Many women throughout the world believe that the husband's seed contains all that is needed for the baby to start growing; the mother simply provides the nourishment to make it grow. All over north and central India the process of reproduction is referred to by the metaphorical use of the two terms the 'seed' and the 'earth'. Men provide the seed and the essence, and since the seed determines the kind of child, a child's identity is fundamentally derived from the father. (Curiously enough, the inherent contradiction between the belief that men determine the nature of the child and the blame attached to women who fail to bear sons, is not appreciated.) The mother's role — as the nourisher — is continued through breastfeeding once the baby is born.

This sexual asymmetry is clearly expressed in the Hindu marriage rituals. The bride goes through the ritual of 'consecration of the field', aimed at purifying her womb ready to receive the seed. The metaphor is taken further, and a woman is expected to bear pain; just as the earth is ploughed, furrowed, dug into, a woman, too, is pierced and ploughed (sexual intercourse is sometimes referred to as 'ploughing'). Just as a man has rights over his field and its produce, so, too, he has rights over his wife's sexuality, her reproductive capacity and what her womb produces. He also has rights over her productive capacity and labour power and these two rights — over her productive and reproductive work — are not unrelated. Just as women's work in reproduction is undermined and undervalued by an ideology that sees the real inputs as male, so, too, is their contribution to the household economy ignored or grossly under-recognised. Women under patriarchy stand alienated from their productive and reproductive labour; the fruits of both belong to someone else.

Women's groups around the world have begun the process of reclaiming sexuality as an area in which women can challenge their oppression. They are looking at received understandings of women's sexuality, linking women's economic and social subordination with their sexual subordination. At the same time, this 'politics

of sexism' has been linked to the 'politics of desire'/ as women have looked at the positive possibilities of sexual freedom; at questions of pleasure as well as of power, of choice as well as subordination. In the process the idea of sexuality itself as a social construction, rather than a biologically innate, unchanging entity has become important; sexuality is seen as the 'intricate and multiple ways in which our emotions, desires and relationships are shaped by the society we live in'. Understanding these social forces is the first step towards changing them, by ensuring that women have an opportunity to think through the place and meaning of sexuality in their lives and in their relationships. In the process, questions of identity, obligation, power, pleasure, choice, and consent are raised, and the opportunity women have for autonomy in this intimate area of their lives.

11.7 Women's Subordination

Patriarchy, which pre-supposes the natural superiority of male over female, shamelessly upholds women's dependence on, and subordination to, man in all spheres of life. Consequently, all the power and authority within the family, the society and the state remain entirely in the hands of men. So, due to patriarchy, women were deprived of their legal rights and opportunities patriarchal values restrict women's mobility, reject their freedom over themselves as well as their property.

Subordination means, "something else is less important than the other thing" (Cobuild 2010:1559). According to Advanced Learners Dictionary, "subordination means having less power or authority than somebody else in a group or an organization" (Hornby 2003:1296).

The term 'women's subordination' refers to the inferior position of women, their lack of access to resources and decision making etc. and to the patriarchal domination that women are subjected to in most societies. So, women's subordination means the inferior position of women to men. The feeling of powerlessness, discrimination and experience of limited self-esteem and self-confidence jointly contribute to the subordination of women. Thus, women's subordination is a situation, where a power relationship exists and men dominate women. The subordination of women is a central feature of all structures of interpersonal domination, but feminists choose different locations and causes of subordination. Contemporary feminist theory begins with Simone de Beauvoir's argument that because men view women as fundamentally different from themselves, women are reduced to the status of the second sex and hence subordinate (Beauvior 1974). Kate Millet's theory of subordination argues that women are a dependent sex class under patriarchal domination (Millet 1977).

Patriarchy is a system whereby women are kept subordinate in a number of ways. The subordination that we experience at a daily level, regardless of the class we might belong to, takes various forms – discrimination, disregard, insult, control, exploitation, oppression, violence – within the family, at the place of work, in society. For instance, a few examples are illustrated here to represent a specific form of discrimination and a particular aspect of patriarchy. Such as, son preference, discrimination against girls in food distribution, burden of household work on women and young girls, lack of educational opportunities for girls, lack of freedom and mobility for girls, wife battering, male control over women and girls, sexual harassment at workplace, lack of inheritance or property rights for women, male control over women's bodies and sexuality, no control over fertility or reproductive rights.

So, the norms and practices that define women as inferior to men, impose controls on-them, are present everywhere in our families, social relations, religious, laws, schools, textbooks, media, factories, offices. Thus, patriarchy is called the sum of the kind of male domination we see around women all the time. In this ideology, men are superior to women and women are part of men's property, so women should be controlled by men and this produces women's subordination. In this context, Gerda Lerner in her book The Creation of Patriarchy said, "The use of the phrase subordination of women instead of the word "oppression" has distinct advantages. Subordination does not have the connotation of evil intent on the part of the dominant; it allows for the possibility of collusion between him and the subordinate. It includes the possibility of voluntary acceptance of subordinate status in exchange of protection and privilege, a condition which characterizes so much of the historical experience of women. I will use the term "paternalistic dominance" for this relation. "Subordination" encompasses other relations in addition to "paternalistic dominance" and has the additional advantage over "oppression" of being neutral as to the causes of subordination (Learner 1989:234-235).

Subordination is the situation in which one is forced to stay under the control of other. So women's subordination means the social situation in which women are forced to stay under the control of men. In this way to keep women under men's control, patriarchy operates some social customs, traditions and social roles by socialization process. To preserve the male supremacy, patriarchy created 'masculine' and 'feminine' characteristics, private-public realms by gendered socialization process. Socialization is considered to take place primarily during childhood, when boys and girls learn the appropriate behaviour for their sex. All agents of socialization process such as the family, religion, the legal system, the economic system and political system, the educational institutions and the media are the pillars of a patriarchal

system and structure. The use of the term "social structure" is important here, since it clearly implies rejection both of biological determinism, and the notion that every individual man is in a dominant position and every women in a subordinate one. "In this system women's labour power, women's reproduction, women's sexuality, women's mobility and property and other economic resources – are under patriarchal control" (Walby 1990:20).

This control over and exploitation of areas of women's lives mean that men benefit materially from patriarchy, they derive concrete economic gains from the subordination of women. In what Walby calls the "patriarchal mode of production" (Ibid), women's labour is expropriated by their husbands and others who live there. She says housewives are the producing class, while husbands are the expropriating class, their back-breaking, endless and repetitive labour is not considered work at all and housewives are seen to be dependent on their husbands. So, there is a material basis for patriarchy. Most property and other productive resources are controlled by men and they pass from one man to another, usually from father to son. Even where women have the legal right to inherit such assets, a whole array of customary practices, emotional pressures, social sanctions and sometimes, plain violence, prevent them from acquitting actual control over them. In other cases, personal laws curtail their rights, rather than enhance them. In all cases, they are disadvantaged. So the material base of patriarchy, then, does not rest solely on child bearing in the family but on all the social structures that enable men to control women's labour.

Patriarchal ideology to keep women away the power systems has been attempted through the construction of private and public realms for women and men respectively. Theories of patriarchy by Walby shows "two distinct forms of patriarchy – private and public patriarchy" (Walby 1990:24).

Private patriarchy is based upon household production as the main site of women's oppression. Public patriarchy is based principally in public sites such as employment and the state. The household does not cease to be a patriarchal structure in the public form, but it is no longer the chief site. In private patriarchy the expropriation of women's labour takes place primarily by individual patriarchs within the household, while in the public form it is a more collective appropriation. In private patriarchy the principle patriarchal strategy is exclusionary, in the public it is segregationist and subordinating. Above all, "the state has a systematic bias towards patriarchal interests in its policies and actions" (Walby 1990:21).

In this system, different kinds of violence may be used to control and subjugate women, such violence by men may even be considered legitimate and women are always routinely experienced by male violence. Male violence is systematically

condoned and legitimated by the states refusal to intervene against it except in exceptional instance. Due to such violence (rape and other forms of sexual abuse, female foeticide, dowry murders, wife-beating) and the continued sense of insecurity that is instilled in women as a result keeps them bound to the home, economically exploited and socially suppressed.

In this patriarchal system, men and women behave, think, and aspire differently because they have been taught to think of masculinity and femininity in ways which condition difference. Patriarchal system shows in or accept that men have, or should have, one set of qualities and characteristics, and women another. Such as 'masculine' qualities (strength, bravery, fearlessness, dominance, competitiveness etc.) and 'feminine' qualities (caring, nurturing, love, timidity, obedience etc.).

Hartmann (1981) argues that both house work and wage labour are important sites of women's exploitation by men. Within the field of paid work occupational segregation is used by organized men to keep access to the best paid jobs for themselves at the expense of women. Within the household women do more labour than men, even if they also have paid employment (Hartmann, 1981a). These two forms of expropriation also act to reinforce each other, since women's disadvantaged position in paid work makes them vulnerable in making marriage arrangements, and their position in the family disadvantages them in paid work.

According to Lim (1997:220), patriarchy is the system of male domination and female subordination in economy, society and culture that has characterized much of human history to the present day. Patriarchal institutions and social relations are responsible for the inferior or secondary status of women in the capitalist wage-labour market. The primacy of the sexual division of labour within the family has several consequences for the women who seek wage employment.

11.8 Access to Property

In much of the South, property, usually in the form of land, is the key to survival, and access and control are intimately related to kinship patterns and marriage. As such, land and property rights are an extension of familial control over its members. Not surprisingly therefore, the world over, women do not have the same access to land as do men, and very few women have full control over their land by acquiring it in their own right. At the same time there is a huge diversity of inheritance patterns practised, dictated by local tribal, religious, and customary and statutory law. In many societies, property is inherited through the patrilineal line, but even in the minority of societies in which inheritance is matrilineal (such as the Asante of Ghana, and the Rembau of Malaysia) control over property and land

tends to remain vested in men, the difference being that in matrilineal systems the men are the maternal uncles, the brothers, and sons of women. In many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa; in Peru, Bolivia and Paraguay; and in Islamic countries, women do not have the same inheritance rights as men. Under the Islamic code, a daughter's inheritance is limited to half that of a son's share (because daughters are expected to marry and have their needs provided for by their husbands, still leaving them dependent on a man, of course). In some societies the process of Islamisation has had a detrimental effect on inheritance patterns. Among the people of Mafia Island on the Tanzanian cost studied by Patricia Caplan, historically access to property was egalitarian. As indigenous ideologies are being influenced by Islam it is becoming more difficult for women to gain access to productive assets such as coconut trees.

In Sub-Saharan Africa customary laws discriminate against women; land rights often devolve to men on the assumption that there is always a male head of household, even though this may mean that women members of the family may lose their status as independent farmers. Governments have tended to replicate this attitude towards women farmers through land reform programmes or cooperative developments. According to a Minority Rights report, under the laws of many African countries land rights continue to be given to the male head of household, despite the fact that the majority of men migrate to the urban centres for work." This has enormous significance for the women who are left behind to farm the land. The failure to gain land rights has been accompanied by a failure to gain rights to a range of other resources such as information, technology, credit, training, and agricultural inputs such as fertilizers, pesticides and seeds. Women are forced to remain dependent on men simply to ensure access to the land they need to grow food for their own and their children's survival. Consequently, many women, in Africa and in other parts of the world remain in their marital home despite maltreatment and violence, for fear of losing access to the few resources they have, land and children.

Many women's organisations are addressing land and property rights. In Zimbabwe, for example, women have attained equal rights to land on the resettled co-operative farms. Co-operative members have obtained usufruct rights although the land itself remains the property of the State. Housing projects in many parts of the world have responded to pressure from women's groups to grant housing rights in the woman's name. The importance to women in gaining access to and control over key productive assets cannot be overstated. Productive assets offer security; loans can be secured against them; dependency on violent or coercive relationships can be lessened; and women gain status from possessing their own means of production.

11.9 Violence against Women

There is a link between the varieties of violence done to women all over the world — rape and battering, dowry deaths in India, female genital mutilation or circumcision in Africa, and the creation of pornography. The link is in women being seen as objects to be owned and exchanged by men, rather than as individuals with rights over their bodies and their lives. As such, freedom from violence has become a key issue for women's groups the world over. Recent figures document the staggering toll of domestic violence. In the US, battery is the leading cause of injury to adult women and a rape is committed every six minutes; in Peru 70 per cent of all crimes reported to police concern women beaten by their partners. In Lima, a city of 7 million, 168,970 rapes were reported in 1987 alone. In India, 8 out of 10 wives can expect violence in their households. The most dangerous place for women, the world over, is at home.

Violence humiliates and intimidates women; fear of violence prevents many women from taking initiatives and organising their lives as they would choose. Fear of violence is a key factor preventing women from participation in development; it may prevent a woman from going to a family-planning clinic, for example, or attending literacy classes. Womankind Worldwide— an NGO set up to look particularly at the needs and potential of Third World women — published a report on violence against women which documents some of the reasons why violence may be on the increase: new methods of production have led to changes in relationships between the sexes, which in turn may have heightened domestic tensions in societies where men believe that it is their right to control their partners. Wives have been beaten for their 'inability, or refusal, to accept the extra work involved in cash crop production'; women who are not so highly dependent on their husband or partner's support may be less vulnerable to abuse, though unemployed men may equally take their frustrations out on their women.

Sexual violence is linked to other forms of violence; in the last two decades attitudes towards rape have shifted significantly, led by women's movements around the world. From seeing rape as a crime committed by abnormal men unable to control their lust, rape is now seen as an act of violence committed by 'normal' men against women: it is primarily a mechanism of control and intimidation. Interestingly, rape laws in many countries of the world retain the idea of rape as an act against property — the property of another man, either the father of an unmarried girl or the husband of a married woman. This idea of women as property, women as objects of exchange, is fundamental to understanding acts of violence committed against women in all parts of the world.

Maria Mies sees the idea of women as property underlying the increase in the number of rapes carried out against rebellious peasants in rural areas in India. Not content with burning houses, and beating up the men, landlords and henchmen rape women. According to Mies, 'These acts have nothing to do with sexuality but...women are seen as the only property which pauperised men still possess. The rape of their women teaches poor men the lesson that their status is one of absolute powerlessness...Class rule and the oppression of women are here closely interwoven. He who owns the land, owns the women of the land.' The same rationale — women as property — underlies the violence that such women often receive from their own husbands. According to the women's movement in India, it is seeing women as objects of exchange between the men of two families that is the root of the problem of dowry death. Police records show a high death rate among young women, due to burning, usually in accidents in the kitchen. In Delhi alone, 690 women died of burning in 1983, and of these 270 were between the ages of 18 and 25. Although only a handful were alleged to be 'dowry burnings' (the deliberate burning of a young bride by her in-laws as a way of getting rid of her on the pretext that she did not bring enough dowry to her marriage), women's groups argue that most if not all such deaths are not accidental. Some may be suicide, but many are murder. Yet very few of these deaths are ever investigated and even fewer result in convictions. The women's movement in India has spoken out strongly against dowry and dowry deaths. On many occasions women have taken to the streets in rage and grief at a suspected dowry death. Yet the deaths continue.

Pornography is another form of violence against women which upholds gender differences. Discussions of pornography have been be-devilled by ideas of liberation, freedom of expression, and questions of morality and censorship. Susanne Kappeler argues that the content of pornography is not the issue: the issue is representation and what it means to turn a person into an object. Pornography conditions male arousal to female subordination, humiliation, pain, rape and mutilation: whether 'soft' or 'hard', the pornographer, the person who creates the images, always starts by reducing his 'subject' to an object, an object that can then be sold to men as property.

11.10 Ritual, Tradition and Cultural Taboos

Traditionally held ideas about correct gender behaviour can have profound effects on women's lives, providing a strong reinforcement of gender patterns in society. An understanding of gender differences in the ownership and control of property, in the sexual division of labour and in the value of women's economic labour needs to be balanced with another view. Women's lives are equally determined by the way in which childbearing and other events — puberty, widowhood — are

perceived and organised by their society. Some anthropologists have argued that gender is the basis for a dual social system; the whole structure of society, beliefs, and behaviour hinge on the idea of a fundamental opposition between the two sexes.

In a study of Kabylia, Algeria, the French social anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu shows how social and physical spaces are divided up according to perceptions of male and female roles. Houses are divided into two halves by a low wall; one half, which is slightly higher, is the place of 'male' cultural activities, cooking and weaving. The lower, darker half is the place of 'female' natural things, the household animals, the water pots, the green fodder and wood, and also natural activities, such as sleep, sex and birth. But this opposition between the female and male places within the house is mirrored in a larger opposition between the house and the rest of the social space, the male world of places of assembly, the fields and the market. The Algerian proverb 'Man is the lamp of the outside, women the lamp of the inside' expresses this.

In Kabylia women are defined by their childbearing status; unmarried adult women are seen as 'bad wood' or 'twisted wood', akin to fallow ground. Sterile women are not allowed to plant in gardens or carry seeds. During menstruation women are-not allowed to prepare meals, work in the garden, plant, pray or fast. Women are charged with all the tasks involving the protection of things that grow and shoot, that are green and tender, whether of humans and animals, 'things in the morning of life'. Women gather herbs and vegetables from the garden, and look after cows. As in India, procreation is perceived as a male act of opening and sowing, akin to ploughing. A bride's arrival at her new house is marked by almost the same ritual as that for the start of a new agricultural cycle, when the ox, plough and seed set out for the fields. She is welcomed at the doorway by a basket of fritters, eggs, wheat, dates, nuts and pomegranates, and she breaks eggs in a gesture symbolizing fertility. Such tightly organised patterns of behaviour are described by Bourdieu as a 'book' from which children learn their society's vision of the world.

Most societies have particular rituals, marking puberty, marriage and childbirth, related to an underlying belief system, and these practices hold communities together and enrich the social fabric of people's lives. The tension arises when these beliefs and actions discriminate against women, or infringe their human rights. Such tension demands that we are cautious in our attitudes to other cultures and their traditions, taking our lead from women within the society concerned. Recently, for example, taboos surrounding menstruation have come to be seen as a positive aspect of women's lives, since they give women a chance to have a much-needed rest. (Presumably such periods of rest always were interpreted positively by the women

concerned; the shift is in the attitude of outside observers.)

The approach to this nexus of issues must be one of immense sensitivity, which insists that discussion be led by women from the community under consideration. Just as Australian aborigines now reject the efforts of white Australians to interpret their culture and art for them, so women of the South reject the attempt of Northern feminists, however well-meaning, to set the agenda in terms of challenging cultural practices that are perceived in the North as inimical to the wellbeing of Southern women.

11.11 Religion

Religion is a foundation stone of gender difference. Under most of the world's religious traditions, women have been given a secondary and subordinate role. Christian tradition is hostile to the idea of women taking a leadership role, though there is evidence that throughout Christian history there have been communities in which women have played a leadership role. The debate over women priests has produced all sorts of reasons why women should not be ordained, many of which refer to women's fundamental biological difference, and her childbearing role, as well as to history and to tradition.

Women living under Muslim laws face different kinds of constraints, though a statement in the dossier 'Women Living Under Muslim Laws' should alert us to the dangers of generalisations: 'Our different realities range from being strictly closeted, isolated and voiceless within four walls, subjected to public flogging and condemned to death for presumed adultery (which is considered a crime against the state) and forcibly given in marriage as a child, to situations where women have a far greater degree of freedom of movement and interaction, the right to work, to participate in public affairs and also exercise a far greater control over their own lives.' Nonetheless, many Muslim women feel (as indeed do women in many religious traditions) that their lives are 'shaped, conditioned and governed by laws, both written and unwritten, drawn up from interpretations of the Koran tied up with local traditions' and that 'generally speaking men and the state use these against women, and they have done so under various political regimes'.

For Hindu women, there is a history of negative and critical writings about their sex. Manu the Law-giver's much quoted dictum 'From the cradle to the grave a woman is dependent on a male: in childhood on her father, in youth on her husband, in old age on her son' is not so very far from the truth for millions of Hindu women.

Most religious traditions have, in the last three decades, attracted feminist scholars who have argued that it is not the texts of religions which have caused the problems but their interpretation. Christian, Jewish, and Muslim feminists have re-examined their scriptures and come to the conclusion that their religions offered the possibility of liberation and improvement in the position of women, but that tradition and history have subverted this potential and used religion to repress women. Other scholars have pointed to the fact that almost all religions have at some point offered opportunities to women to exercise power, usually through the mystical tradition. In Islam women made a significant contribution to Sufism, and there have been several notable women Christian mystics.

The questions of religious teachings, textual interpretation, and traditions are not simple ones, and while most religions have developed liberal movements, there is an equally strong pull towards fundamentalism, which tends to stress women's difference and, whether in the churches of the US or in the mosques of Iran, claim a divine sanction for polarised gender roles.

Religion may be used to repress women, but women the world over have used religion as an opportunity to come together, and as a source of solidarity with other women. The story of Rigoberta Menchu, an Indian Guatemalan peasant woman, offers an example of the role of Christianity in one woman's fight for social justice against an oppressive military regime. By the age of 23 she had already become famous in her country as a national leader, and her life-story reflects vividly the experiences common to so many Indian communities in Latin America.

11.12 Working Culture

Gender discrimination in working culture is not only about male bosses and female secretaries within the formal sector. Gender discrimination in the division of labour outside of the household context touches almost all the economically productive work that women in the South perform. In this section we look at women in the manufacturing sector, where the large-scale employment of women is an aspect of the changing international division of labour; in the informal sector; and in tourism and prostitution as it has developed particularly in South-East Asia in the last two decades.

A theme running throughout this section is the paradox at the heart of much of women's economic activity: it both liberates women, and subordinates them; it gives them an income, but, when carried out in poor and unregulated conditions, can be deeply exploitative of their time and labour.

11.12.1 Women in Manufacturing Industries

There is growing evidence that a 'new international division of labour' has developed, in which countries in the North are increasingly specialising in research and development, finance and administration, while in Southern countries, manufacturing is beginning to replace their former role in the supply of raw materials. Within this international division, Southern countries become the global production line, and women operate the machinery. In order to attract foreign capital into their countries, Southern governments have set up free-trade zones. These come with large incentives — the promise of a cheap, docile, and unorganised work force (predominantly female); help with loans; subsidized factory space. A preference for female workers has become an important part of the international division of labour. A study done of the selection of workers for Mexico's electronic factories found that employers were looking for women who were unmarried and preferably under 20.

Female labour is preferred because it is inexperienced, unlikely to unionize, perceived to be docile, dependent, and easily managed. Above all, it is cheap. Many of the women employed are taken on as trainees at minimal rates, and laid off once they are qualified. In one study it was found that an electronics plant had a staff turnover of 100 per cent in an 18-month period. Women working in such factories have little job security since they can be laid off whenever demand is slack and then re-employed again on temporary contracts when demand picks up. The nature of much assembly-line work, particularly in electronics and in the manufacture of professional and medical equipment such as heart pace-makers, demands stamina and good eyesight, and many women resign voluntarily from the electronics sector when they are aware that they can no longer reach the production level required because of deteriorating eye-sight and other problems. The hierarchy in these plants reflects that of the rest of society: the executives, production managers, quality control and personnel managers are always men. The department supervisors are usually men, and the line heads are preferably men. The operatives are always women.

While it is obvious that women have benefited from new job opportunities, and for many of them incomes have risen from zero to the minimum wage, it is also true that women have gained the available jobs because it is easier to pay them less, sack them without compensation and control them in the factory, although, increasingly, women workers are organising to press for better pay and conditions. The rapid incorporation of large numbers of women into the work force is sometimes presented as an example of women being 'integrated into development'. What is actually being created is sex-hierarchies that echo the division of power between women and men in the family.

11.12.2 Women in Informal Sector

The informal sector is the workplace of most working women. Unregulated and unorganised, it is often even more exploitative of the labour of poor women than it is of poor men. In the paddy fields of South Asia, women may be paid as much as a third less than men for the same work, may face sexual harassment, work throughout pregnancy until the day they give birth, and have no provision for childcare afterwards. In the Bogata region of Colombia women work in flower production, growing carnations and other exotic flowers for European and US markets; they work seeding and transplanting in humid greenhouses; they fumigate seedlings, weed the beds and care for the flowers, working in factory-like conditions under a blazing sun; finally, they pick and package and refrigerate the blooms. Well over half the workers suffer from occupational illnesses, such as pain, poisoning from chemicals, and muscular paralysis due to abrupt, and extreme changes of temperature. Women in the flower industry suffer from a form of gender bias common to a number of jobs in the informal sector, which can be summed up as the 'nimble finger' syndrome. Women predominate in a range of both informal and formal sector occupations, from beedi rolling and the match industry in India, to the electronics industry in off-shore plants throughout the South, on the grounds that they are more manually dexterous. In practice, manual dexterity is not rewarded as a special skill, and is instead an excuse for employing extremely young women, and children, who are seen as a particularly docile workforce.

The World Bank report "Poverty and Gender in India" makes the point that India is one of the few countries in Asia where women's share of employment in the formal sector has fallen in the last decades, accompanied by a 'vigorous growth' in the informal sector, which has become the major source of employment for urban women. It highlights many of the problems common to all women making their living on the margins of the formal economy. Among poor urban households, almost all women are employed in occupations that range from rag picking, to construction work, to home-based production, all carried out under conditions that offer little job security, extremely long hours, little chance of a growing personal income, and hard or unhealthy working conditions. Unfortunately, attempts to regulate and improve conditions within the informal sector can, if not carried out with the full participation of the women concerned, have detrimental effects on opportunities for women. The World Bank argues that 'Even if it were possible to enforce existing labour regulations throughout the informal sector, this would probably have the same effect that it had in the formal sector: a shift to more capital-intensive production, labour shedding where possible, and yet more elaborate manoeuvres to obtain a flexible, low-wage work force.'

Clearly, if women are not in control of the process, they will lose out. Only by enabling poor women to create their own jobs, either individually or in co-operatives, by providing better access to land, credit, raw materials, technology and markets, will they be able to benefit from changes within the informal sector. That this is possible is well illustrated by the case study of rag-pickers from Ahmedabad. The market women of Ahmedabad offer a similarly clear example of competition for resources within the informal sector along gender lines, and the way in which, if they are well-organised, they can resist developments inimical to their own economic well-being.

Women vegetable vendors have sold in the same market spots in Ahmedabad for years. As urban land prices have soared, their spaces have become much sought after by larger, male, merchants and town planners, who have pressurised the police into arresting and fining vendors for carrying out their business. The Self Employed Women's Association of Ahmedabad (SEWA), a large umbrella organisation for women in the informal sector, organised the vendors into demanding licenses, a process that has taken them both to the Gujarat High Court and the Indian Supreme Court. Now 329 women who sit in the crowded area of Manek Chowk have a legal right to sell their vegetables, and cannot be moved on. SEWA also extends financial and a wide range of other services to self-employed women.

11.12.3 Tourism and Prostitution

Among many of the countries of South-East and East Asia, economic development has been based on tourism. The forms of tourism that have become most prevalent have upheld strongly polarised gender roles. In order to earn a living from the economic opportunities available, many women sell sexual services. Tourism in this context highlights many of the facets that determine gender roles: biological sex, ethnic identity, class, and the relationship between rich North and poor South.

In order to understand the phenomenal growth of tourism in the last 40 years and its impact on women, we have to look at some of the conditions that led to its development. The growth of Third World tourism was a carefully promoted activity. At the end of the Second World War the aviation industry found itself with the capacity to produce large numbers of planes but nothing for them to do. This, combined with the post-war boom which led to increased wages and increased leisure time in industrialised countries, and growing attempts by the US to exert its influence over South-East and East Asia, were all factors that came together and encouraged the concept of the 'package tour' to 'exotic' countries. Tourism also received massive World Bank funding, through a special department set up in 1970, known as the Tourism Projects Department.

The growth of tourism was not something that was initiated by the countries of the South; they were persuaded by economic arguments: tourism as a foreign exchange earner, tourism as a job creator and booster of national income. To this day, Southern tourism is firmly controlled by the countries from which the tourists come. Third World countries have virtually no control over the information produced about its societies in the North. Advertising turns the 'natural' resources of the Third World — 'sun, sea, sand, and sex' — into commodities which can be bought. Tourism has grown to be one of the largest items of world trade, and the major foreign exchange earner for many small island countries such as Fiji, Jamaica, Seychelles, and Cyprus, and either first or second earner in countries such as Thailand, South Korea, Kenya, Colombia, Lesotho, and Tanzania.

Sex tourism in parts of South-East Asia was largely a consequence of American foreign policy — to contain the spread of communism in the region after the Korean War. In 1967, a treaty was signed between the US military and the Thai government allowing the US soldiers stationed in Vietnam to come on 'rest and recreation' leave in Thailand. The resulting expansion in hotels and places of entertainment was spectacular. By 1970, spending by the US military was equivalent to one-quarter of the total value of rice exports. Much of the money was spent on 'personal services' — in other words, the sexual services of Thai women. Inevitably it was not the Thai women themselves who reaped the benefits but the owners of the entertainment industry, often members of the Thai military.

The growth of sex-tourism has received explicit government backing in many of the countries in which it is occurring. In South Korea in the 1970s the women 'servicing' Japanese businessmen were instructed to 'make sacrifices to get foreign money ... this self-sacrifice is a matter of pride for them and for the nation'. Similarly, government officials in the Philippines under the Marcos regime made explicit their view that female sexuality was to be regarded as an economic asset in their tourist ventures for national development. Sex tourism is sometimes justified by pointing to the poverty of the countries in which it occurs. Sex tourists may be told about the need of individuals to earn a family wage, and encouraged to believe that prostitution is an expression of women's autonomy to make decisions about their own lives and sexual conduct. Many visitors to South-East Asia assuage their guilt by persuading themselves that they are visiting cultures which have different moral and sexual mores — that sex is an accepted and traditional part of hospitality.

11.13 Education

Girls who receive little or no education suffer a massive disadvantage in facing

the modern world. They lack resources that might enable them to tackle their poverty more effectively; without basic education, most subsequent training is closed to them, and economic opportunities are therefore limited to the informal sector only. Women who were not given an education themselves speak poignantly about what they feel they missed: ' Without education, you are nothing in this world. I wish that I could be born again. I wouldn't get married so young, and I would learn and learn until I died.'

The NGO Womankind identifies three barriers to women's education: the economic climate, social attitudes and the school environment. Until the 1980s, school enrolment figures for girls throughout the world rose, suggesting that the dream of universal primary education might one day be achievable. However, in the last decade economic deterioration throughout the South has led to cuts in public expenditure on education. School fees have become more common, and the costs of school uniforms, books, pencils and so on may deter families from educating all their children. If there is a choice to be made, boys usually receive preference. These social attitudes are, as we have seen, deeply ingrained. A farmer may need assistance during busy times of the year, and is more likely to take her daughters out of school than her sons; she expects her daughters to share her domestic burden. Additionally girls may miss school during their monthly periods, either because social custom demands it, or for simple practical reasons. Early marriage and rapid motherhood may be another social factor preventing a girl from finishing her education. Two-thirds of girls born in Bangladesh in the late 1950s were married by the time they were 15; among Muslims in India, leaving school for early marriage is not uncommon. For those girls who do go to school, the school environment will determine what kind of education they receive; this is a major factor in the ways education may uphold gender inequalities rather than challenging them.

Much education offered to girls is a 'double-edged sword', in that it reinforces and heightens their sense of inadequacy as girls. Available literature suggests that while there is much that is inadequate or inappropriate about curricula in general, the effects of this on girls may be more damaging than on boys. Kate Young explains that this is because of the stereotyping of women's and men's activities found in school literature; The expectations and models that are built into the curricula seem to be more prejudicial to girls than they are to boys.' Additionally, girls are often offered a restricted curriculum, emphasizing domestic science and other 'feminine' skills, rather than science and technical subjects. When these biases inherent in curricula are added to the problems of lack of adequate role models for girls beyond a certain level of education and the generally lower expectations of girls held by parents, teachers and girls themselves, it is not difficult to see why education may

reinforce gender roles rather than challenging them. Many teachers are not themselves conscious of the discrimination that women as a gender face, and they are not able to challenge damaging stereotypes in educational material, career options available to girls, and school environments that may discriminate, simply because they do not perceive them.

One of the consequence of the way in which conventional schooling tends to reinforce social stereotypes is the steady drop-out of girls as they move upwards through the educational system. In Papua New Guinea in 1985 there were roughly equal numbers of boys and girls at the primary level; by secondary school age only 35 per cent of the pupils were girls, and at university level in the same year, women students were only 15 per cent of the total. Clearly, this kind of education is failing women; it fails to prepare them for anything other than their role as wife and mother and, while there is evidence that education does make a difference to the health and the likelihood of the survival of their children, most women in the South are also traders, factory workers, farmers — workers of all varieties. Literacy is important, but if women are to gain from economic opportunities in a rapidly changing world they need other skills as well — numeracy, accounting ability, and technical skills.

For millions of women around the world the opportunity of going to school never came, and they married and had children without any formal education. Yet for these women, non-formal programmes offered by local church groups, trade unions and NGOs can offer both practical skills and a chance to increase their confidence and self-esteem, a basis from which to challenge the apparent rigidity of social structures. One woman who had participated in a non-formal education project in Delhi said that learning to read and write had opened her eyes. 'Even though I was an old lady I was a baby; now I am like my grandchildren, and life is starting again.' Non-formal education programmes are, like conventional schooling for girls, fraught with problems; inadequate follow up, poor teaching materials, badly-trained teachers. Yet people working in development around the world are working to challenge even these problems, as the following case study shows.

11.14 Public Man: Private Woman

One of the most powerful ideologies underpinning gender differences is the division of the world into the realms of public and private. The public realm, comprising of public institutions, the state, government, education, the media, the worlds of business, corporate activity, banking, religion, and culture are in almost all societies in the world dominated by men. Certainly there are individual women who enter and may eventually lead such institutions, but nowhere do women as a

group exercise power and influence in the public domain in the same way that men do. Ethnicity, class, and religion may play a large part in deciding which men exercise power, but women's access to power is always less than that of men from the same background. This has important implications for the practice of development and for the ability of development planners to ensure that development is equitable and benefits both women and men. Because women are poorly represented in the public sphere they are less able to exercise power and influence for the well-being of their gender. The ideology of public and private tends to mean that women's sphere of influence is the house, whether this is a council high-rise tenement block, a large home in a wealthy middle-class suburb or a shack in a shanty town. In the last 20 years there has been a growing recognition of the importance of this sphere in the sustenance of communities and families, and the centrality of the household in determining gender roles and inequalities.

Throughout the world women are reclaiming, or claiming for the first time, public spaces; women's access to the media, to education, the formation of international networks of women, and the gradual entry of women into public life are beginning to challenge the ideology of public and private. As the testimony of the stories and case studies presented in this book make clear, inequality based on gender is under increasing attack.

11.15 Gender and Power

Gender shapes power, from the 'private' relationships of the household to the highest levels of political decision-making. However, this calls for a need from development practitioners to place power at the centre of their efforts and to 'think and work politically' (TWP) usually forget about gender. In addition, theorists' analyses of the distribution of power and resources in countries generally make only the most superficial reference to gender, if they mention it at all. Therefore, development work could be both more politically smart and more effective if it addressed this blind spot, focusing on six intimate links between gender and power.

First, gender divides power. Inequalities between men and women are one of the most persistent patterns in the distribution of power. For example, women's lack of influence marks political decision-making the world over.

Second, gender relations are power relations. Often what it means to be a 'woman' is to be powerless (quiet, obedient, accommodating). A 'real man', by contrast, is powerful (outspoken, in control, able to impose his will), particularly in relation to women. These gender roles tend to perpetuate the power inequalities that they are based on. For example, the fact that many men and women think it's not

'natural' for women to speak up in public often poses a key barrier to women's access to decision-making. 'Power equals masculinity' also helps explain why powerful people often demonstrate dominance in gendered ways. In Malawi, for example, leaders have traditionally asserted their 'big man' status by getting women to offer sexual 'favours' to party leaders and functionaries. As a result, they have established "the mobilisation of women in subordinate and exploitative roles as an enduring feature of Malawi's political system."

Third, the family is an arena of power and politics. Power dynamics in families and households interact with those in the 'public' sphere in shaping development outcomes. In Sri Lanka, increased female employment and access to resources challenged power relations between men and women in households, and often led to conflict in families. This, paradoxically, brought about a resurgence of social control over women, seen at its most extreme when some NGOs employing female local staff received bomb threats.

Fourth, gender shapes power inequalities based on other divisions, such as class and ethnicity, and vice versa. In Sri Lanka, for example, a power analysis revealed that almost all women parliamentarians were related to male politicians from powerful political families. The vast majority also came from the dominant Sinhalese ethnic group. Opposition to opening up more parliamentary seats for women representing women therefore "not only stems from a reluctance to share power with women, but also from a reluctance to enable women outside the main 'political culture' to access seats of power and authority."

Fifth, gender shapes institutions and how they affect the distribution of power. Most political and economic institutions, historically dominated by men, are tailored to (elite) men's experience. They idealise 'masculine' forms of behaviour and rely on men's power over women. Therefore, these institutions tend to 'lock in' two types of power - men's power over women, and the power of the most 'masculine' men over everyone. Take political parties. They are key gatekeepers for women's political participation, but their male-dominated cultures often make them inaccessible to women. In Burundi and Kosovo, for example, female politicians have complained that important party decisions were taken in bars – spaces women often can't access.

Last, gender also shapes how we understand what 'power' is. The widely accepted definition of power is getting someone else to do what you want them to do. Arguably this reflects a specifically male experience of the world: a place inhabited by hostile 'others' with whom, to survive, you are forced to forge some kind of social relationship. Women, particularly in their socially assigned roles of wife and mother, may more often understand themselves as being in continuity with

the people around them rather than in opposition. They often aim to build capacity in others rather than to dominate. This would suggest an alternative idea of power: the capacity to transform and empower yourself and others. Amongst other things this alternative perspective highlights that women can sometimes have special forms of influence on decision-making because of their specific social status. In Liberia, for example, women working for peace were able to achieve high levels of trust among opposing factions by emphasising their non-threatening roles as sisters, mothers and wives.

So gender and power are intrinsically linked; understanding this can help us understand both concepts better and creates an opportunity for more politically smart development. It does this by offering two really practical pieces of advice:

If we think about gender, we're better at thinking and working politically. A gender perspective shows that the 'think and work politically' (TWP) agenda is currently blind to key components of the workings of power: how power and politics in the family shape power relations at all levels of society; how wider economic, political and social structures rely on and reproduce gender power relations; and how feminised sources of power offer new opportunities for peace and prosperity. Addressing these blind spots can help us be more politically savvy. And that's good for development outcomes.

If we think politically, we're better at supporting gender equality. A power perspective shows that gender inequalities are tied to power relations at all levels of society. So gender inequalities are deeply political and if we want to help tackle them we must address them as such. To do this, among other things, we need to develop a deeper understanding of local context; focus on a wider range of powerful actors; and, importantly, take a closer look at the gendered power relations within donor country organisations.

11.16 Power as Empowerment

Power is understood in terms of an oppressive or unjust power-over relationship. The term "domination" is used to refer to such relationships, though some of the theorists discussed above prefer the terms "oppression" or "subjection," and others refer to this phenomenon simply as "power." However, a significant strand of feminist theorizing of power starts with the contention that the conception of power as power-over, domination, or control is implicitly masculinist. In order to avoid such masculinist connotations, many feminists from a variety of theoretical backgrounds have argued for a reconceptualization of power as a capacity or ability, specifically, the capacity to empower or transform oneself and others. Thus, these feminists have

tended to understood power not as power-over but as power-to. Wartenberg (1990) argues that this feminist understanding of power, which he calls transformative power, is actually a type of power-over, albeit one that is distinct from domination because it aims at empowering those over whom it is exercised. However, most of the feminists who embrace this transformative or empowerment-based conception of power explicitly define it as an ability or capacity and present it as an alternative to putatively masculine notions of power-over.

For example, Jean Baker Miller claims that "women's examination of power…can bring new understanding to the whole concept of power" (Miller 1992, 241). Miller rejects the definition of power as domination; instead, she defines it as "the capacity to produce a change – that is, to move anything from point A or state A to point B or state B" (Miller 1992, 241). Miller suggests that power understood as domination is particularly masculine; from women's perspective, power is understood differently: "there is enormous validity in women's not wanting to use power as it is presently conceived and used. Rather, women may want to be powerful in ways that simultaneously enhance, rather than diminish, the power of others" (Miller 1992, 247–248).

Similarly, Virginia Held argues against the masculinist conception of power as "the power to cause others to submit to one's will, the power that led men to seek hierarchical control and…contractual constraints" (Held 1993, 136). Held views women's unique experiences as mothers and caregivers as the basis for new insights into power; as she puts it, "the capacity to give birth and to nurture and empower could be the basis for new and more humanly promising conceptions than the ones that now prevail of power, empowerment, and growth" (Held 1993, 137). According to Held, "the power of a mothering person to empower others, to foster transformative growth, is a different sort of power from that of a stronger sword or a dominant will" (Held 1993, 209). On Held's view, a feminist analysis of society and politics leads to an understanding of power as the capacity to transform and empower oneself and others.

This conception of power as transformative and empowering is also a prominent theme in lesbian feminism and ecofeminism. For example, Sarah Lucia Hoagland is critical of the masculine conception of power with its focus on "state authority, police and armed forces, control of economic resources, control of technology, and hierarchy and chain of command" (Hoagland 1988, 114). Instead, Hoagland defines power as "power-from-within" which she understands as "the power of ability, of choice and engagement. It is creative; and hence it is an affecting and transforming power but not a controlling power" (Hoagland 1988, 118). Similarly, Starhawk claims

that she is "on the side of the power that emerges from within, that is inherent in us as the power to grow is inherent in the seed" (Starhawk 1987, 8). For both Hoagland and Starhawk, power-from-within is a positive, life-affirming, and empowering force that stands in stark contrast to power understood as domination, control or imposing one's will on another.

A similar understanding of power can also be found in the work of the prominent French feminists Luce Irigaray and Hélène Cixous. Irigaray, for example, urges feminists to question the definition of power in phallocratic cultures, for if feminists "aim simply for a change in the distribution of power, leaving intact the power structure itself, then they are resubjecting themselves, deliberately or not, to a phallocratic order" (Irigaray 1985, 81), that is, to a discursive and cultural order that privileges the masculine, represented by the phallus. If we wish to subvert the phallocratic order, according to Irigaray, we will have to reject "a definition of power of the masculine type" (Irigaray 1985, 81). Some feminists interpret Irigaray's work on sexual difference as suggesting an alternative conception of power as transformative, a conception that is grounded in a specifically feminine economy (see Irigaray 1981 and Kuykendall 1983). Similarly, Cixous claims that "les pouvoirs de la femme" do not consist in mastering or exercising power over others, but instead are a form of "power over oneself" (Cixous 1977, 483–84).

Along similar lines, Nancy Hartsock refers to the understanding of power "as energy and competence rather than dominance" as "the feminist theory of power" (Hartsock 1983, 224). Hartsock argues that precursors of this theory can be found in the work of some women who did not consider themselves to be feminists – most notably, Hannah Arendt, whose rejection of the command-obedience model of power and definition of 'power' as "the human ability not just to act but to act in concert" overlaps significantly with the feminist conception of power as empowerment (1970, 44). Arendt's definition of 'power' brings out another aspect of the definition of 'power' as empowerment because of her focus on community or collective empowerment (on the relationship between power and community, see Hartsock 1983, 1996). This aspect of empowerment is evident in Mary Parker Follett's distinction between power-over and power-with; for Follett, power-with is a collective ability that is a function of relationships of reciprocity between members of a group (Follett 1942). Hartsock finds it significant that the theme of power as capacity or empowerment has been so prominent in the work of women who have written about power. In her view, this points in the direction of a feminist standpoint that "should allow us to understand why the masculine community constructed…power, as domination, repression, and death, and why women's accounts of power differ in specific and systematic ways from those put forward by men….such a standpoint

might allow us to put forward an understanding of power that points in more liberatory directions" (Hartsock 1983, 226).

The notion of empowerment has also been taken up widely by advocates of so-called "power feminism." A reaction against a perceived over-emphasis on women's victimization and oppression in feminism of the 1980s, power feminism emerged in the 1990s in the writings of feminists such as Camille Paglia, Katie Roiphe, Christina Hoff Sommers, and Naomi Wolf. Although this movement has had more influence in mainstream media and culture than in academia – indeed, in many ways it can be read as a critique of academic feminism – it has also sparked scholarly debate. As Mary Caputi argues in her book Feminism and Power: The Need for Critical Theory (2013), power feminists reject not only the excessive focus on women's victimization but also the claim, made by earlier empowerment theorists, that women are "sensitive creatures given more to a caring, interconnected web of human relationships than to the rugged individualism espoused by men" (Caputi 2013, 4). In contrast, power feminists endorse a more individualistic, self-assertive, even aggressive conception of empowerment, one that tends to define empowerment in terms of individual choice with little concern for the contexts within which choices are made or the options from which women are able to choose. Caputi argues that power feminism relies on and mimetically reproduces a problematically masculinist conception of power, one "enthralled by the display of 'power over' rather than 'power with'…" (Kaput 2013, xv). As she puts it: "feminism must query the uncritical endorsement of an empowerment aligned with a masculinist will to power, and disown the tough, sassy, self-assured but unthinking 'feminist'" (Caputi 2013, 17). Because of its tendency to mimic an individualistic, sovereign, and masculinist conception of power over, power feminism, according to Caputi, "does little, if anything, to rethink our conception of power" (Caputi 2013, 89). In order to prompt such a rethinking, Caputi turns to the resources of the early Frankfurt School of critical theory and to the work of Jacques Derrida.

11.17 Conclusion

The concept of power is central to a wide variety of debates in feminist philosophy. Indeed, the very centrality of this concept to feminist theorizing creates difficulties in writing an entry such as this one: since the concept of power is operative on one way or another in almost all work in feminist theory, it is extremely difficult to place limits on the relevant sources. Throughout, I have emphasized those texts and debates in which the concept of power is a central theme, even if sometimes an implicit one. I have also prioritized those authors and texts that have been most influential within feminist philosophy, as opposed to the wider terrain of feminist

theory or gender studies, though I acknowledge that this distinction is difficult to maintain and perhaps not always terribly useful. Debatable as such framing choices may be, they do offer some much needed help in delimiting the range of relevant sources and providing focus and structure to the discussion.

11.18 Summary

Thus, to raise women's position it is urgent to protect women from patriachal subordination it is patriachal ideology which makes us feminine and masuiline which assigns different roles, right and responsibilities to women and men. Family can play a great role by bringing a new dimension in reccontructing the on going soualization. It is not only enough to change family value system but the laws of interitance, property distribution, right over children should also be changed. To bring equality it is essantial to establish euqal right between men and women in all respect of life.

11.18 Questions

1. Answer in Detail :

    a. How is power and subordination manfested in the workplace between man and women?

    b. Discuss- "Private woman vs public man?

2. Answer Briefly :

    a. Women's access to property

    b. Tourism and prostitution

    c. Violence against women

    d. What are the bariers to women's education?

    e. How are the women suberdinated

3. Answer Very Briefly :

    a. Define patriarchy

    b. Define Religian

    c. Define power accuring to weber

    d. What is subordination

    e. What do you mean by sexuality?

    f. Why is the son prefered in Indian society?

    g. What problems do want face in the infenmal section?

11.20 References

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  ii. Half world; half chance

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UNIT 12 ◻ Resistance and Movements

Structure

12.1 Learning Objectives

After going through the sub units the students will be able to:

- ✓ Familiarise the readers with various phases of women's resistance and movements in India
- ✓ Identify the specificities of each phase
- ✓ Identify the various elements of continuum and disjuncture throughout the entire time-span
- ✓ Identify what has been done and what more needs to be done

12.2 Introduction

Often denoted as the fairer sex/second sex/weaker sex, women in a traditional patriarchal set-up like that of India, are expected to play second fiddle and abide by the traditional diktat of being demure, docile and submissive. Men and women are not just socialised in different roles, their roles have a different social status too.[1] The difference in the role and responsibilities associated with that status make men and women "intended or unintended product(s) of a social practice" whereby women's work(s) and voices are devalued and their status is disadvantaged.[2] Gender activism, in the South Asian countries, has ranged from women's participation in social and political movements to promoting gender rights and socio-economic justice and abolishing discriminatory laws and irrational gender classifications. Women are overcoming gender stereotyping to realise their dreams, and also breaking the glass ceilings to overcome organised systems of vertical segregation in organisational setups within and across the nation-states in the region. This section essentially tries to explore the question as to whether women in the pre-colonial and post-colonial eras, conformed to the social norms or whether they tried to break out of the mould to chart out a path of their own through organising resistance and movements to protest against issues afflicting their lives and that of the society in general. Bypassing the debate as to whether there was a homogeneous women's movement or multiple women's movement as taken up by Kamla Bhasin, it suffices to note that women's movement/s in India has/have varying degrees of success within the changing socio-political-economic contexts.

12.3 The Beginning : The Nineteenth Century

Did the women find their voices to protest overnight? Surely not. As **Liddle and Joshi** rightly notes, "The women's movement has a long history in India. (It) represents, not merely an oppositional force fueled by anger, a rather negative reaction to oppression, but the development of a distinctive female culture, a positive creative force inspiring men and women alike."[3] However, as **Lata Mani** cogently points out, such debates mediated essentially through an interpretation and re-interpretation of religious scriptures, had very little to do with women themselves. These women, in Mani's words, "were neither subjects nor even the primary objects of concern" in the ensuing contestations. Women merely remained the site where contestations over tradition were calibrated. They played no active role in deciding their fates.

However, from the second half of the nineteenth century, women, hailing from families with a modicum of western education, increasingly became aware of the

home and the world which found outlet in their writings. However, at the same time, these women were not envisaging a thorough re-modelling of the domestic equations, where women would be treated as equals.

What emanates from these pages is a heady mixture of self-realisation and self-introspection. The very awareness, as is evident from the pages of these late nineteenth century non-fictional writings, although in an embryonic form, serves as a potent indicator of a greater role of women in the national arena in the twentieth century. The second half of the nineteenth century, thus, marks a watershed when, from being relegated as nameless, faceless entities in the tussle between the ruler and the ruled over the question of emancipation and modernisation, the *aborodhbashinis*, a few of them at least, came to be heard. Though not in large numbers, they still made their presence felt in the broader arena. This period thus served as a precursor to the greater role women would play in the twentieth century, in terms of visibility and impact. Geraldine Forbes thus traces from 1880, the 'first wave of feminism' in India.

12.4 The Twentieth Century

The task of putting a face behind these names came to be accomplished in the twentieth century, during the heydays of nationalism, with the intertwining of the twin phenomena of the politicisation of the domestic space and the domestication of the political space. The Partition of Bengal in 1905 and the concomitant Swadeshi movement was instrumental in breaking the shackles that had so long tethered women to the *antahpur*. Bengal broke out in spontaneous protest, where women no longer confined themselves to the inner quarters and crossed the threshold to step into the bigger world. Family served as a microcosm of the nation and the mother of the family came to be increasingly equated with the mother of the nation. About five hundred women met at Jenokand village in the district of Murshidabad to protest against the government's decision to partition Bengal and to stress the need for using indigenous, country- made goods. Such gatherings were not stray incidents as testified by similar congregations in Barisal where nearly 200 women participated followed by such events in Calcutta, Dacca, Khulna, Chittagong and Mymensingh.

12.4.1 Heady Days of Nationalism : Gandhian Nationalism

As the century progressed, so did the role of women diversified. The credit of drawing women out en masse on the streets goes to **Gandhiji.**

Throughout the Gandhian period of mass movement, participation of common women remained a hallmark. From every nook and corner of the subcontinent, women

were drawn to Gandhiji's vision. The Rowlatt Act of 1919, the launching-pad of Gandhian agitation, drew in women in large numbers. 6 April, which was a day of complete shutdown and fasting saw spontaneous participation of women. The village women of **Sanghoi** in Punjab observed fast along with their men.[4] The Non-Cooperation Khilafat movement (1920-1922) can be deemed as a watershed so far as women's participation in the wider network of pan-India movement is concerned. As **Poonam Saxena** shows, women from interiors of United Provinces (UP), shed their demureness to appear on public platforms and thus got linked to a greater cause.[5] Based on pan-Indian unity cutting across communities, the Non-Cooperation Movement gained momentum from 1920 onwards, built on the indefatigable spirits of the common women. In May 1921, five hundred women enrolled themselves as the members of the Rawalpindi Congress Committee. By the end of the month, the number rose to thousand.[6]As Saxena's study shows, women formed a powerful opinion group within the Khilafat movement, especially in UP. One of the pioneering figures, in this context, was **Bi Amman**—a veil-clad unlettered woman—whose fiery speeches, enthused the UP Khilafatists. Accompanied by her sons **Shaukat Ali** and **Muhammad Ali**—two stalwarts of the movement, she toured the length and breadth of the province, influencing people to join the Khilafat cause. She advanced to the point where she would appear on a public platform veiled but would then lift her veil to speak to the crowd, explaining that all those present were like her sons and daughters and thus there was no reason to observe *parda* before them. Smaller towns of the province, namely, Bijnor, Moradabad, Gonda, Gorakhpur and Bareilly, did not remain immune from the Gandhian touch. **Gyanvanti Viswamitra** from Bijnor, **Parvati Devi** from Meerut—all played crucial roles—in mobilising the masses. Gandhi era, thus ensured a new dawn for Indian women, in foraying into the male bastion of nationalist struggles, through greater participation and visibility.

The subsequent Gandhian movements were no exception. En masse participation of women remained a distinct feature. The Civil Disobedience Movement attracted women from varied backgrounds. As **Madhu Kishwar** outlines how Kasturba initiated women's participation by leading 37 women volunteers from the ashram at Sabarmati to offer satyagraha and to demand abolition of the salt tax. **Sarojini Naidu** led the raid on Dharasana Salt Works in the course of which the police force went berserk trying to crush the non-violent satyagrahis. **Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay** led a procession of 15,000 to 'raid' the Wadala Salt Works. Women's associations played an active role in violating the salt laws. Women volunteers carried lotas of water from the Chowpatty beach in Bombay to make salt at home, and many others went out onto the streets selling this contraband salt at fancy price.[7] **Radha Kumar** hails the event, "On that memorable day thousands of women strode down to the sea like proud warriors. But instead of weapons, they bore pitchers of clay, brass

and copper; and, instead of uniforms, the simple cotton saris of village India."[8] Lauding their efforts, Gandhi wrote, "The women in India tore down the purdah and came forward to work for the nation. They saw that the country demanded something more than their looking after their homes …"[9]

The Quit India movement of 1942 served as the high watermark in terms of women's participation. Pulsating with rage at the unjustified arrest of Gandhi and other front-ranked Congress leaders, the nation burst out in spontaneous protest with Gandhi's clarion-call of *Karenge ya Marenge* (Do or Die) serving as the touchstone. As Nehru eloquently noted, "Most of us menfolk were in prison. And then a remarkable thing happened. Our women came to the front and took charge of the struggle. Women had always been there, of course, but now there was an avalanche of them, which took not only the British government but their own menfolk by surprise. Here were these women, women of the upper or middle classes, leading sheltered lives in their homes, peasant women, working class women, rich women, poor women, pouring out in their tens of thousands in defiance of government order and police lathi."[10] The name that is immortalised in the pages of history is that of 72 year old **Matangini Hazra** of Midnapore district of West Bengal. Leading a procession of mostly women, marching towards the Tamluk police station, Hazra, defiantly faced the bullets. Shouting the battle-cry 'Vande Mataram', Hazra the fell to the ground, with the tri-colour held high. Quit India Movement gave birth to many such fearless women leaders, namely, **Sucheta Kripalani, ArunaAsaf Ali, Usha Mehta**—leaders who played seminal roles not only in the freedom movement but fought relentlessly for women's emancipation in independent India, too. Mehta laid foundation of underground Congress Radio through which she disseminated information about the movement to common folk. Congress Radio was the broadcasting mouthpiece of the Indian National Congress and functioned from different locations from Bombay.

12.4.2 Beyond The Gandhian Arena

The roles of women were not only confined to the path directed by Gandhiji but branched out to more diversified paths as evident from the 1930s. While the Gandhian philosophy of pegging women with domesticity and equating their roles in the national movement as an extension of the family responsibilities, helped women make the transition from home to the world, Gandhi did not envisage a radical role for women so to say. In a sense he married feminisation and nationalist politics through his emphasis on women's role in the national movement being complementary to her household role.

However, not all women subscribed to this notion of playing second fiddle.

From the 1930s, the trajectory of women's participation in the freedom struggle took a new turn, with women vying shoulder to shoulder with men in taking the British administration head-on. Dubbed as revolutionaries, as opposed to the passive resistance of Gandhi, these fire-brand women changed the course of history. A series of daring activities involving women marked their entry into the arena of revolutionary nationalism, which had so long been the forte of men. **Pritilata Waddedar** was a key member of the Chittagong Armoury Raid and committed suicide by consuming cyanide before being caught by the police, in 1930. A slew of attempted assassinations, mostly carried out by women, followed. Fourteen year old **Suniti Chowdhury** and fifteen-year old **Shanti Ghosh** killed C. G. B. Stevens, the District Magistrate of Tippera in December 1931. **Bina Das** shot at the Lieutenant-Governor Stanley Jackson during the convocation at the University of Calcutta in 1932. Although the aim misfired, the very act sent the whole country in a state of fervour. Recruited through groups formed in colleges, schools and universities, they participated in much the same type of training as their male counterparts: sword and lathi play, target practice and handling bombs and munitions. These hardened them to bear the unbearable torture meted out by the brutal police force. Shanti and Suniti were both subjected to inhuman treatment in the custody with their nails being uprooted and forced to go without food or water for days, to extract confession. They, however, remained unflinching in the face of such bestial cruelty. As Shanti Das later explained, "Our mission was to rouse the women of India by our dead defiance and courage in successful action."[11] In accomplishing their mission, as **Durba Ghosh** points out, there was considerable 'un-sexing' of these women as they refused to subscribe to the traditional social diktat and somewhat blurred the distinction between the sexes by breaking gender stereotypes and participating on equal footing with the male counterparts.

Such acts of valour continued into the decade of the 1940s, with women from the grass-root level plunging headlong into the **Tebhaga** movement in Bengal in 1946 and the **Telengana** movement. The Communist-led Tebhaga movement, witnessed the never-say-die attitude of landless peasant women, crowning it as "one of the most important political events in twentieth century Bengal."[12] Demanding their just share of the harvest, which they have so long been denied, Tebhaga (literally one-third of the share) witnessed rural women fighting at par with men. In Narail sub-division of Jessore district, around 250 women formed the *Nari Bahini* under the courageous leadership of an unlettered peasant woman named **Sarala**, to repel police raids. When the police contingent arrived by boat on the riverbank, the *Nari Bahini* dragged the boat back to the river. The hapless policemen literally had to beg for mercy and beat a hasty retreat.[13]

The **Telengana movement**, which spanned both the colonial and the post-colonial periods between 1946 and 1951, was directed against the exploitative practice of *vetti* or forced labour which the peasants were subjected to. Large number of women who were desperate because of extreme poverty, slavery and sexual exploitation by the feudal lords, fought courageously in this movement. In order to mobilise and develop political acumen among women, the Communist Party formed a women's organisation which published a woman's journal *Andhra Vanitha*. Through this they campaigned against child marriage, widow remarriage, increased wages etc.

12.5 Independence and New Directions

12.5.1 New India : The Early Decades

As independence dawned and the nation began its tryst with destiny, what role do the women play in the making of a modern nation? Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister, believed that a nation's progress was tied to the fate of its women. In this context, Nehru was determined to ensure the safe passage of the Hindu Code Bill in the Constituent Assembly (CA) and subsequently in the Parliament, to grant women their due status. Although the passage of the Bill was fraught with oppositions at every step, the women members of the CA, cutting across party lines spoke, unequivocally in favour of the Bill. **Hansa Mehta, Sucheta Kripalani, G. Durgabai, Renuka Ray** were unanimous in support of the Bill. Kripalani passionately appealed on the floor of the CA, "If men and women are to work equally, if they are to function as equal citizens of the State, if they are to fulfil their obligations towards the state, how can we have such discriminatory rules in the matter of property rights of women? Unless woman gets her full share of property you cannot expect her to fulfil her obligations to the state."[14]Their unstinted support lent credence to the issue and the Bill finally became an Act in 1956.

Outside the hallowed portals of the Parliament, the resilience of the women were felt in everyday lives, when the battered nation was recovering from the aftermath of the Partition. With the nation torn asunder, families were uprooted from their natal set-up and had to eke out a hand-to-mouth existence and begin life afresh in the new country. Once again, women showed their determination and spirit amidst trying times. Ordinary homemakers, to whom the world revolved around the four walls of their sanctuary in the pre-Partition days, were suddenly thrust into a situation where their worlds literally came crashing down. However, fighting against all odds, the refugee women held forth. Over 18,200 women applicants were registered in the Government-managed Employment Service Organisation in 1948.[15]

Women successfully made forays into the male bastion. To quote **Jasodhara Bagchi**, "Calcutta was no longer a city of male elites in which women also ran."[16]

Women taking to the streets became a common sight in Calcutta of the 1950s and 1960s. In February 1956, responding to a call by the UCRC, nearly 300 women gathered at a meeting at Raja Subodh Mullick Square to protest against the high-handedness of the government with regard to rehabilitation of the Partition migrants. Be it the anti-tram fare resistance movement or the Teachers' movement, women's participation remained a common thread. The former witnessed large-scale picketing organised by the opposition parties, where women remained undaunted in the face of police bayonets and tear gas. One of the leading faces of the Teachers' movement was **Anila Debi**, who was associated with the All Bengal Teachers' Association (ABTA). When a decision was taken to defy Section 144 imposed by the government to counter the agitation, the members of the MARS mobilised their units throughout West Bengal, to gather in Calcutta in large numbers to defy government-sanctioned restrictions.

In other parts of India also, regional movements could boast of considerable female presence, which often became the parametres of success. Vinobha Bhave, a strict Gandhian, initiated a self-help movement or *sarvodaya* to donate lands to the landless. Although started in Andhra Pradesh as a corollary to the Telengana movement, the initiative found success in Bihar and in the Uttarakhand area of Uttar Pradesh. Preserving the ecology and anti-alcoholism were the two main planks of the agitation. Under the guidance of **Miraben** and **Saralaben**, who headed the Gandhi ashram in that area, women came to be intimately involved in the movement.

New India brought with it new hope but at the same time new challenges also.Radicalising traits in Indian politics from the late 1960s, especially within the Communist parties led to the emergence of militant trends within the political sphere. The splintering of the Communist Party and the formation of CPI (M-L) and the subsequent Naxalbari movement in West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Bihar led to the ideological polarisation in the socio-political sphere, with the annihilationists and non-annihilationists crossing paths that led to indiscriminate killing in the name of 'police encounters.'

12.5.2 New Directions : From The 1970s

Thus as India stepped into the 1970s, there was a sense of tension and unrest in the air. Amidst such trying times, women's movement, too, assumed a role and form different from the one which it had in the social reform phase as well as during the struggle for independence. The decade started with the momentous *Chipko*

movement in the Garhwal region for the conservation of forest, more precisely against the illegal felling of tress. Starting off in the village of Mandalin in April 1973, the movement spread to other Himalayan regions in the next five years. Women became the fulcrum of the movement, where they hugged the trees to prevent these from felling. Hence, the name *Chipko*. Dhoom Singh Negi, Bachni Devi—local village women—became the face of the movement. They even coined the slogan, "What do the forests bear? Soil, Water and Air." The movement showed the importance of feminism as a component in the struggle to conserve forests and protect the environment.

Growing disillusionment over prevailing land rights, economic rights, poverty and unemployment led to widespread discontent over the economic policies of the government. Of particular importance to the women's movement, were the agitations such as the *Shahada* agitation and the subsequent formation of the *Shramik Sangathana* in the 1970s of the Bhil (tribal) landless labourers against the exploitative landlords which was triggered off after the rape of two Bhil women. Kumar describes the militant role played by women in this agitation, "They led the demonstrations, invented and shouted militant slogans, sang revolutionary songs and mobilised the masses. They went from hut to hut to agitate the men and persuade them of the necessity to join the Shramik Sangatana."[17] The problem of family violence, wife beating and alcoholism became issues of grave concern around this time and the strategy of retaliation was adopted. The **Self-Employed Women's Association** (SEWA) movement in Ahmedabad led by Ela Bhatt, which was a sort of pioneering women's trade union movement that began in 1972, was another such landmark in the history of the contemporary women's movement. Women involved in various trades in the informal sector were brought together by their shared experiences such as low earnings, harassment at home, harassment by contractors and the police, poor work conditions, non-recognition of their labour to list just a few. Apart from collective bargaining, the movement strived to improve working conditions through training. In 1973 Mrinal Gore from the Socialist Party joined women from the Communist Party of India (Marxist) to form the **United Women's Anti-Price Rise Front**, which turned into a mass movement of women seeking consumer protection. The *Nav Nirman* **movement** of 1974, which began as a student movement in Gujarat, chiefly against corruption, was another such turning point in the history of agitations for 'rights' and 'lokniti' (people's rule of law). Influenced by concepts of 'revolution', the movement critiqued the caste system and religious rituals. Besides involvement in political and economic issues it was also concerned with those that were considered private such as family violence, domestic roles and challenged patriarchal stereotypes.The **Progressive Organisation of Women (POW)**, originating in

Hyderabad in 1974, worked towards organising women against gender oppressive structures in society, namely, the sexual division of labour and the culture that rationalised this discrimination. The organisation promoted the ideology of 'equality' and opposed the economic dependence of women on men. This led to other Maoist women's organizations in Pune and Bombay, culminating in the first major celebration of March 8 as International Women's Day in 1975.

1975 marked two watershed events—**UN Declaration of International Women's Year** and the declaration of emergency in India. A world conference on women was convened in Mexico in the same year. The **World Plan of Action** formulated during the Conference stressed the need for research, documentation and analyses into processes in society that create structures of gender inequalities. Responding to the call, in India **National Committee on the Status of Women** was set up to examine the status of women in the country and to investigate into the extent to which the constitutional and legal provisions had impacted on women's status including their employment and education. The Committee was the first major attempt to review and evaluate data on various aspects of women's status. It was also empowered to comment on the directions of change in women's roles, rights and opportunities due to development. The Committee came out with its findings in the form of a report, popularly known as the *Towards Equality* Report (1974), which became a major landmark for women's movement. The beginning of women's movement in India, has often been traced back to this report. The report revealed the deplorable condition of women in the country evident from demographic data, an analysis of the socio-cultural conditions prevalent, the legal provisions and safeguards, economic role played by women in all sectors, women's access to education, political participation, the policies and programmes for welfare and development, the impact of mass media, etc. The report also made several recommendations which included stressing the important role of the State and the community in the achievement of 'gender equality'. It highlighted the need for a concerted effort to eradicate oppressive practices such as dowry, polygamy, bigamy, child marriage, ostentatious expenditure on weddings, and it emphasised the need for a campaign on legal awareness, the provisions of crèches, better working conditions for women including equal remuneration for equal work, the compulsory registration of marriages, law reform on aspects concerning divorce, maintenance, inheritance, adoption, guardianship maternity benefits, the universalisation of education, etc. The report reiterated the constitutional goal of a Uniform Civil Code for the country.

Armed with the findings of this report as also the draconian measures imposed by the state during emergency, women's movement in India was bolstered to chart

out new paths. Post-emergency, saw the growth of 'autonomous' women's organisations, with expanding base in both urban and rural India. Between 1977 and 1979 new women's groups emerged in cities like Delhi, Banglore, Hyderabad, Bombay, Ahmedabad, Patna, and Madras. They organised protest actions against dowry murders, beauty contests, sexist portrayal of women in media, pornographic films and literature imported from abroad, introduction of virginity tests by the U.K. immigration authorities, custodial rape and pitiable condition of women in prisons. These groups were multicultural in their composition and worldview. As a result, their political agenda reflected the contemporaneous handling of the complex reality of women constructed by interplay of class, caste, religion, ethnicity and globalisation.[18] These organisations rejected formal structure and traditional leadership styles and despite having no prototype to follow, they experimented with leaderless collectives with decision making by consensus, a volunteering of tasks and rotation of responsibility, "The variety of organisations are support groups, agitational groups, grassroots groups, wings of political parties, professional women's groups and research and documentation centres."[19] Dissemination of the messages and issues highlighted by them through newsletters, magazines and booklets in regional languages as well as in English provided creative way of handling Indian women's problems. Launching of **MANUSHI** in January 1979 was a qualitative leap in this direction.

12.5.3 The Decade of The 80s

The decade of the 80s increasingly articulated the demand for the study of women's issues in academic institutions and to conduct research based on experiential material and affirmative action. Responding to the call, the University Grants Commission (UGC) financed the setting up of **Women's Studies Centres** (WSC), within or functioning autonomously of the university system for conducting empirical studies on women's issues that would aid the government in formulating policies specifically for the target groups. The collaborative endeavours of the WSC and the NGOs helped in mainstreaming the issues afflicting women. In April 1981, in the first **National Conference of Women's Studies** at SNDT Women's University, a wide variety of issues were discussed by activists, researchers, academicians, administrators and policy makers. These included the developmental process which bypassed women, the gender bias in textbooks, sexism in the media, gender blindness in science and technology, health needs of women and violence against women-rape, domestic violence and prostitution. It was seen that WS would build a knowledge base for empowering women by pressing for change at policy level and in curriculum development, by criticising gender-blindness as well as gender-bias within mainstream academia, by creating alternative analytical tools and visions and

by advocacy for women's developmental needs in the economy and in society. This Conference established a new trend by which, gradually, women activists were invited, as resource persons and participants, to academic seminars, consultations and training workshops.[20] As a result of the collective endeavour of women's studies scholars and the women activists, two important documents providing insights into enormity of Indian women's problems have come into existence. They are *Shram Shakti Report* focusing on poor self-employed women and women in the unorganised sector and **National Perspective Plan for Women** (1988-2000).The leading weekly of India, *Economic and Political Weekly* since 1985 published Reviews of Women's Studies in its April and October issues.

Issue-based regional movements continued in this decade. In Andhra Pradesh, the *Anti-Arrack* **movement** was strong between **1992 and 1993** and it spread into other states at different levels. More than **40,000** women uniting and blocking the *arrack* auction in Andhra was a historic chapter in the Indian women's movement. Fight against patriarchy on an individual level, too, bore fruit. Another fire-brand activist who made a mark during this decade and who refused to bow down under successive government pressures over the subsequent decades, is **Medha Patkar.** The brain behind the *Narmada Bachao Andolan* **(NBA),** Patkar brought to fore the flip-side of developmental initiatives like the Sardar Sarovar Dam over the river Narmada that would lead to the submergence of villages and lead to the displacement of nearly 40,000 tribals. With the local villagers that included farmers, fishermen and daily-waged labourers who would stand lose not only their livelihoods but also their lives because of the proposed dam, Patkar spearheaded a relentless struggle from 1985 onwards, through non-violent means. Her fight still continues and she is one of the most recognised faces of human rights movement in India and has won world-wide acclaim for her cause.

However, in terms of visibility and viability of the organisations and movement, the **Mathura rape case** acted as a catalyst. As has been aptly pointed out, "In the wake of the of the Mathura fury, the magnitude and tenor of press coverage of incidents of police rape and protests suggested that there was a surge of anger all over the country. Given this apparent mass support, women issues assumed political significance and political parties could no longer afford to ignore them."[21] Nationwide anti-rape campaign resulted in emergence and proliferation of the autonomous women's organisations in several cities and towns of India. These groups such as **Forum Against Oppression of Women** (Mumbai), **Saheli** (Delhi), **Stree Shakti Sangathana** (Hyderabad), **Vimochana** (Banglore) managed to get tremendous publicity in the print as well as the audio-visual media because at that time 'violence against women' was the most sensational and the newest issue. The main focus of

this campaign against rape was to create awareness and to lobby for a change in the existing laws. Though the modifications demanded in the existing law was partially incorporated when such amendments were ultimately made, through country-wide agitation, as Kumar points out, women's movements came to be recognised as mainstream action, no longer gender-specific but for the overall betterment of society. This is amply reflected in the works of individual women activists like **Aruna Roy** whose thrust of work encompassed the downtrodden and the marginalised, irrespective of gender. As one of the founding members of the *Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan* **(1987),** Roy, from the very beginning, trained her focus on fair and equal wages for workers who were employed by the government. Her crusade eventually evolved into a tireless campaign for right to information and ultimately led to the Right to Information Act in 2005.Another example is **Lawyers Collective** co-founded by **Indira Jaisingh** in 1981. The association aims to provide legal recourse to the needy and downtrodden who cannot afford effective legal remedies and thus often become victims of the skewed legal system. One of the core areas of their focus is women's rights and Collective played a pivotal role in the framing and passage of the Protection of Women Against Domestic Violence Act, 2005.

What probably made women activists of the 1980s more amenable to overcoming their political differences and making common cause in the 'autonomous' movement was the realisation that no political party had understood or realised the latent militancy and consciousness of women which had so resoundingly revealed itself throughout the 1970s. Perhaps it was necessary for women to distance themselves from traditional, accepted theories and practices, draw on each other's political experiences, to go back to the subjective and rethink their positions and actions. Saheli and FAOW are examples of organisations that remained committed to functioning without a hierarchical structure through collective activity and consciousness raising and immersing themselves for the social upliftment through multi-pronged activities like adult literacy, safe drinking water, campaigning for eradication of violence against women.

The Mumbai-based **Forum against Oppression of Women** has suggested gender-just legislation in areas such as marriage, inheritance, and social security. Some have argued for a gender-just code to cover not only family but also economic, workplace, and livelihood rights— the whole gamut of law. The Delhi-based Working Group of Women's Rights (supported by the Human Rights Law Network) has proposed a new national secular civil code that would be optional. It has also suggested a "reverse optionality"— that is, all citizens would be born under the national code but could later opt into personal laws.[22] These positions favour one-time legislation. Thus the debate over the viability of a uniform civil code still

ricochets amongst the various women's organisations.

12.5.4 The Decade of The 90s

The momentum generated in the 1980s was maintained in the 1990s, too. Increasing collaboration between the women's rights organisations and the WSCs resulting in blending of hands-on experiences and academic rigour added new dimensions to the women's movement. In 1991, 16 days between 25 November and 10 December were marked for activism against gender-based violence on a world-wide scale. In India, though it did not pick up in the 1990s, the campaign gained pace from the new millennium. With the liberalisation of the economy in 1991, India entered into a new phase in the socio-economic-political sphere. As Samita Sen points out **Empowerment** became the buzz-word.[23] At the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, one of the goals clearly defined was to increase women's participation in political institutions.In a bid to fulfill this agenda, in September 1996 the United Front government introduced the **Constitution (Eighty-first) Amendment Bill**, which sought to reserve for women one-third of the seats in Lok Sabha and state assemblies. The bill was referred to a joint select committee under the chairpersonship of Gita Mukherjee, a veteran member of Parliament from the Communist Party of India. The resubmitted bill was hotly debated in the House in 1997 and 1998. Since then the bill has been stalled. It remains on the agenda in each parliamentary session, but is yet to see the light of the day.

At the same time, it was also a time of growing factionalism within the women's movement. As **Maithreyi Krishnaraj** points out, "The 1990s have brought in new and formidable challenges before the women's movement and women's studies."[24] The rising tide of communalism and the increasing popularity of right-wing parties exacerbated the already polarised atmosphere along the triad of caste, class and religion. Krishnaraj laments, "Hindutva has appropriated the language of feminism for different ends. Our earlier efforts to build broad solidarity have been drastically curtailed by Hindutva forces."[25]There was a lot of introspection and soul-searching amongst the women's movement itself as to cull out the reasons behind the rearing of head of such 'regressive' forces. The most potent factor identified, was the disconnect between the feminists and the everyday lives of women whose betterment they aim for. The daily battles for survival, in which majority of Indian women are engaged in whether at home or outside or often both, somehow failed to be addressed effectively by the women's movements, thereby making little headway at the ground level. Empowerment for women was deemed as a lop-sided concept since it widened the chasm between the genders. Gender increasingly came to be identified only with women. Thus, as Krishnaraj rues, the term gender, "does not really address both

sides of the equation."[26]

All these only helped the cause of the right-wingers who seized the opportunity to talk of women's rights being firmly entrenched in the patriarchal notion of women being carers and bearers. Organisations like the Shiv Sena's *Mahila Agadi*, the VHP's *Durga Vahini*, the BJP's *Mahila Morcha* and the RSS's *Rashtrasevika Samiti*, though differing in approach and tactics, deploy the same ideology of *narimukti* being co-terminus with the eternal identities of daughter, wife and mother. Salvation lies in serving the family which remains the true site of *narishakti*. Feminism, liberation are concepts imported from the west, designated to corrupt and pollute the minds of Indian women. **Pushpa Bhave** opines that the failure of women's organisations to connect and establish linkages with the large masses of women in urban India (in this case in Mumbai) led them to join organisations like the Shiv Sena.[27] The demolition of Babri Masjid and the communal mayhem that followed widened the gulf of mistrust between the two principal communities and as communalism breeds communalism, both Hindus and Muslims became more inward-looking in a bid to sail through the troubled times.

However, this is not to deny the relentless struggle waged out by several associations and organisations across India, countering the rising tide of communalism and 'regressiveness' and other forms of demeaning women. **Shabnam Hashmi**, through her organisation **SAHMAT** (acronym for Safdar Hashmi Memorial Trust), has worked tirelessly to counter the communal poison. With a determined effort to uphold pluralistic ethos of the country, SAHMAT has undertaken activities—performances, exhibitions, publication of books, posters, production of audio-video cassettes—to underline the concept of unity in diversity of the Indian nation and the people. **Teesta Setalvad**, as one of the co-founders and co-editors of *Communalism Combat* in 1993, prove the adage that the pen is mightier than the sword. For her, the magazine is a vehicle to combat the divisive forces, both majority and minority right-wing.

With media, both electronic and print, making increasing forays and consumerism engulfing everyday lives, activists raised a hue and cry over the objectification of women. The women's movement's agitation paid the greatest attention to the ways in which women's bodies were sexualised by the media and in films. Although the right-wingers, too, opposed such portrayal of women, their stand fundamentally differed from thatof the women's movement. While the former's position was grounded on the argument of media promoting perversion and promiscuity, the stand of the women's movement was the sexist and discriminatory representation of women. Protest marches and sloganeering against the 1997 Miss

Universe contest in Bangalore is a case in point. While the right-wingers objected to rounds like swimwear, which was linked to the discourse of the outward appearance of a fully-draped *sanskari* Indian woman, the feminists protested on the ground of objectification, borne out by rampant consumerism. Thus the concept of 'moral policing' increasingly gained ground. On the other hand, feminists in Bangalore held processions with mock 'queens' crowned as 'Miss Disease', 'Miss Starvation', 'Miss Poverty', 'Miss Malnourished', 'Miss Dowry Victim,'etc, in order to highlight the issues of poverty, and lack of nutrition and health care in the country.

Such protests by the feminists were not devoid of its share of controversy from within the movement itself. As Rupal Oza points out that the location of protests as being against the glorification of the objectification of women ended up endorsing a more conservative position which might decree that women's bodies and their sexuality must be controlled, especially in public. The women's movement's critiques of the 1997 Miss World contest in India could potentially be read as an effort located in the protection of the nation conceived in terms of desexualised woman.[28]

Cutting across debate, what remains cardinal is the deplorable condition of women in the existing socio-economic-cultural structure. That women are not safe within the family itself, has already become a foregone conclusion. But ground-level experiences showed that violence against women encompasses a whole range of violence, not limited to physical torture at marital homes. Loopholes in the prevalent legal system ensured that the perpetrators, with guile and shrewdness, could armtwist their way to acquittal. For example, in case of dowry deaths, dying declarations of a victim against the husband or the in-laws were seldom treated as evidences by the court. Thus, abetment to murder or suicide could not be successfully invoked in many of the cases. Section 304B of the IPC could not be applied if the wife died after the stipulated time-frame of seven years. Moreover, deaths when not linked to dowry, even within seven years of marriage would remain outside the pale of this provision. Even the sheen of 498A, which was considered a boon when it was introduced in 1983, gradually wore off since the clause gave weightage more to physical assaults, suicides or visible marks of injury. Threats of violence, verbal abuse, sexual violence in terms of forced intercourse or economic violence, namely, cutting off financial provisions—the new forms of violence devised to corner women—slipped though the gaping holes of this provision. Long-drawn legal process, too, offset the viability of 498A. The normal trial period was between five to ten years.[29] On top of that, the existing laws failed to address the issue of violence faced by unmarried women, widows or natal family violence which had become a palpable social reality. Moving away from the initial position of domestic violence

being linked only with physical violence, the women's rights organisations, thus, broadened the definition to include various forms of non-physical violence as also expand the site of violence from marital homes. Any woman in a violent situation would require some immediate relief, namely, protection, monetary relief, shelter, counseling that would prepare her for the battle ahead. Criminal laws cannot provide a woman with all these emotional and material needs, their purpose being to act as preventives and deterrents. The need for a civil law was being increasingly felt by the society and it became imperative that a special civil law addressing the issue of domestic violence be introduced. **Lawyers Collective** put forth a bill in 1994, suggesting that protection of women was the need of the hour, rather than punitive action against the perpetrator. It was designated to be a civil law, as it was felt that placing it within the ambit of criminal law would limit a woman's access to the law.

A national colloquium "Empowerment Through Law" was convened in 1994 to discuss in threadbare the draft bill. Attended by lawyers, activists and academicians, the colloquium voiced in unison the need for a law to protect women from domestic violence that occurred in intimate relationships and settings and often in a hierarchical power structure where the victim was dependent on the perpetrator, thus making any legal recourse difficult for the victim. However, debate at various levels dragged on, on the efficacy of a civil law, the consequent misuse and the bill was pushed into the backburner.

12.6 Stepping into the Millennium and After

The stepping into the new millennium was marked by the historic signing of the **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)** by leaders of 189 countries at the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000. These are essentially eight goals with measurable targets and deadlines to improve the condition of the world's poorest and marginalised lot. The deadline set was 2015. Amongst the goals set, two were directly linked with women—to promote gender equality and empower women and to improve maternal health. **Violence Against Women** (VAW) became a part of the standard lexicon.

At the individual and organisational level, fight for gender parity and justice continued. A study conducted by the Centre for Social Research in 2003, showed that nearly five crore married women in India were victims of DV, of which only a paltry and shocking 0.1% were reported.[30] The UPA government mentioned in its Common Minimum Program the enactment of a civil law on domestic violence as one of its primary agenda. The draft bill received cabinet approval in June 2005.

After being passed by both Houses, and receiving Presidential assent, the bill entered the statute book. It came into effect on 26 October 2006. Decades of activism finally led to the fruition of the **Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA)** in 2005.

The Act is designed taking into account the delicate nature and difficulty involved in dealing with cases of violence. As ubiquitous as its occurrence is, so is the extent of its social acceptance and legitimacy. Recognising the fact that legal procedures would disincentivise women from reporting cases of domestic violence, due to social backlash as well as fear of collapse of the family structure, the Act creates a framework for the informal resolution of conflicts through service providers. Women's rights organisations and NGOs have a responsible role to play in the effective implementation of the Act. Across the countries several such associations/ NGOs, like **Swayam,** headed by Anuradha Kapoor in Kolkata, have been working in right earnest in the dissemination of the act among the various stakeholders. Swayam initiated dialogues with the administration as also community workers and women in the remotest villages in south Bengal to spread the message of VAW as also the efficacy of the PWDVA as a remedy. Translation of the act in simple vernacular to be discernable by all, holding regular awareness sessions, street-plays, skits are some of the other potent weapons in the armoury of ending VAW. *Ebong Alap*, founded in 2003, too, strives towards creating a gender-just societywhich is also sensitive to other forms of inequity and where there is space for dialogues and conversations leading to the unfolding of critical thought, expression and action.

Rita Banerji, single-handedly, initiated the 50 Million Missing campaign in December 2006 to draw attention to female gendercide in India. Collecting thousands of photographs of girls and women from all over India, Banerji's primary aim is to draw attention to the dismal picture of foetus killing, which she statistically shows is rampant amongst the most educated of the to-be-mothers. Contextualising gendercide as a product of cultural misogyny, she demands that gendercide/femicide should be recognised as a gender-based hate crime and dealt accordingly.

For the activists and organisations in India, however, apart from these universal goals of gender equality and justice, the venom spewed by communalism remains a major scourge, capped by the Gujarat riots of 2002. Women's organisations pitched in to ease the volatile situation as also to provide the much-needed relief and help to the communities to rebuild their respective lives. Shabnam Hashmi co-founded **ANHAD** (acronym for Act Now for Harmony and Democracy), in March 2003, in response to the Gujarat carnage. In 2005, ANHAD rehabilitated 25 riot-hit children from Gujarat by bringing them over to Delhi, getting them admitted in schools and

looking after their mental and physical health. It has also worked and published extensively on human rights violations in Kashmir.

12.7 Conclusion

Of late, the controversy over the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 has taken a communal tinge, but at the same time portrayed the perseverance of the common woman. In retaliation to 'police high-handedness' in repressing agitations at Jamia Millia Islamia University in New Delhi in the aftermath of the enactment in December 2019, women protestors, majority being Muslims, have been squatting at Shaheen Bagh area in New Delhi from 14 December 2019. Through spontaneous songs, speeches, graffiti and posters they have been registering their resistance against government atrocities at large. Within 10 days, the sit-in demonstration stretched for nearly a kilometre. Elderly women, new mothers with lactating infants, braved the harsh Delhi winters to record their protest against the 'unjust' Act. Often swelling to nearly 1 lakh, the women have so long been able to maintain their independent stand, devoid of any political colour. In solidarity with their Shaheen Bagh sisters, the women from the Park Circus and adjoining areas of Kolkata launched a similar sit-in demonstration from the early days of January 2020. Park Circus has inspired many such sit-ins led by women in different pockets of the city, like Kidderpore, Metiabruz and Zakaria Street.

What is unique in these peaceful sit-ins are there are no hate-speeches, only spontaneous sloganeerings like 'Inquilab Zindabad' 'Halla Bol.' Lauding the movement, one of the local girls acknowledged, "A large number of Muslim women at Park Circus have come out in what is considered a male-dominated space and made it their own. They have defied societal pressure and reclaimed the public sphere, which has led to a change in perceptions and stereotypes built around Muslim women."[31] Another protester admitted that the movement has led to self-discovery, "I am shy, but the protest made me explore myself. It has empowered me as a woman and has given me confidence to face challenges in life."[32] Perhaps the spirit of the protesters in both the metropolises, are encapsulated in the words of Asmat Jamil, a frail woman who has undergone a kidney transplant, "Nothing can deter us and we will continue the movement till the Act is revoked."[33]

12.8 Summary

The trajectory of women's movement and resistance in India thus has a colourful tapestry of individual and collective efforts. Although much still needs to be done, since the latest NCRB data do not exhibit a promising picture so far the societal

position of women is concerned, one can still be hopeful that with a rich past, a bright present and a promising future, women's movement and resistance would be successful in bringing about changes in the societal mindset that would treat all genders as equal without any power equations and hierarchical stratification.

12.9 Questions

1. Answer in Detail:

1. Did women in the latter half of the nineteenth century envisage a revolutionary break from the societal stereotype?

2. "Throughout the Gandhian period, women participated in the national movement in large numbers." Elucidate

3. Explain some of the issues that women took up in the pre-independence period.

4. How did women come out in support of the Hindu Code Bill?

5. Did the setting up of Women Study Centers bring about perceptible changes in the women's movement?

6. How did the women's movement address some of the burning issues in the 1980s and 1990s?

2. Answer Briefly:

1. Around what time do we hear the voices of the women and in what form? Elucidate the main thrust of some of the essays penned by women during the late nineteenth century?

2. What role did women play in the Swadeshi movement?

3. What method did Gandhi use to mobilise women during the national movement?

4. Apart from the Gandhian discourse, what are the other means through which women contributed to the freedom struggle?

5. Briefly narrate the role of women in the initial years after independence.

6. What changes did the decade of the 1970s bring about in the women's movement?

7. What are the opposing forces that could be seen within the discourse of women's emancipation during the 1990s?

8. Name one important act passed in the new millennium. What is the main thrust area of the act?

3. Answer Very Briefly:

1. Explain the phrases: Politicisation of the domestic space and domestication of the political space. Do these hold true in the context of the Indian national movement?

2. "Through their acts, there was considerable unsexing of these women." Elucidate this concept of 'unsexing' and how it was done in the context of the national movement.

3. Trace some significant milestones in the first three decades after independence, in the context of the women's movement.

4. Did the new millennium bring about any major changes in the women's movement in India or do we see the continuation of the earlier trends?

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UNIT 13 ❑ Gender and State

Structure

13.1 Learning Objectives

After going through the sub units the students will be able to:

- ✓ Have a basic understanding of the key concepts of gender and state
- ✓ Have a holistic understanding of the interactions between gender and state in the context of colonial and post-colonial India
- ✓ Identify the major signposts in this interaction

13.2 Introduction

Gender and the state share a somewhat volatile and ambivalent relationship. This module aims to familiarise the readers with the ups and downs that characterise the relationship between the two, straddling the colonial and the post-colonial periods. Starting from the nineteenth century, when the colonial administration took up the cudgels of administration in India, down up to the current regime, the module would try to highlight the important signposts that mark this interaction.

13.3 Defining Gender, Defining State

13.3.1 Gender

In common parlance, sex and gender are often used inter-changeably. However, from the academic point of view, one needs to distinguish between the two, at the outset. **Sex** denotes human beings on the basis of certain *biological* traits (chromosomes, sex organs, hormones and other physical features like breasts). **Gender** denotes human beings depending on *social* factors (social role, position, behaviour or identity). For the feminists, the driving force behind forging this distinction is to counter biological determinism, i.e., the theory that biology is destiny and that women are biologically weaker, thus subservient to the stronger sex, is a foregone, irreversible condition.

Biological determinism roughly originated in the nineteenth century with the writings of **Geddes and Thompson**. The duo believed that social, psychological and behavioural traits were caused by metabolic state. Women supposedly conserve energy (being 'anabolic') and this makes them passive, conservative, sluggish, stable and uninterested in politics. Men expend their surplus energy (being 'katabolic') and this makes them eager, energetic, passionate, variable and, thereby, interested in political and social matters. These biological 'facts' about metabolic states were used not only to explain behavioural differences between women and men but also to justify what our social and political arrangements ought to be. More specifically, they were used to argue for withholding from women political rights accorded to men because,"what was decided among the prehistoric Protozoa cannot be annulled by Act of Parliament."[1] It would be inappropriate to grant women political rights, as they are simply not suited to have those rights; it would also be futile since women (due to their biology) would simply not be interested in exercising their political rights. Although biological determinism of the kind endorsed by Geddes and Thompson is nowadays uncommon, the idea that behavioural and psychological differences between women and men have biological causes has not disappeared

altogether from the perception. In the 1970s, sex differences were used to argue that women should not become airline pilots since they will be hormonally unstable once a month and, therefore, unable to perform their duties as well as men.[2] More recently, differences in male and female brains have been said to explain behavioural differences; in particular, the anatomy of corpus callosum, a bundle of nerves that connects the right and left cerebral hemispheres, is thought to be responsible for various psychological and behavioural differences. For instance, in 1992, a *Time* magazine article surveyed then prominent biological explanations of differences between women and men claiming that women's thicker corpus callosums could explain what 'women's intuition' is based on and impair women's ability to perform some specialised visual-spatial skills, like reading maps.[3]

There has been a strong rebuttal from the feminist scholars against such lop-sided definition of gender based on biological features garnered to portray women as fragile and of unstable constitution. As early as 1949, **Simone de Beauvoir** famously claimed that one is not born, but rather *becomes* a woman, and that "social discrimination produces in women, moral and intellectual effects so profound that they appear to be caused by nature."[4] Following the footsteps of Beauvoir, it is now widely acclaimed that gender is predicated more on cultural and social constructions rather than anatomically determined. Countering the 21st century contention of essayists like **Gorman**, **Anne Fausto-Sterling** has questioned the idea that differences in corpus callosums cause behavioural and psychological differences. First, the corpus callosum is a highly variable piece of anatomy; as a result, generalisations about its size, shape and thickness that hold for women and men in general should be viewed with caution. Second, differences in adult human corpus callosums are not found in infants; this may suggest that physical brain differences actually develop as responses to differential treatment. Third, given that visual-spatial skills (like map reading) can be improved by practice, even if women and men's corpus callosums differ, this does not make the resulting behavioural differences immutable.[5]

Gender till the 1950s, was essentially confined to the pages of grammar books as masculine, feminine and neuter genders. From the second half of the twentieth century, the word gender assumed a different dimension when **J. Money**, used the word to refer to the self-identification of individuals whose genital sex was ambiguous. Significantly, in Money's usage, an individual's gender role could differ from various biological definitions of an individual's sex. From this beginning, there was a slow but gradual increase in the use of gender through the 1960s by writers, especially in the social sciences and among psychoanalysts, who wished to emphasise the environmental, social, or psychological determinants of psychological/behavioral differences between men and women. **Robert Stoller**, a renowned psychologist,

appropriated the term gender by co-relating sex with biological traits and gender with the amount of masculinity and femininity a person exhibited. Taking a leaf out of Stoller, feminists found it useful to distinguish between sex and gender. This enabled them to argue that many differences between women and men were socially produced and, therefore, changeable. **Gayle Rubin** uses the phrase 'sex/gender system' in order to describe "a set of arrangements by which the biological raw material of human sex and procreation is shaped by human, social intervention."[6] Rubin employed this system to articulate that "part of social life which is the locus of the oppression of women" describing gender as the "socially imposed division of the sexes."[7] Rubin's thought was that although biological differences are fixed, gender differences are the oppressive results of social interventions that dictate how women and men should behave. Women are oppressed *as women* and "by having to *be* women."[8] However, since gender is social, it is thought to be mutable and alterable by political and social reform that would ultimately bring an end to women's subordination. Feminism should aim to create a "genderless (though not sexless) society, in which one's sexual anatomy is irrelevant to who one is, what one does, and with whom one makes love."[9]

Scholars like Rubin believe sex and gender to be complementary, not completely dissociated from each other. Thus, gender is deemed to be the social interpretation of sex. Nicholson calls this 'the coat-rack view of gender' where sexed bodies are akin to coat-racks, which "provide the site upon which gender is constructed."[10] Gender conceived of as masculinity and femininity is superimposed upon the 'coat-rack' of sex as each society imposes on sexed bodies their cultural conceptions of how males and females should behave. This socially constructs gender differences – or the amount of femininity/masculinity of a person – upon the sexed bodies. Taking this argument further, **Stoljer and Haslanger** elaborate, that one can be a sexed male and a gendered female and vice-versa, thus conceptualising the third gender.[11] Gender differences thus spring from cultural practices and social expectations, "intended or unintended products of a social practice."[12]

Kate Millet further explicates that gender is "the sum total of the parents', the peers', and the culture's notions of what is appropriate to each gender by way of temperament, character, interests, status, worth, gesture, and expression."[13] Children are often dressed in gender stereotypical clothes and colours (boys are dressed in blue, girls in pink) and parents tend to buy their children gender stereotypical toys. They also (intentionally or not) tend to reinforce certain 'appropriate' behaviours. Girls are discouraged from playing sports like football or from playing 'rough and tumble' games and are more likely than boys to be given dolls or cooking toys to play with; boys are told not to 'cry like a baby' and are more likely to be given

masculine toys like trucks and guns. Thus feminine and masculine roles conveniently fit with and reinforce women's subordination so that women are socialised into subordinate social roles: they learn to be passive, ignorant, docile, emotional helpmates of men.

Thus gender is a sum total of the society's perception and concomitant construction of how a male and a female should behave and become a boy/man and a girl/woman. Anybody not adhering to this prescription, is labeled as 'deviant' and thus chastised, ridiculed and socially ostracised.

13.3.2 State

Derived from the Latin word status which means condition/circumstances, there is no comprehensive, all-encompassing definition of state. Opinions differ as to the connotation of the term state and as to when the concept emerged. The Greek polis of the Archaic period was more of a 'city community' rather than a modern-day state. As **MacIver** points out, the Greek polis can be treated as transitional forms rather than full-fledged states, "Perhaps they should not be included within the classification of states any more than the *pithecanthropus* is to be included among the races of man."[14] The term 'state' was non-existent in Greek or Roman thinking and is deemed to be comparatively of modern origin. **Machiavelli** is widely believed to have introduced the concept of state, "All the powers which have had and have authority over men are states (*stati*) and are either monarchies or republics."[15]

State, according to **Barrow**, refers to a set of different, but interrelated and often overlapping, theories about a certain range of political phenomena. The act of defining the term can be seen as part of an ideological conflict, because different definitions lead to different theories of state function, and as a result validate different political strategies. According to **Jeffrey and Painter**, "if we define the 'essence' of the state in one place or era, we are liable to find that in another time or space something which is also understood to be a state has different 'essential' characteristics". Different definitions of the state often place an emphasis either on the 'means' or the 'ends' of states. Means-related definitions include those by **Max Weber** and **Charles Tilly**, both of whom define the state according to its violent means. For Weber, the state "is a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory" (Politics as a Vocation), while Tilly characterises them as "coercion-wielding organisations" (Coercion, Capital, and European States).

Ends-related definitions emphasise instead, the teleological aims and purposes of the state. Marxist thought regards the ends of the state as being the perpetuation

of class domination in favour of the ruling class which, under the capitalist mode of production, is the bourgeoisie. The state exists to defend the ruling class's claims to private property and its capturing of surplus profits at the expense of the proletariat. Thus **Marx** claimed that "the executive of the modern state is nothing but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie."

The most commonly used definition is Max Weber's, which describes the state as a compulsory political organisation with a centralised government that maintains a monopoly of the legitimate use of force within a certain territory. MacIver offers a somewhat lucid definition of the state, which can be accepted for the purpose of understanding this module, "The State is an association which acting through law as promulgated by government endowed to this end with coercive power, maintains within a community, territorially demarcated, the external conditions of social order."[16]

The state is characterised by several constitutive elements—population, a fixed territory, government and sovereignty. State and government are often equated on the same plane. Celebrated political thinker **Harold Laski** observes, "The state is for the purposes of practical administration, the government."[17] Echoing the same thought, **G.D.H. Cole**, too, articulates, "A state is nothing more or less than the political machinery of government in a community."[18] However, such bunching of state and government are no longer tenable. Conceptually, state and government are distinguishable. Government stands for the machinery in which the will and purpose of the state are organised, articulated and enforced. In order to fulfill this task, the government is assigned the necessary authority by the state, i.e., the governments are means through which the state power is employed. Thus, the most fundamental difference as manifested between the state and the government is that while the power of the state is original and primary, the authority of the government is derived and delegated. Whereas, the state comprises the aggregate population within it, the government consists of a fraction of the total population. Moreover, what distinguishes a state from the government is the permanency of the former—while governments come and go, the state endures forever. The inner commotion and convulsions might destabilise the government but it fails to sap the foundation of the state. Government is an agency for fulfilling the wishes and aspirations of the people. Thus the population might have genuine grievances against the government, but not against the state.

The state, being a human institution, population is its obvious element. Population, residing within a fixed territory, however, is not homogeneous in nature. They may be striated along the axes of caste, creed, religion, language, class. Whether a homogeneous population augurs well for a state is a debatable issue. However, in modern nation-states, where democracy is hailed to be the best form of governance,

heterogeneity of population ensures plurality of voices and opinions and acts as effective checks and balances.

For the purpose of this module, population and government—two most integral components of the state—would be essentially dealt with. The interaction/negotiation/ confrontation pivoting around gender, between the government-in-power and various segments of the population, and within the population itself would be analysed. Since, state is an abstract concept and population and government are the human and visible representation and reflection of the state, how the measures undertaken by the government vis-à-vis gender, which makes up the population, impacted the same and how they reacted to these measures, how the path of collision, collaboration has been charted out, would be the focus.

13.4 Gender and The State : Nineteenth Century Colonial India

At the dawn of the nineteenth century thanks to the expansionist policy, the East India Company had spread its tentacles across the length and breadth of India. The jurisdiction of the Company extended over the three Presidencies of Madras, Bengal and Bombay and a newly-created dependent province known as the North-Western Provinces. With the exception of the Indus delta, the whole coastline of India was in British possession, while thanks to Lord Wellesley's Subsidary Alliance, the princely states, too bowed down to British subservience. Placed on a surer footing, the British now looked upon India as a viable commercial market since the colony possessed the three-pronged advantages of territorial importance, commercial value and maritime utility. British power in India came to be regarded as an "instrument for ensuring the necessary conditions of law and order by which the potentially vast Indian market could be conquered by British industry."[19] This necessitated the task of justifying their rule for which they found an ideology based on India's 'difference' from Britain. Under the influence of the ideals of Evangelicalism and Utilitarianism, the British identified themselves as civilised and modern and decisively set the non-European world as the 'other.' To describe oneself as 'enlightened' implied that someone else had to be shown as 'savage.' As the British endeavoured to define themselves as 'British' and thus as 'not Indian', they had to make of Indians whatever they chose not to make of themselves. This process had as its outcome, an array of polarities that shaped much of the ideology of the Raj during the nineteenth century.

To amplify the inferiority of the Indians the British took recourse to the triad of language, race and gender. British men, British women, Indian men and Indian women were all fitted in distinct roles to spell out India's difference. The British

believed that more 'ennobled' the position of women in a society the 'higher' would be the civilisation. As **James Mill** opines, "The condition of women is one of the most remarkable circumstances in the manners of nations. Among rude people, the women are generally degraded, among civilised people, they are exalted."[20]By this measure, not surprisingly India lagged far behind Britain. India's women were not 'ennobled' by their men but instead 'degraded'—"India is unhappily an example to prove how manifold are the ramifications of evil spreading out of a demoralised and degraded state of domestic relations. Bigamy, polygamy, adultery, prostitution, abortion, infanticide, incest, fraud, robbery, violence, and all kinds of murder are the melancholy results...for the proper regulation of domestic society in India, remarriage of widows must be allowed, marriage of infants must be abolished, females must be educated, and restraints must be placed on marriage..."[21] As Indian men did not perform their duty of uplifting the pitiable condition of women, the British determined that they themselves should act as the protector of India's women by which they could proclaim their 'masculine' chivalrous character and moral superiority over the Indian male. **James Forbes** describes the Indian men as "maidenly and well-nigh effeminate, of a countenance shy and somewhat estranged."[22] The Bengalis, especially, were at the receiving end of the British barb, "The physical organization of the Bengalee is feeble even to effeminacy...courage, independence, veracity are qualities to which his constitution and his situation are equally unfavourable."[23] This effeteness needs to be countered by robust British masculinity. Philip Meadows Taylor's romantic novel *Seeta* set against the backdrop of the Revolt of 1857, is a classic example of the colonial master's envisioning of the feminine rescue mission. In fact Job Charnock's rescuing of a widow from the funeral pyre and his subsequent 'marriage' to her in late seventeenth century, has often been used as a classic example of how British humanitarian benevolent masculinity was pitted against a barbaric, despotic one.[24] **Charles Grant**, who was elected member of the East India Company's Board of Trade by Lord Cornwallis and subsequently in 1805 rose to be its chairman, argued strongly in favour of evangelising India since, "…we cannot avoid recognising in the peopleof Hindostan, a race of men lamentably degenerate and base; retaining but a feeble sense of moral obligation…governed by malevolent and licentious passions, strongly exemplifying the effects produced on society by great and general corruption of manners, and sunk in misery by their vices…"[25] Amongst the factors contributing to the peculiarities of the Indian character, Grant identifies the debilitating influence of climate. The heat and humidity of the climate were regarded as conspiring to subvert manliness, resolve and courage—"The climate of India …must be allowed to be less favourable to the human constitution…the bodily frame is less hardy, the faculties have less energy, their exercise is less expanded and delightful, ardour is checked, the oppressed

spirit gives more easily to indolence and indulgence…"[26] Thus the British saw India as a land ruled by womanly men, who ran away from battles and hence deserved British subjugation. It is this gendering of the empire that provided a fertile ground for fulfilling the British hegemonistic agenda. Being proved superior both in terms of physical and mental faculties, the British strongly believed that they have the white-man's burden to civilise barbaric India. This was sought to be countered by the subject population, who strived to prove their 'manliness' as opposed to the colonial discourse of effeteness, more so from the latter half of the nineteenth century and spilling over to the twentieth.

Placing themselves on a high pedestal, the colonial administration embarked on its 'civilising mission' with a special emphasis on girl/women. Within the overarching discourse of comparison which was an effective tool, adopted to forge the superiority of one against the other, the debate between the colonial administration and the indigenous population pitted 'our' women against 'theirs', to formulate the notion of an 'ideal woman.' This was mediated through the lens of the 'self' and the 'other.' **Harry Verelst**, Governor of Bengal (1767-1769) raised a very relevant question, "Shall we disregard the condition of a wife, incapable of governing herself?"[27] The writings of **Monier-Williams** in the late nineteenth century resonate with similar sentiment, "Are we Englishmen, who are responsible for the welfare of our Indian Empire, and who derive so much of our own welfare from the purifying and elevating influence of our own home-life, chargeable with indifference to the condition of the women of India?"[28] The domestic space, thus, became their chosen field of reform. The dawn of the nineteenth century witnessed government's active involvement with the women's issue with questions being raised about their pitiable condition and the ways and means to pull them out of the morass—what should be the ideal age of marriage for a girl? When would a girl be allowed to enter into sexual relationship? Should a widow be burnt alive on the funeral pyre of her husband? Should a widow be allowed to re-marry? Should a woman have access to education? These are some of the cardinal issues that rankled the colonial administration during the course of the nineteenth century and their efforts to find answers to these questions brought them at loggerheads with the conservative sections of the indigenous society—the self-proclaimed spokespersons of traditions and culture that characterised the Indian way of life, including home.

At the same time, in their endeavour to reformulate the lives of women, the administration did receive support of a section of the subject-population led by stalwarts like **Raja Rammohun Roy** or **Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar**. The first telling intervention of the colonial government in the gendered discourse of the subject population is Regulation XVII of December 1829, by which the practice of Sati was

abolished in Bengal Presidency, under the initiative of Lord William Bentinck. Although the barbarity of Sati or self-immolation of Hindu widows on the funeral pyre of their deceased husbands had been bothering the administrators right from the end of the eighteenth century, no decisive action was taken till Bentinck arrived, for fear of giving umbrage to religious prejudices of the Hindus that might provoke an anti-government reaction and stall the onward march of Pax Britannica. Thus while the government was desirous of an abolition of the heinous practice, for the subject population, on the other hand, Sati became a marker of their ethos and tradition, to be fiercely protected from any alien intervention.

As Sati increasingly became a more visible rite, it became a rallying point of civilising mission and the government policy see-sawed between an avowed desire not to offend the religious sensibilities of the Hindus and the criticism that its silence on the stated issue gave indulgence to murder and made women sacrificial lambs. Shocked at the gruesomeness and goriness of the incidents, the state could not turn a blind eye with girls as young as nine years being consigned to flames in the name of religion. While his predecessors dithered on the question of abolition, Bentinck was steelier in his determination. In his endeavour, he found an able support in a section of the indigenous population, the most notable being Raja Rammohun Roy. Basing his argument on the sacred texts, namely, Manusmriti, commentaries by Yajnavalkya, the nucleus of Rammohun's argument, as gleaned from his 1818 tract titled "Translation of a Conference between an Advocate for and an Opponent of the Practice of Burning Widows Alive," and a second pamphlet published in 1820, "A Second Conference between an Advocate for, and an Opponent of the Practice of Burning Widows Alive" centred on trying to find answer to the question, "…whether or not the practice of burning widows alive on the pile and with the corpse of their husband's, is imperatively enjoined by Hindu religion?"[29] His emphatic reply was, "Manu in plain terms enjoins a widow to continue till death forgiving all injuries…"[30] He claimed that the mythic lawgiver Manu who called for Hindu widows to lead a life of ascetic celibacy (*brahmacarye vyavasthita*) superseded the quoted injunctions of Angira and other ancient Hindu sages in support of self-immolation. A widow, who outlives her husband but adheres to the tenets of celibacy was, according to Manu, to be venerated as a sadhvi. Battle-lines were drawn with the anti-abolitionists, too, gearing up with their own set of arguments gleaned from religious texts. The face of this group was Radhakanta Deb, who, too dug deep into the scriptures and cited passages from the Upanishads to bolster his argument against the proposed ban. Caught in the whirlpool of ruptures within the Indian society, Bentinck's immediate predecessors jettisoned any concrete interventionist measures for the fear of ruffling indigenous sentiments. However, Bentinck decided to step in where his predecessors feared to tread—the end result being the Regulation of 1829.

Not to take things lying down, the conservative faction under Deb went all the way to the Privy Council to appeal against the Regulation, which however was rejected.

Abolition of sati was the first step towards what **Gayatri Spivak** terms, "White men are saving brown women from brown men."[31] The banning of the self-immolation of widows brought forth the more disturbing question of the widows' future plight. Corollary thus to the abolition of sati, came the enactment of the Widow Remarriage Act of 1856, which, too, exposed the fissures within the indigenous society and thus followed the same road map of confrontation with the government on the question of women. While Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar campaigned tirelessly in favour of the proposed measure, culling out passages from the religious texts in support of widow remarriage, supported by a section of the indigenous press, the voices of the opponents, too, were loud and clear. The Brahmins of Poona in their petition dated 27 February 1856, opposed the measure and expressed their opinion that those who are in favour of the measure must not be Hindus. The inhabitants of Mymensingh characterised Vidyasagar's move as one from a "very thoughtless and improvident youngman who would suffer unlimited troubles which God knows well only." 784 petitioners of the upper country, sojourning in Calcutta expressed the apprehension that if the proposed Bill became law, it would effectively mean that, "whosoever may wish will run away with any one's wife…" The inhabitants of Chattagram district in their petition dated 18 July 1856 predicted that "it will never be an uncommon thing for a youthful handsome woman of a wicked mind to agree with the allurements of youthful wealthy debauchees and accordingly attempt the lives of their poor and ugly husbands." 991 persons calling themselves "professors of the Hindu law" submitted a petition dated 29 February 1856 drawing the attention of the Legislative Council to the religious precepts governing the life of a widow. At the end, there were 40 petitions against the proposed Widow Remarriage Bill, signed by nearly 50,000-60,000 persons and some 25 petitions in favour of the Bill signed by around 5,000 inhabitants.[32] Ignoring the rebellious voices, Dalhousie in 1856, went ahead with his 'civilising mission,' passing the Widow Remarriage Act (Act XV of 1856).

These two acts conclusively prove the government's determination to 'rescue' the 'native' women from the morass they were steeped in and their commitment to project themselves as the messiah and the savior, who would wave the magic wand of legal reform to offer the much-needed relief from unnecessary customs and rituals that had shackled them for ages. Understandably, society, more so, the indigenous male patriarchs were not receptive of these 'reforms' which they deemed as 'obtrusive interference' in their sacred domestic space. They became all the more determined to prove their chivalry as compared to the 'gora sahibs.' Though the indigenous

patriarchs failed to stall the appropriation of the physical space by the Britishers, they became more resolute in safeguarding their gendered space centring around the home. Thus the notion of 'modernisation of the domestic space' was fiercely debated in the spatial time-zone of nineteenth century. It was essentially a three-pronged struggle where the government and the conservative faction of the society at opposite ends, with the a segment of the indigenous intelligentsia siding with the pro-reformative initiatives of the administration.

However, from the second half of the nineteenth century with the rising spirit of nationalism, the tussle became more contoured and jagged. The social space of the indigenous people was bifurcated, as identified by **Partha Chatterjee**, into the inner/home and the outer/world. Self-identity became co-terminus with the inner domain, representative of "…one's inner spiritual self, one's true identity."[33] Thus it was fiercely guarded by the conservationists, "…the crucial need was to protect, preserve, and strengthen the inner core of the national culture, its spiritual essence. No encroachments by the colonizer must be allowed in that inner sanctum."[34] However, as Chatterjee contends, reformation of the domestic set-up, was recognised by the anti-colonialists themselves, "…a mere restatement of the old norms of family life would not suffice…new norms were needed, which would be more appropriate to the external conditions of the modern world…"[35] But it is they who would decide the course of these new norms and the women's question was situated within this broad framework of safeguarding one's true self through the inner space as also altering the same to meet the demands of time but not a blind aping of the West. Women, being the custodians of home, became the forbearers of 'nurturing and protecting' this spiritual self and the changes to be wrought within this sphere were to be the prerogative of the nationalists, but of course not at the cost of discarding feminine virtues like chastity, self-sacrifice, submission, devotion, kindness, patience and the labours of love, that had remained the hallmark of an Indian woman and which distinctively set her apart from her Western counterpart. While the administrators charted out the roadmap of modernisation and amelioration of the plight of Indian women through socio-legal measures that would eventually convert them into 'ideal' 'modern' women, Indians like **Bhudev Mukhopadhyay** felt that modernisation along western lines would rob them of features that would prove her exalted status vis-à-vis a western woman, "In a society (ostensibly referring to the British society) where men and women meet together, converse together, eat and drink together, travel together, the manners of women are likely to be somewhat coarse, devoid of spiritual qualities and relatively prominent in animal traits."[36]

To the colonial mind, recalibration of the domestic sphere necessitated overhauling of marital relations that would free the wives, more precisely, the child-

wives from the stranglehold of domination and subjugation within the four walls. Drawing parallel between the institution of marriage as prevalent in Great Britain and India, Verelst commented that the differences lay not only in the 'forms and solemnities' but also in the 'age of contracting' and the 'power and dominion of a husband.' **H.H. Risley**, placing marriage in a broader context, linked the same with the making and unmaking of a nation, "Among the various causes which contribute to the growth of a race or the making of a nation by far the most effective and persistent is the *jus connubii*—the body of rules and conventions governing marriage."[37]

Tradition and custom demanded girls to be betrothed and married off literally at the cradle. Premature sexual intercourse was thus an everyday occurrence in Hindu households. This was statistically proved by the findings of **Dr Allan Webb**, Professor of Military Surgery in the College of Medicine in Calcutta. The data collected from Calcutta showed girls 'menstruating' at the age of eight, nine or ten. The bleeding, Webb concluded, should not be correlated with the onset of puberty, but was due to rupturing of hymen because of premature sexual intercourse.[38] It was in this context, that colonial attempts to outlaw child-marriage and concomitant evils assumed a sustained tempo throughout the nineteenth century which gathered momentum from the second half. Infant marriage was underlined as the cause that would spell doom for the entire Hindu population, "…a population which countenances such a practice must be in a fair way towards extreme moral degradation, if not to ultimate extinction."[39]

The outcome was four acts destined to regulate marriage and age of consent, i.e., the age in which a girl was deemed fit to enter into sexual relationships—Indian Penal Code, 1860; Special Marriage Act, 1872; Indian Limitation Act, 1877; Indian Penal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure 1882 Amendment Act, 1891. Though they could bank on the support of an 'enlightened' section of the indigenous society, namely, **Keshub Chandra Sen**, **Berhamji Malabari**, the opponents, were nevertheless, an equally vociferous lobby, who marshaled their weapons to counter the colonial narrative. Coming out in favour of marriage at an young age, **Bhudev Mukhopadhyay** eloquently underlined that advantages outnumbered the disadvantages of such a system and those who focus solely on the latter are the blind followers of western ideals much to the detriment of Indian cultural fabric. A matured girl of the age of 19-20 marrying into another family would be a misfit since her mental faculties would no longer be malleable and amenable to change—her habits and her character would have already taken a concrete shape. It would be well-nigh impossible for the bride, under the circumstances, to adjust to the new set-up at her marital home. Domestic tension will mark husband-wife relationship.

Late marriages would thus lead to severe maladjustments. Citing the instances of countries of the west like England and USA, Bhudev, pointed out, "*Je desh-ey adhik boyeshey parinay-er niyom, sei desh-ei parinoychhed-er byabostha prachalito…ingraj-ra adhik boyish-ey bibaha koren...uha swata-i bichhino o skhalito…markin-diger desh-eo adhik boyeshey bibaha koribaar niyom…jodi oi sakal desh-ey udbahubandhan sukh-er bandhan hoito, tobey oi bandhan chhinno koribar jonyo eto jatno ebong eto agroho keno hoibey?*"[40] (Marriage at a matured age would result in marital discord resulting in separation and divorce as exemplified by western societies). Estrangement amongst husbands and wives is thus a common occurrence in western households.

The flashpoint was reached in 1890, with the death of eleven year old Phulmonee due to excessive bleeding because of forced intercourse by her thirty-five year old husband Hari Mohan Maiti. Hari Maiti was charged under Section 304, 304A, 325 and 338 of the Indian Penal Code, which amounted to culpable homicide not amounting to murder and grievous hurt that endangered human life. The case was heard by a single judge of the Calcutta High Court in its original jurisdiction. Maiti was ultimately acquitted of all charges, except 338 and was awarded a sentence of one year imprisonment. The law of rape, which carried a sentence of either imprisonment of ten years or transportation for life, was not applicable, since Phulmonee had crossed the legally stipulated age of ten. The judge, Mr Wilson, regretted that, "It by no means follows that because the law of rape does not apply between husband and wife if the wife has attained the age of ten years, that the law regards a wife over ten years of age as a thing made over to her husband, or as a person outside the protection of law."[41]

Phulmonee's case brought the issue of marital rape out into the open. So far the sensitive question revolved essentially around the legislative discourse. The first reflection could be found in the draft Penal Code in 1837, submitted for government perusal. Rape was defined in Chapter XVIII—Of Offences Relating to Human Body. While outlining the circumstances that would constitute rape, the last of the five circumstances outlined intercourse "with or without her consent when she is under nine years of age."[42] Even in case of consensual sex, if the girl was under nine years of age, the intercourse would amount to rape. Exception was however made in case of "sexual intercourse by a man with his own wife..."[43] implying that a husband had the right to exercise his marital rights and force himself upon his wife, irrespective of her age. Objections to the exception were, however, raised by three Judges of the Sudder Court at Bombay, Mr J.C. Thomas, Mr W. Hudleston and Mr A. D. Campbell. Mr Thomas expressed his doubt at the propriety of this exception, "The early age at which children are married and in the eye of the law become

wives, makes it necessary that protection should be given to them by the law till they are of age to reside with their husbands."[44] Siding with the opinion of the Bombay trio, the framers of the Code, too felt the need that "...the check of the law may be necessary to restrain men from taking advantage of their marital right prematurely."[45] Thus, in the final Penal Code of 1860, Section 375 laid down the rape clause and identified five circumstances which constituted rape. Of these, the last mentions, "Sexual intercourse by a man with his wife, the wife being under ten years of age" would also amount to rape.[46] Thus conjugal relationship, in a limited sense, was brought within the ambit of rape, if the age of the wife was below ten.

However, that fixing the age at ten, failed to offer sufficient protection was evident from the various data collected by the administration. But, post-1860 Penal Code, attempts to raise the age of consent or marriage faltered at the altar of indigenous opposition. Phulmonee's case provided the administration with the much-needed support they were looking for. Agitated at the death of an innocent girl, petitions poured in from cross-section of the society, urging some pro-active measures from the government. Propped up by the support of a section of the Indian population, the government was convinced enough by the end of 1890, that a measure to the effect of raising the age of consent from ten, would not meet with fervent antagonism. Sir Andrew Scoble introduced the Bill titled, "Indian Penal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure 1882, Amendment Bill" in the Legislative Council on 9 January 1891 with the expressed objective of protecting female children from 'immature prostitution' and from 'premature cohabitation.'[47]

The frontal assault on the sacred domestic sphere led a section of the intelligentsia to launch a scathing attack. **Bal Gangadhar Tilak** opposed the Bill for interfering in the age-old customs of the Hindus, "If today's bill is passed…then it will damage our traditions and shastras."[48] For him, the reform of Indian women should be rooted in traditional norms. He was not opposed to social reform per se, but he did not endorse the methodology of the social reformers appealing to the government for legislation. Such a docile attitude, he felt, would weaken the moral and intellectual foundation of the national movement. He never undermined the need for social reform, but stressed that these should be carried out under the leadership of men embodying the pristine Hindu way of life and not by the government, "We would not like that Government should have anything to do with regulating our social customs or ways of living…"[49] Reformation through Government legislation was labelled by Tilak as 'Reformation through Tyranny.'

The tug of war hinged on the issue of marital rape, which the Bill sought to outlaw. The yardstick of being 'civilised' was pegged on the legal recognition of

marital rape, "A law so bad as that which makes the cohabitation of a husband with his wife rape is not to be found in any country… A law which will peep into a married couple's bedroom and make holes and openings in the windows in order to enable the Magistrate to look into it, is possible only in this country."[50] How could husbands, venerated as gods according to ancient texts, be prosecuted of marital rape? How can "in any civilized country a husband be held guilty of rape upon his own wife?"[51]

Thus government intervention within the domain of gender often ricocheted due to the unflinching attitude of a section of the population. The rising tide of nationalism further heightened such acerbic exchanges. Nation, in the Indian context, has always been represented as the mother. Celebrated litterateur Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's novel *Ananda Math* (1882) eulogised the nation as a beloved mother and sang odes dedicated to the nurturer and carer immortalised by the phrase *Bande Mataram* (Hail thy Mother). The nation is narrated on the body of the women. As **Mrinalini Sinha** suggests, "nations are gendered ideological constructs."[52] Hence by dictating the age of consummation and consequent motherhood, the colonial rulers aimed to tighten their grip over the nation itself and counter the growing spirit of nationalism that was making its presence felt in the form of groups, organisations and associations that were questioning the validity and veracity of colonial rule. In the indigenous psyche, the nation was represented not as an 'empty social space' but "as Mother India...the Indian nation (was) imagined as woman, mother."[53] To whip up support of the masses, the nation was endowed with a figurative image, "In the metaphor of nationalism, it is the female body and the many faces of 'mother' that have served as the most universal and potent symbols of imagining the nation."[54]Home was deemed as a microcosm of the nation and this needed to be fiercely guarded from any unwanted encroachment. As Bhudev reiterates in several of his essays, "A woman would be the true upholder of the virtues that would set apart the Indian home from a European one."[55] Autobiographical accounts of Indian women often echo such sentiments where femininity equals foregoing the British-prescribed reforms that would distance them from being virtuous Indian women. As **Kundamala Debi** points out, "If you have acquired real knowledge, then give no place in your heart to memsahib-like behaviour. This is not becoming in a Bengali housewife."[56] **Krishnabhabini Dasi** writing in the 1880s after her travel to England along with her husband, was aghast at the British way of life, especially the lifestyles of women, "Women also drink to the same extent as men. A grandmother, mother and daughter—all descend to the liquor shop early in the morning. The grandmother is around eighty years of age. Such a ghastly site can only be witnessed in England."[57] Feminine dignity and prestige became the indicators of progress and superiority. To rival her European counterpart, an Indian wives' role would be reformulated so that

she reflects the true spirit of Indian culture and religion. She would be mentored to be a true companion and helpmate to her husband—her dress, food manners, education, her role in organising life at home were to be remodelled so that she could become the better half of her partner in every sense. She should be the epitome of grace, poise and subtleness—qualities which distinctly set her apart from her western counterparts. A plethora of domestic manuals written in late nineteenth century namely *Ramanir Kartavya* (Jayakrishna Mitra, 1890); *Griha Lakshmi* (Girijaprasanna Raychaudhuri, 1888) contained copious instructions for women to become ideal housewives. Husband's authority over his wife should be supreme, "As the husband is the support of a Bengali girl's life, it is her duty to follow whatever advice he gives her—whether it is proper or improper."[58] **Nagendrabala Dasi** analysing an ideal husband-wife relationship, reifies the age-old notion, "A wife's duty is to ensure the welfare and well-being of her husband and her in-laws. Any woman who acts otherwise, is not worth calling a wife...an ideal wife should sacrifice her own desires and needs—that is the essential pre-condition of being an ideal wife. If you desire to win the affection of your husband then you should abhor things which your husband does not approve, even if you derive pleasure from such activities...never indulge in anything which your husband distastes...never care for your own well-being...it is your husband's responsibility to ensure your upkeep."[59] A woman who reflects these qualities would thus be venerated as a *Sukanya* (ideal daughter), *Subhagini* (ideal sister), *Sumata* (ideal mother), *Sugrihini* (ideal wife).

The discourse evolved within the parametres of patriarchal premise of being the saviour of Indian women, the father-figure who would determine and have the final say in eschewing what is right and just. But who would be more suited to play this role—the 'effeminate' Indian men or the more robust, 'manly' British? As scholars have demonstrated how the cry of 'tradition in danger' was in reality a scream for 'manhood in danger.'[60] The triumvirate of opponents, proponents and the colonial administration were all stakeholders in the 'politics of masculinity.' Apparently at opposite ends of the poles, the opposers as also the supporters strived to portray themselves as the true custodians of female sexuality. While the former did so by fighting tooth and nail the British legislations, the latter, tried to prove their manliness by acting as catalysts in these socio-legal reforms. Tilak, for instance, criticised the supporters of the Consent Bill, as 'unmanly' being unable to control their household affairs and appealing to the government "to keep a watch in their private rooms."[61] The administration, in between, reiterated the idea of 'native effeminacy' which was grounded to "reinforce colonial contempt for the class from which came most of the India's nationalist politicians and intellectuals."[62] Cutting across factions, civilising mission hinged on the axis of women, for both the Indians (proponents and opponents alike) and the imperialists, "the 'women question' has...acted as a...quality of

civilisation."[63] But who would chart out the roadmap of this reformation? Throughout nineteenth century, the struggle revolved within the matrix of women's 'emancipation.' While the British concept was predicated on saving the women from the clutches of social evils which the emasculated Indian men remained silent of, with the help of a section of the indigenous society, the opponents not only resented colonial interference but their prescription conceived of emancipatory role of a woman to strengthen the inner domain, which would effectively mean introduction of new norms but at the same time retaining the essence of the "inner spirituality of indigenous social life."[64]

Nineteenth century thus shows the tenuous relationship between gender and the state, calibrated along lines of confrontation and cooperation, often volatile, shaky and complicated. From the institution of Sati in the 1820s, to later conflicts over widow remarriage and the age of consent, the status of Indian women attracted the reforming zeal of missionaries, colonial legislators and metropolitan liberals. For Indian conservatives, reformers and later nationalists, women and the family were likewise potent symbols, conveying a variety of different class, community and national identities. As a force for 'modernising' tradition, the legislative debates within the elite Hindu arena made possible the regeneration of textual shastric position on women. For the colonial administration, this 'women's question' translated into a cautious cultural interface and intervention. The debates on women's 'duties', sexuality and marriage were in themselves, crucial in defining gender relation within the family and of family with the nation at large. By the end of the nineteenth century, these debates infused a new sensibility and direction to women's concerns and consequently redefined and realigned the roles of both men and women within the nation.

13.5 Gender and The State : Twentieth Century

13.5.1 Pre-independence

With the rising graph of nationalistic zeal, it is but a foregone conclusion that the relation between gender and the state would assume a more nuanced, multi-layered angle at the dawn of the new century. With gender remaining a politically salient aspect of colonialism, and nationalism sweeping across the country in the twentieth century and with the increasing visualisation of the representation of mother as a shackled, chained woman whose misery knew no bounds under colonial rule, Mother India, understandably, became the locus of contestation. Nationalism is gendered in that it draws on socially constructed ideas of masculinity and femininity to shape female and male participation in nation building, as well as the manner in which the nation is embodied in the imagination of self-professed nationalists. As

Tanika Sarkar aptly points out that interpretation and reinterpretation of gender roles are a crucial endeavour of nationalism as a discourse. Thus nationalism and gender identities became intertwined. The binary of masculinity/effeminacy that dominated much of the discourse in the nineteenth century echoed throughout the pre-independent phase of the twentieth century when nationalism provided the fertile ground for testing such hypothesis for both the factions—the administration and the people it administered.

The Swadeshi movement offered much-needed opportunity to the menfolk to shed the 'effeminate' cloak. The anti-partition agitation hinging on *atma-shakti* or self-reliance helped the males to erase this stigma of 'womanly man.' The years of revolutionary terrorism that complemented the Swadeshi movement, proved an effective counterpoint to the notion of a non-aggressive male. Thus the twentieth century started with a reconfiguration of masculine self—a more robust, self-assertive, fearless man, whose life was dedicated at the altar of the motherland. While the Chapekar brothers in Maharashtra and Khudiram Bose in Bengal smilingly embraced the gallows after daring acts of assassination of British officials, Prafulla Chaki without a second thought shot himself in the head to escape arrest, Kanailal Dutta and Satyendranath Bose showed exemplary courage in killing another fellow inmate inside the prison cell who had turned approver. Such acts of valour, not only inspired the masses but served as effective rebuttal of colonial derision, "Courage, independence, veracity, are qualities to which his (Indian) constitution are equally unfavourable."[65] Speeches of Swami Vivekananda like 'Heaven is nearer through football than Gita' further roused the spirit.

However, for the women, the reiteration of the earlier trend of being nurturers and bearers was seen. Only the ambit was widened when the Swadeshi movement offered them the chance to graduate from the role of mother of the house, concerned with the welfare of its members to that of the mother of the nation. Abanindranath Tagore's pictorial depiction of Bharat Mata, simultaneously imprinted the image of the mother as the caresser and carer as also the woebegone woman, chained and shackled who needed to be rescued and resuscitated. It served as an appeal to the nationalists, to step forward as the manly male and rehabilitate the mother-nation from colonial bondage. Thus gendered nationalism assumed a more concretised shape with woman as signifier of the nation and the male as warriors exhorted to defend the homeland. This is perhaps nowhere better embodied and manifested than the ideology of Gandhiji. The very epithet of "Father of the Nation" that he was bestowed with, speaks of this gendered connotation. The compartmentalisation of gendered roles of men being the provider and women being the nurturer became all the more overt in Gandhiji's speeches and writings. Although he did believe in the

innate strength of women and passionately spoke that if women were to be 'free' they had to be 'fearless' and that it was more a matter of psychological fear and helplessness, culturally imposed upon women by society, than physical weakness which had kept women crippled, he never encouraged the idea of women fighting shoulder to shoulder with men for the cause of the nation. Thus while men would actively participate in protest demonstrations and picketing, withstanding the brutalities unleashed by the state, women's contribution would be in the constructive programme and the non-violent *satyagrahas* initiated by him. Constructive work included relief work in emergencies like floods, the founding of national schools, the promotion of *khadi* and other cottage crafts, anti-liquor propaganda, and social work. As **Banerjee-Dube** points out, "Gandhi valorized women for their powers of endurance and self-suffering, and spiritual and moral courage."[66] Thus while Gandhi dreamt of a new, liberated, regenerated India, the role that he envisages and advocates for women is based on the ideology of division of labour between the sexes which has been historically an important tool for the oppression and exploitation of women. Gandhi saw home as the main sphere of activity of most women. He believed in the equal dignity of both men and women and in women's absolute freedom for self-realisation. But his notion of equality does not extend to equality in employment, or in economic and political power. He wanted, first and foremost, to change the moral condition of women's lives, and to do away with the vile abuses of power by men, but not so much to alter the basic relationship from which that power was derived. He attempted to extend the power of women as wives, mothers and sisters within the house-hold rather than to have women acquire political power in their own right. Gandhi did not envisage a radical change in their social role.[67] His equating of women with virtuous mythical characters like Sita and Savitri not only enthused them to associate themselves with the greater cause of the nation, but also served the purpose of keeping the movement within the boundaries of non-violence, though it did at times transgress the limits.

However, not all women subscribed to the Gandhian notion of non-violence being the regenerator of the nation and its women. From the 1930s, the surge of alternative methodology of militant nationalism as testified by the likes of Pritilata Waddedar, Kalpana Dutta, Bina Das reflect the resolute determination of young girls to overstep the socially prescribed gender norms and carve out an alternative identity of oneself. They can be deemed as the true legatee of the militant nationalists of the Swadeshi period at the beginning of the century, since for them martyrdom was the ultimate sacrifice one could make. This 'unsexing' as Durba Ghosh terms it, led to a somewhat reorientation of gender roles within the nationalistic discourse and the colonial government, undoubtedly, had a seminal role to play. As Bina Das, in her confession alluding to gender norms and symbols, pointed out, "I only sought the

way of death by offering myself at the feet of my country and invite the attention of all by my death to the situation created by the measures of the Government, which can unsex even a frail woman like myself, brought up in all the best tradition of Indian womanhood."[68]

Thus, attempts to break out of the patriarchy-dictated norms, whether by the colonial administration or the indigenous men, were on the offing, more so reflected in the activities of various women-centric organisations, founded and run by elite, upper-class, urban women who came forward to address the burning issues involving their ilk. So long been debated within the rubric of *sastras* by 'white men' and 'brown men,' these associations provided women with a voice of their own, albeit in a limited scale given the class-caste-regional composition of these organisations. Nevertheless, the voices, so long muffled and stifled, became audible in the larger arena. During the early spurt of nationalist agitation the **Women's Indian Association** (WIA) was launched (1917), followed by the **National Council of Indian Women** (1925) and the **All-India Women's Conference** (AIWC) in 1927. The Women's Indian Association defined itself as including and representing women of all races, cultures, and religions. It opened branches in different parts of southern India but remained connected to the Madras Theosophical Society. It counted amongst its objectives, "To secure the abolition of child-marriage and to raise the Age of Consent for married girls to sixteen; To secure for Women the vote for Municipal and Legislative Council on the same terms as it is or may be granted to men; To secure for Women the right to be elected as members on all Municipal and Legislative Councils; To help Women to realise that the future of India lies largely in their hands."[69] Its political debut was immediate. In 1917 a delegation met Secretary of State Sir Edward Montagu to argue for female franchise. The proposal was scuttled when in the 1919 Government of India Act, commonly known as the Montagu-Chelmsford Act, voting rights, based on property qualifications enfranchised three per cent of Indian men for the Provincial Assemblies and .06 per cent for the Central Assembly, excluding women by allowing the Provincial Assemblies to drop the exclusion clause, which most of them did. The colonial government may have wished to free Indian women from male dominance, but they did not intend to do so by allowing them equal voting rights. Further obstructions to the idea of female suffrage were encountered in the negotiations that led up to the 1935 Government of India Act. In 1929 the Viceroy announced a Round Table Conference to discuss Indian demands for total Independence. The All India Women's Conference proposed a three- woman delegation to put forward its policy of adult suffrage to the Conference, but the British government rejected the delegation. In 1932 the women's organisations again demanded representation at the Second Round Table Conference, and were eventually invited to send three representatives to the Parliamentary Joint Select

Committee in London. The delegation was scheduled to meet the Committee in July, but the meetings were repeatedly postponed, until they were informed that they could appear before a sub-committee. Furious and disgusted, the women declined. Clearly, as **Liddle and Joshi** points out, "there were well-defined limits around Britain's liberalisation of women's position: the British concept of equality for Indian women did not extend to permitting them to vote on equal terms with men, nor did it include allowing representatives of the national women's organisations an equal chance to articulate their views."[70]

The government was carefully sidestepping the women's question since the increasing participation of women in the national movement, led by Gandhi, signifying the rising tempo of the freedom struggle had somewhat unnerved the administration. Hence when the question of adult franchise again came up under consideration during the debate over the Government of India Act 1935, the conclusion was that the proposition of women's franchise was 'administratively impossible' and at the end, only the wives and widows of men eligible to vote were granted the right. Such piecemeal fulfillment of their demand was rejected summarily by the women's organisations, "We women wish to be citizens in our own right, independent of any of our male relations ... We do not think that woman's rights as a citizen should depend upon her marriage, which in the majority of cases in India at present is not entirely under her control."[71] Such bold statements, no doubt, testify to the desire and determination to break free from gender stereotypes of dependency syndrome and carve out a separate niche.

13.5.1.1 Re-engendering Gender

As a test case of how gender was constructed by the ruler and the ruled, one can cite the instances of three acts in the pre-independence phase—the Age of Consent Act, 1925, the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929, the Hindu Women's Right to Property Act, 1937.

Age of Consent Act, 1925

The 1891 act did not put the consent issue to rest, but consent remained a constant engagement and a veritable ground of contest. With the Indians now members of the Imperial Legislative Council, the initiative came from the indigenous law-makers, rather than the colonial rulers. In 1924, Hari Singh Gour introduced a bill raising the age of consent from 12 to 14 in case of married girls/women and 15 in case of unmarried girls/women. The Bill was referred to a Select Committee which recommended the reduction of the age from 14 to 13 in case of married women, while prescribing that age be fixed at 16 for the unmarried girls. Against

the backdrop of the recently-concluded Non-Cooperation movement, the government shied away from its commitment to intervene in marital relations, thus scaling down the age of non-consensual sex vis-à-vis marriage. While the Council members (all male) debated the bill within the legislative precincts, the women fought it all out, outside. Women's Indian Association plunged headlong with their support. With its headquarters in Madras, the association focused in mobilising public opinion in favour of age-raise by organising meetings to educate the public about the evils of early intercourse. Though the bill received widespread support outside the Legislative Council, it failed to pass the acid test, mainly due to the vehement opposition of the government which, in sharp contrast to its stance towards the 1891 Bill, was apprehensive of the fall-out. British legislators like Hailey openly encouraged orthodox Indian resistance. Thus, although an overwhelming majority of the members of the Legislative Council voted in favour of raising the age of consent outside marriage (65 to 22) and a wafer-thin majority of 45 to 43 in case of marital rape, the bill failed to see the light of the day.

Scuttling of the Gour bill due to government antagonism, further fanned the fire of hostility with the women activists associated with WIA, namely its founder member Dorothy Jinarajadasa, stepping up its pressure tactics and going all the way to Britain to campaign for raising the age of consent. Their hard work ultimately paid off, when in 1925, Home Member Alexander Muddiman proposed a Bill, akin to the Gour Bill fixing the age of consent at 14 in case of unmarried girls and 13 in case of married. Gauging the favourable mood, the government realised it would be futile to offer any opposition and the Bill was resoundingly passed in the Council by a majority of 80 votes to 11.

The Child Marriage Restraint Act (CMRA), 1929 and the Right to Divorce

As the issue of consent was inextricably tied with marriage and since it has been long proved that raising the age of consent failed to offer any modicum of relief to the target group, mid-twenties witnessed a flurry of hectic activities for raising the age of marriage. The outcome was the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929. This Act is a landmark so far as domestic equations in India are concerned, more so because for the first time, it attempted to zero in on the age of marriage, rather than consent. CMRA sought to rectify the lacunae embedded in the previous acts, where only the age of consent was deliberated upon. So long, the debate centred on fixing the age of consensual sex, i.e. a girl could still be married literally at the cradle as per religious dictum, but it could not be consummated till she reached the government-prescribed age. That this was not an effective tool was amply proved when the government noted with regret that the annual reports received from most of the provincial governments on the working of the law showed no cases reported.

Surprisingly, Bengal with the highest number of child marriages, did not report a single case. This is not to assume the strict compliance of the law, but the lack of registering cases due to social stigma. Hence the need for more stringent measures in the form of legalising the age of marriage was called for. For the Indians, this was tied up with the emasculation discourse, as Berhamji Malabri pointed out, "early marriages led to a too early consummation of the nuptial troth, the breaking down of constitutions... the birth of sickly children, the giving up of studies, and a disorganised household leading perhaps to sin."[72] A 'disorganised household with sickly children' was seen as micro-portrayal of a disorganised nation since those 'sickly children' would be no match for the robust Britishers. Thus a thorough overhauling of the marriage laws, was the need of the hour for the revival of the nation. As Mrinalini Sinha points out, "With support for the Sarda Act, Indian nationalism rhetorically appropriated modernity as the basis for its own legitimacy."[73] Till the CMRA, marriage was a gender-specific issue seen from the perspective of women. CMRA was a gender-neutral act, in the sense it sought to fix the age of marriage for both the prospective bride and groom.

With the acceleration of pressure both within and outside the Council, it was difficult for the government to stave off the issue. The demand emanated from the indigenous society and women were in the forefront clamouring for some definitive measure on part of the administration. AIWC in its first session passed a resolution pledging support to the Bill. Wary of the government's intention, Muthulakshmi Reddi, Deputy President of the Madras Legislative Council, wrote to the Viceroy seeking permission to introduce her Bill "Age of Marriage Act, 1928" for prevention of child marriage. However, with the fate of the Sarda Bill being still debated, the Viceroy refused such sanction. Not to be disheartened, Reddi threw her support behind the Sarda Bill by drafting a resolution supported by the majority of the members of the Madras Legislative Council, where she passionately argued that child marriage is a 'more serious and dangerous crime' than sati since 'sati involves a two minute suffering while by this custom of child marriage, the girl child from the moment of her birth to her death undergoes the continuous life long suffering as a child wife, as a child mother and very often as a child widow.' Although she had to face stiff opposition from the conservative section of the society for meddling with customs and rituals and appealing to the colonial government for the reform of the same, Reddi remained unflustered. An indefatigable Reddi mustered all her energy to campaign untiringly whipping up support for the Sarda Bill. In February 1928, AIWC send a deputation led by the Rani of Mandi and 19 other members representing almost every province presented before the Viceroy the urgent need to pass the bill. In fact all the three women-led organisations, AIWC, WIA and NCWI threw their weight behind the bill. As Mrinalini Sinha comments, they successfully mobilised

women as a political category, independent of the diktats of the religious and caste communities, with a voice of their own and helped reconfigure the social and political dynamics. Thus the CMRA helped imbue the gender question with newer dimensions and the consequent reshaping of the relation between the gender and the state. In trying to promote a higher age of marriage, the early feminists were trying to uphold the image of an ideal female who was not to be coerced into the trappings of early marriage and motherhood but was to be refined and educated that would help foster a mind of her own. Thus moving away from the position of the late nineteenth century reformists who recontoured the image of a woman as an ideal mother and wife who would be an able companion to her husband, the early twentieth century women activists, through legislative means, desired to carve an identity that would be free from the derivatives of the male members of the household.

Thus a woman's delayed sexual activity, whether outside or within marriage became intertwined with the civilisational maturity of the nation. The ideological underpinning was fuelled by the publication of *Mother India* by Katherine Mayo in 1927 that traced the backwardness and debilitations of the Indians, because of the 'heinous' practice of child-marriage. Countering Mayo became the order of the day and hence the all-out campaign to fructify the Sarda Bill. A Committee was constituted with the aim to study the issue threadbare as evident from the data it gathered from nearly six thousand surveys, the testimonies of nearly four hundred witnesses and a tour of twenty cities and ten villages.[74] With regret the Committee noted that the 1891 Act remained a dead letter since thirty–eight years working of the law has frustrated the high hopes entertained by its framers and has conclusively shown that it unfortunately cannot be deemed to be a mighty instrument of reformation. In fact great masses of the people have been not only unaffected by the law, but have actually remained ignorant of it. Though the Committee focused on finding the ideal age of marriage, it also recommended a parallel rise in the age of consent for sexual relationship outside marriage. Thus a clear distinction was made between sex within marriage and that outside and separate parametres were set for the two. An all-male member Committee, in a stance that projected the patriarchal face, objected to the use of the term rape within marriage. Rather than inclusion within the rape clause, the Committee voiced the opinion that an additional clause may be inserted in the Chapter "Of Offences Relating to Marriage" where the 'crime' be classified as 'Marital Misbehaviour', rape is too harsh a term to be used within holy matrimony, they felt. In case of non-marital sex, i.e., intercourse outside marriage, the state's position echoed that of the conservatives, who believed, given the social structure any sexual relationship prior to marriage would jeopardise a girl's future marriage prospect, "It is very difficult for her to secure for her a suitable husband." Thus the state donned the role of a concerned parent to protect its girl-children from

'unwanted' dangers, in the process denying the girls any independent agency. While it condoned sex within marriage as legal by recommending the age of marriage at 14, in case of unmarried girls it was felt that any physical relation below the age of 18 would be sacrilegious.

With the government throwing its weight behind the Bill, the passage was smooth with the Legislative Council passing the Bill with an overwhelming majority, in September 1929, penalising parties to a marriage in which a girl was below 14 and the boy below 18. To ensure strict enforcement of the Act, a 'Sarda Committee' was founded by the AIWC. Dr Reddi continued to write passionately about the Sarda Act in the official mouthpiece *Stri Dharm*. On paper, the Act ensured that the girls could at least have the opportunity to partake in the prospect of acquiring education rather than be betrothed at cradle and live a life of ignominy.

Corollary to the question of marriage came the issue of divorce. Traditional Hindu law, deeming marriage as a sacrament, regarded the same as an indissoluble union. Manu emphatically declares, "Neither by sale nor desertion can a wife be released from her husband."[75] The inherent implication is that divorce is not obtainable even by a husband because a wife can never be released from a marital bondage. While the practice of polygamy rendered dissolution of marriage unnecessary for the husband, the prohibition of the second marriage of a woman rendered divorce useless for a wife. Thus the word divorce according to the Hindu law is taboo. The grounds of disqualification for marriage in Hindu law are fewer than in any other system of law. Impotency, which is often considered as a disqualification of marriage, is not viewed in that light, under the Hindu law, as propounded by Manu and the Dayabhaga School of law.[76] This is because impotency does not render a marriage absolutely fruitless as the husband could request kinsmen to beget issues on their wives. Although among the lower classes impotence is a valid ground for disqualification of marriage amongst the upper classes, though, impotency is never regarded as a ground for declaring a marriage null and void. Thus, under all circumstances, a husband had the right to enjoy the company of his wife and if the same was denied to him he was armed with the power to file a suit for the same.

Close on the heels of marriage being intensely debated between the state and the Indian reformers and conservatives, divorce, too, became an equally controversial issue. Hari Singh Gour, tried introducing a Bill, in 1927 empowering Hindu women with the right to divorce on certain grounds, namely, impotency, imbecility and serious ulcerous leprosy. Though vehement opposition forced him to withdraw, not to be disheartened, Gour brought a second Bill titled "Hindu Marriage Dissolution Bill" in August 1928. The AIWC, not only pledged its support but went all out to garner opinions in favour of the Bill. In the Seventh session of the Committee held

at Lucknow, Reddi pointed out the biasness embedded in the Hindu personal law, "The Hindu husband enjoys all the rights without being questioned by any authority. The poor wife has to submit to all the neglect, to all insults, and abuses that are heaped upon her by her husband."[77] Although the Bill did not see the light of the day, campaign was stepped up by the AIWC in its subsequent annual sessions. However, the right to file divorce from errant husbands could only be legislated in the post-independence era.

Hindu Women's Right to Property Act, 1937

Denial of property rights reduced women to parasitic existence and to rectify this anomaly and offer them a dignified life, Harbilas Sarda, introduced the Hindu Law of Inheritance Bill in 1929. Although the Bill failed to see the light of the day, it definitely paved the way for the "Hindu Women's Right to Property Bill" in 1937, introduced by Dr Deshmukh. Referred to a select committee, the final shape of the Bill failed to live up to the expectations of the women's organisations, since it only favoured the widows with regard to property ownership, ignoring the claims of daughters and other female heirs. Bowing down to barrage of protests from women's organisations, the government appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Sir B.N. Rau to examine the Bill and to remove any injustices therein. The Act recognised the rights of widows over the properties inherited from male owners. However, at the same time, it failed to provide adequate succour to women since it did not confer on them the inheritance rights on agricultural lands. This was a major handicap of the Act and women's organisations were spurred to rectify this anomaly. The Women's Indian Association Madras and All India Women's Conference held meetings to request the government to suitably amend the Act to include agricultural lands within the definition of 'property.' Although their efforts fell flat, the limited recognition of women's property rights was definitely a milestone under the circumstances and set the target for future fulfillment of women's demand for equal property rights.

On the eve of independence, *The Hindu Married Women's Right to Separate Residence and Maintenance Act, 1946* gave the married women some amount of relief by enabling her to claim from her husband, under specific circumstances, separate residence and maintenance.

13.5.2 Post-independence Scenario

The dawn of independence understandably brought in new hopes and aspirations. As India began her tryst with destiny, finally shaking off colonial bondage, it was hoped that gender equality would be one of the primary focus of the new state

policy as men and women would toil shoulder to shoulder in the building of a resurgent India. The Constitution of India furthered this hope through enshrining Article 14 which granted the right to equality. It was ardently hoped that Indian women would have their equal share in every aspect of life. With Jawaharlal Nehru, who believed that a nation cannot go far ahead unless it gives full scope to it women, at the helm, it was believed that indeed the women would at last get their dues. Nehru, in fact, in his letter to the respective heads of the states, stressed on the importance of having adequate numbers of women in the Parliament.

13.5.2.1 The Hindu Code Bill

The first concrete step towards women's empowerment in post-colonial India was the enactment of the **Hindu Code Bill**—the collective name given to four acts passed between 1952 and 1956, namely, the Hindu Marriage Act, the Hindu Succession Act, the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act and the Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act—all geared towards granting women with specific rights within the family and consequently society at large. The Bill which was on the anvil for quite some time, having originated in 1941, was taken up for discussion, by the Constituent Assembly of India in 1948. The bill had to traverse a thorny path before it could finally see the light of the day in 1955-56. Since the larger aim of the Bill was the just distribution and allocation of resources within the family in which the women would also have their fair shares, the question of feasibility of such a Bill was intensely debated.

Understandably, the orthodox section of the society could not reconcile to this idea of recalibration of power equations within the family that the Bill would entail since it contained landmark provisions, namely, the legal right of a wife to claim separate maintenance from her husband on grounds of infidelity, cruelty, or abandonment, or if he has changed his religion, or if there is any other cause justifying her in living separately; the property which is given to a girl by her parents as a dowry on her marriage will be treated as trust property. She will be entitled to claim it when she reaches the age of eighteen, so that neither her husband nor his relatives will have any interest in such property or any opportunity to waste it. Also a daughter would be entitled to a share in the property of her father if he dies intestate. Her right to inherit property was declared to be absolute and not dependent on circumstances. A wife was granted the right to terminate her marriage on certain specified grounds. The conservative sections of the society, namely, the religious leaders like Sankaracharya of Kanchi, organisations like the Hindu Mahasabha, Sanatan Dharma Sabha, went up in arms both within and outside the Constituent Assembly/Parliament and the common refrains were, "defamation of Hindu religion,"

" religion in danger," "unfair and unwarranted imposition from above on Hindu Community," "conspiracy against religion."[78]

The opposite viewpoint posited by the liberals offered a counter-narrative epitomised by Prime Minister Nehru when he asserted in the Parliament, "It should be clearly understood that this is one important measure to which the Government attaches importance and on which it will stand or fall."[79] Rational voices were heard outside the precincts of the Parliament. The Dharma Nirnaya Mandala campaigned vigorously in favour of the Bill. Women parliamentarians like Hansa Mehta, Sucheta Kripalani, Renuka Ray emerged as forerunners in countering the anti-Bill propaganda. At the face of stiff opposition from a section of Parliamentarians, Sucheta Kripalani observed, "We are pledged to give women equal status in society. We are pledged to do away with all sex discrimination…"[80] As conscientious citizens of new India and as newly-elected representatives of the people, the women parliamentarians fought for their rights and the rights of thousands of women across the country. The well-meaning attitude of Nehru and like-minded parliamentarians saw the Bill through finally between 1954 and 1956. The Bill undoubtedly constituted a milestone in the history of women's rights not only in India, but throughout South Asia. A daughter would have share in her father's property, while a wife would have the right to be the single wife of her husband while simultaneously been granted the right to separation and divorce. As Chitra Sinha sums up its significance, "The laws of 1954-56 transformed Indian society not just through the efficacy of their immediate implementation process, but also through the influence on gender perceptions in society."[81]

13.5.3 Women's Empowerment and Five Year Plans : Paradigm Shift

Planning became the cornerstone of Indian economic and social restructuring and reorientation in the post-independent period. A Planning Commission with the Prime Minister as the ex-officio chairman was set up. Women's empowerment was initiated within the rubric of welfare in the **First Five-Year Plan (1951-56)** cohich clubbed women's issues within the umbrella term of 'welfare' to be considered along with other underprivileged groups such as SC, ST, OBCs and not a separate distinct other issues. **The Central Social Welfare Board**, set up under the auspices of the government under this Plan, became the implementer of various welfare-centric policies. Integration of women in rural development was discussed in 1954 and the Women Village Workers and Women Social Education Organisers (*Mukhiya Sevika*) were appointed to promote social education and community participation of rural women. The Central Social Welfare Board started Welfare Extension Projects in 1954-55 to cover activities like social education, maternity and child care etc.

This was followed by *Mahila Mandal* Scheme. However, inadequacy of staff and funds retarded the implementation of women welfare services. The **Second Five-Year Plan (1956-61)**, further explicated this welfare position by offering a definition of 'social welfare' whereby a holistic approach was considered as a panacea for regeneration, 'the well-being of the entire community' rather than a particular section of the society. Thus women's welfare remained subsumed within the broader context of welfare. However, amongst the concrete actions taken, was the setting up of *Mahila Mandals* to focus on women's issues at the grassroot level. The Plan also outlined the need for implementation of certain women-centric measures for the welfare of women—maternity benefits, crèches for working mothers at their workplaces, also relieving women from being involved in injury-prone works. Community Development Programme and Central Social Welfare Board pooled their resources for women and child welfare work and offered their services to the Central and State Government Agencies or voluntary or international agencies like UNICEF. However, the most significant recommendation was the suggestion for implementing the policy of 'equal pay for equal work.' Another aspect of welfare was highlighted in the **Third Five-Year Plan (1961-66, 1966-67, 1967-1969),** when it stressed the need of female education as part of the welfare programme. In the sphere of health, maternal and child care was focused on along with nutrition and family planning. Applied Nutrition Programme was introduced with the assistance of UNICEF. The thrust area of the **Fourth Five Year Plan (1969-1974),** was on education, where education of adult women was emphasised, since the basic philosophy was that en educated mother would be able to ensure the education of her progenies. High priority was also accorded to nutrition and supplementary feeding for expectant and lactating mothers.

The **Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-1979)** witnessed a major paradigm shift when the approach changed from 'welfare' to 'development' but at the same time retaining the essence of welfare within the developmental framework. A greater exposure for women was envisaged under various schemes, which aimed to make women fit for the employment market, by imparting skills and knowledge that would help ensure their economic freedom. What prompted this change in vision was the landmark *Towards Equality* report published in 1974 that changed the very perspective with which the women's question had been analysed so far. The report was the outcome of the study carried out by the **National Committee on the Status of Women**, which was set up to examine the status of women in the country and to investigate the extent to which the constitutional and legal provisions had impacted on women's status including their employment and education. The Committee was the first major attempt to review and evaluate data on various aspects of women's status. It was also empowered to comment on the directions of change in women's roles, rights

and opportunities due to development. The report revealed the deplorable condition of women in the country evident from demographic data, an analysis of the socio-cultural conditions prevalent, the legal provisions and safeguards, economic role played by women in all sectors, women's access to education, political participation, the policies and programmes for welfare and development, the impact of mass media, etc. The report also made several recommendations which included stressing the important role of the State and the community in the achievement of 'gender equality'. It highlighted the need for a concerted effort to eradicate oppressive practices such as dowry, polygamy, bigamy, child marriage, ostentatious expenditure on weddings, and it emphasised the need for a campaign on legal awareness, the provisions of crèches, better working conditions for women including equal remuneration for equal work, the compulsory registration of marriages, law reform on aspects concerning divorce, maintenance, inheritance, adoption, guardianship maternity benefits, the universalisation of education, etc. The findings helped recalibrate the government policies with regard to women and the resultant change in approach. A National Plan of Action for Women was adopted in 1976 which became the guiding light for policy-framing on women till 1988. Simultaneously, special attention was riveted on rural women, who were the most marginalised in terms of access to healthcare, education and employment. The National Commission of Agriculture for the first time in 1976, brought to the fore the neglect women suffered in the rural areas, especially in the agricultural sector. Under the Integrated Rural Development Programme (initiated in 1978-79), it was envisaged that at least 30 percent of the beneficiaries should be women. To realise this, stress was laid on giving adequate employment to women under National Rural Employment Programme and Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Scheme. It was also decided that one third of the beneficiaries under the scheme, Training for Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM) should be women.

The **Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-1985)** saw an emphasis on the three inter-dependent sectors of health, education and employment of women. The inclusion of a separate chapter titled "Women and Development" for the first time, attests to the government's well-meaning intentions to uplift the condition of women. The Government took steps to create a general awareness and understanding of the problems of women, strengthen voluntary action at the grass root level like *Mahila Mandals*, expand functional literacy programme, expand minimum health facilities, improve nutrition status, provide fair share of employment opportunities, identify the specific needs and problems of self employed women and to diversify education and training opportunities for women. As part of the Sixth Plan rural development strategy was to cover a large number of rural women. Accordingly, a pilot scheme

called Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) was initiated by the Department of Rural Development, Government of India in 1982.

The **Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-1990)** aimed to integrate women in national development as also generate awareness about their innate strength and potential and their rights. it was decided to strengthen all the existing programmes meant for women's development. A new scheme namely the creation of Women's Development Corporation was proposed for promoting employment generating activities. The setting up of a Women's Development Planning and Monitoring Cell intended for collection of Data and Monitoring of Plan Programmes was also included. The Department of Women and Child Development was set up in 1985 as a part of the Ministry of Human Resource Development to give the much needed impetus to the holistic development of women and children. A significant step was to identify (or promote) 27 Beneficiary Oriented Schemes (BOS) (1986) having direct benefits for women in different Ministries/Departments. National Perspective Plan for Women (NPPW) (1988-2000) was issued by the government in 1988. The purpose of this document was to asses the extent to which women had been integrated into India's development and make recommendations towards the equity and social justice for all women. The NPPW placed great emphasis on reservations for women in various fields. Many art and craft centres were opened for women in order to enhance their employment opportunities. Support to Training-cum-Employment for Women (STEP) was launched in 1987 to strengthen the skills with a view to promote employment opportunities.

With the liberalisation of the economy from 1991, the **Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-1997),** witnessed another paradigm shift, where empowerment of women was spelt out. This was cogently expressed, "benefits of development from different sectors do not bypass women" and women must be enabled to function as equal partners and participants in the development process. To fulfill this goal, several measures were proposed/undertaken, namely setting up of the National Commission for Women in 1992 to safeguard the rights and interests of women, setting up of *Rashtriya Mahila Kosh* in 1993 to provide micro-credit to poor and asset-less women, adoption of National Nutrition Policy in 1993 to provide requisite nutrition to adolescent girls, expecting and lactating mothers, launching of *Mahila Samriddhi Yojana* to encourage thrift activities among women, establishing a National Creche Fund to earmark funds for setting up of crèches for working mothers, launching of *Indira Mahila Yojana* for an integrated approach to women empowerment through the SHGs. The Plan also envisaged under the Kasturba Gandhi Education Scheme setting up of girls' schools in districts having low literacy rates. The ultimate objective of all these efforts is to make women economically independent and self-reliant.

Some of the important initiative thus undertaken in this direction include launching of programmes viz., 'Work and Wage', 'Learn while you Earn', 'Credit for Entrepreneurial/Self Employment Ventures', Employment Guarant "(Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas), STEP (Support for Training-cum-Employment), TEPC (Training cum Employment cum Production Centres) popularly known as NORAD are some of the important women-specific employment cum training programmes. There exist a few more programmes like, IRDP (Integrated Rural Development Programme), TRYSEM (Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment Programmes), JRY (Jawahar Rozgar Yojana), NRY (Nehru Rozgar Yojana), PMRY (Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana) which extended 30 to 40% reservation benefits for women. However, the most landmark provision of this Plan was to recognise the need for exclusive reservation of women in representative bodies. As a corollary to this, 1/3 seats were reserved for women in the panchayats and municipal bodies.

The **Ninth Five-Year Plan(1997-2002),** recognised women as agents of change, where they would be integrated in planning and implementation of strategies. The plan attempted 'convergence of existing services' available in both women-specific and women-related sectors with a special strategy of 'women component Plan' (WCP) so that not less than 30% funds/benefits accrue to women. The government adopted *Bhagya Shree Bal Kalyan* Policy (Oct. 19, 1998) to uplift the conditions of girls and *Rajrajeswari Mahila Kalyan Yojana* (Oct. 19, 1998) to provide insurance protection to women. The plan also reiterated the need for 1/3 reservation for women in Parliament and Legislative Assemblies. Within the broader context of empowerment, access to healthcare and education would be ensured through Special Nutrition Programme and universalisation of mid-day meal schemes to prevent drop-outs. The Plan also laid down other concrete measures namely, Women's Component Plan to ensure that developmental benefits do not bypass women and that at least 30% funds are designated from all women-related sectors. Other moral boosting steps were also envisaged, namely, the institution of *Stree Shakti Puraskars* for honouring five distinguished women who have made seminal contributions towards women empowerment; *Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana* (SJGSY) (1999) for eliminating rural poverty and unemployment and promoting self-employment; setting up of a Task Force on Women to review the existing women-specific and women-related legislations and suggest enactment of new legislations or amendments wherever necessary.

The Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007), reiterated the previous goals. Women should themselves act as agents of change and development. Social and economic empowerment, Gender Justice remained the key-words in this phase. The already-

launched schemes were further evaluated and necessary changes brought about to bring in the desired results. Inclusion of women at every step of formulation and implementation was stressed at so that women do not remain mute recipients of government-planned schemes but they themselves become a part of the process right from its inception, so that their voices are given adequate space.

The Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012) recognised women as agents of social and economic growth. The approach paper to the plan stated, "An important divide which compels immediate attention relates to gender. Special, focused efforts made to purge society of this malaise by creating an enabling environment for women to become economically, politically and socially empowered." The thrust was to create a violence-free environment for women and provide women with basic entitlements to ensure full realisation of her potential. Along with the existing programmes, new schemes were launched, namely, setting up a Gender Budgeting Cell, preparation of training manuals for Gender Budgeting & Capacity Building Workshops. It also aimed to examine the impact of globalisation on women, especially poor women including gender differentials in wage rates, exploitation of women in the unorganised sector, lack of skill training, technology, and marketing support. The Plan also envisaged to provide poor women from both urban and rural backgrounds with homesteads as also making NREGA more gender-responsive and sensitive.

The Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-2017) with its stress on inclusive growth, undoubtedly visualised women as equal partners. Focus was riveted on single women and holistic growth encompassing health, education, urbanisation and governance in which women would be equal stake-holders and beneficiaries were mooted. It also aimed to reduce gender and social gap in school enrolment, ensuring that girls get equal opportunities to study along with boys.

With the scrapping of the Planning Commission, no formal plans have been announced following the twelfth five year plan.

13.5.4 State and Women-centric Laws

In its bid to uplift the status of women, the post-colonial state enacted a plethora of laws to ensure and enable women to lead a life of dignity. This section deals with some of the landmark acts passed in the post-Hindu Code Bill decades that added further edge to the existing laws. It was felt that that special laws are needed to counter ever-changing face of violence against women. Laws must keep pace with the changing face of violence otherwise they would be rendered redundant and useless. Sex determination tests conducted by unscrupulous diagnostic centres, under

the garb of pre-natal medical examinations for checking the health of the foetus, led to large-scale termination of pregnancy when the test results showed that the mother was carrying a female child in her womb. To curb the heinous practice of female foeticide, **The Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition Of Sex-Section) Act, 1994** provided for prohibition of sex selection, before or after conception, and for regulation of pre-natal diagnostic techniques for the purposes of detecting genetic abnormalities or metabolic disorders or chromosomal abnormalities or certain congenital malformations or sex-linked disorders and for the prevention of their misuse for sex determination leading to female foeticide.

The Dowry Prohibition Act was passed in 1961, which stated in no uncertain terms "If any person, after the commencement of this Act, gives or takes or abets the giving or taking of dowry, he shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than five years, and with the fine which shall not be less than fifteen thousand rupees or the amount of the value of such dowry, whichever is more."[82] In order to revamp the criminal code and to prevent the IPC from being converted into an archaic and moribund set of laws, regular amendments became a systematic feature. **Act 43 of 1986**, added **Section 304B to IPC** which states that where the death of a woman is caused by any burns or bodily injury or occurs otherwise than under normal circumstances within seven years of her marriage and it is shown that soon before her death she was subjected to cruelty or har-assment by her husband or any relative of her husband for, or in connection with, any demand for dowry, such death shall be called 'dowry death,' and such husband or relative shall be deemed to have caused her death. The punishment ranges from seven years' imprisonment to life imprisonment.

However, the most talked about addition to the IPC vis-à-vis women was the insertion of **Section 498A** in 1983 which brought within the legal ambit cruelty and harassment inflicted by the in-laws' families, "Whoever, being the husband or the relative of the husband of a woman, subjects such woman to cruelty shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years and shall also be liable to fine. Harassment of the woman where such harassment is with a view to coercing her or any person related to her to meet any unlawful demand for any property or valuable security or is on account of failure by her or any person related to her meet such demand."[83]

Unfortunately, even after so many safeguards, the rising curve of crime against women, drive home the point that these acts and amendments have failed to act as effective deterrents in curbing the menace of violence against women, who still languish from onslaughts by men, even within the domestic confines. The need for

a special law offering women protection within the space called 'home' was being increasingly felt and demanded by the women's rights organisations and NGOs across the country. A study conducted by the Centre for Social Research in 2003, showed that nearly five crore married women in India were victims of DV, of which only a paltry and shocking 0.1% were reported.[84] Loopholes in the prevalent legal system ensured that the perpetrators, with guile and shrewdness, could armtwist their way to acquittal. For example, in case of dowry deaths, dying declarations of a victim against the husband or the in-laws were seldom treated as evidences by the court. Thus, abetment to murder or suicide could not be successfully invoked in many of the cases. Section 304B of the IPC could not be applied if the wife died after the stipulated time-frame of seven years. Moreover, deaths when not linked to dowry, even within seven years of marriage would remain outside the pale of this provision. Even the sheen of 498A, which was considered a boon when it was introduced in 1983, gradually wore off since the clause gave weightage more to physical assaults, suicides or visible marks of injury. Threats of violence, verbal abuse, sexual violence in terms of forced intercourse or economic violence, namely, cutting off financial provisions—the new forms of violence devised to corner women—slipped though the gaping holes of this provision. Long-drawn legal process, too, offset the viability of 498A. The normal trial period was between five to ten years.[85] Conviction rates, as evident from the available data, were low. In 2000, whereas the conviction rate in 498A was a meagre 21.7%, in 2011 it further fell to 20.2%.[86] On top of that the existing laws failed to address the issue of violence faced by unmarried women, widows or natal family violence which had become a palpable social reality. Any woman in a violent situation would require some immediate relief, namely, protection, monetary relief, shelter, counseling that would prepare her for the battle ahead. Criminal laws cannot provide a woman with all these emotional and material needs, their purpose being to act as preventives and deterrents. The need for a civil law was being increasingly felt by the society and it became imperative that a special civil law addressing the issue of domestic violence be introduced. After much debate, deliberations and discussions as to whether law has any right to penetrate into the innermost sanctum of a home and whether every intimate relationship be monitored by law, the **Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act** (PWDVA) was passed in 2005, to become effective from October 2006.

As a single window tool, the Act is designed to address the physical, economic, mental and sexual aspects of violence. The Act, taking a humane view of the situation, provided a woman battered and scarred both mentally and physically, with the services of specially appointed Protection Officers well versed with the law, who would guide the women at every step in filing the complaint till the final verdict is

pronounced. It has been seen that in most cases, the women with no competent guidance got lost in the legal rigmarole with unscrupulous lawyers, ready to milch these hapless women, filed cases under various clauses of the IPC. The post of the Protection Officer was specially created to prevent the women, already victimised, from falling into the nefarious trap of money-laundering lawyers.

PWDVA, applicable to people in a 'domestic relationship' and residing in a 'shared household,' takes a broad view of the term violence which is defined as harms or injures or endangers the health, safety, life, limb or well-being, whether mental or physical, of the aggrieved person or tends to do so and includes causing physical abuse, sexual abuse, verbal and emotional abuse and economic abuse; or (b) harasses, harms, injures or endangers the aggrieved person with a view to coerce her or any other person related to her to meet any unlawful demand for any dowry or other property or valuable security; or (c) has the effect of threatening the aggrieved person or any person related to her by any conduct mentioned in clause (a) or clause (b); or (d) otherwise injures or causes harm, whether physical or mental, to the aggrieved person.[87] The term 'domestic relationship,' too, is defined in the widest possible sense, "relationship between two persons who live or have, at any point of time, lived together in a shared household, when they are related by consanguinity, marriage, or through a relationship in the nature of marriage, adoption or are family members living together as a joint family."[88] Thus, not only marital relationships, but any relationship including live-in relationship, within the four walls of the house, fell within the purview of this act. However, the Supreme Court of India, while disposing off the case between D Veluswamy v/s D Patchaiammal, laid out a clear-cut definition of live-in relationship that would come under the ambit of PWDVA, 2005—a 'relationship in the nature of marriage' is akin to a common law marriage. Common law marriages require that the couple, although not formally married, must be of legal age to marry; they must be otherwise qualified to enter into a legal marriage, including being unmarried; they must have voluntarily cohabited and held themselves out to the world as being akin to spouses for a significant period of time.[89]

In a bid to rectify the lacuna in the existing legal system, namely the long-drawn court battles which a woman has to wage in order to get relief from her plight, draining her emotionally, financially and physically, the PWDVA provide for a speedy disposition of the cases within a stipulated deadline of sixty days, with the first hearing having to take place within three days of receiving the complaint. The act also provided for a wide array of interim reliefs in the form of protection orders thereby restraining the respondent/s from committing further acts of violence, restraint order on evicting the aggrieved woman from the household, monetary compensation

for emotional and mental torture and other expenses like medical treatment, arrange for medical treatment of the injured woman, provide temporary custody of child/children. The court, if necessary, would arrange for psychological counselling of the woman, arrange for her stay at shelter homes and medical treatment. All these would be provided free of cost.

Another vital issue that had time and again been taken up by various rights' groups was amendment of the **Rape** clause of the Indian Penal Code. Broadening of the scope of the clause as also stringent punishment measures were being demanded especially criminalisation of marital rape as also death sentence for the convicted were felt as adequate deterrents to the crime. Following the public outcry over the Nirbhaya gang rape in December 2012, the government was forced to constitute a panel for reviewing the rape provisions of the IPC. Submitting a 600 page report to the government, the Committee suggested large-scale changes that included making the definition of rape more inclusive where it should not be confined to peno-vaginal penetration but should include all forms of penetrative sexual assaults like anal, oral committed by men over women or transgender persons. It also recommended that the legal process be made more accessible and the trial process should be speeded up to provide justice to the victims of sexual violence. Side by side, it also recommended that immunity enjoyed by a husband with regard to sexual relations in a marriage should be repealed and that marital rape should be brought within the ambit of law. While the government took cognizance of many of these suggestions which was reflected in the Criminal Law Amendment Act 2013 enacted in April of that year, it refused to endorse the Committee's recommendations with regard to marital rape. The then Union Home Secretary R.K. Singh clarified that that government decided against recognising marital rape as this would go against the traditional family system in India where a marriage is seen as a steadfast institution. In 2018, the Women and Child Development Ministry argued that the crime and the very idea of it "cannot be suitably applied in the Indian context."[90] Thus as the government refuses to provide suitable legal redressal to the wives, women continue to suffer within the domestic confines.

13.5.5 The 'Other' Genders

Although the interpretation of the term 'gender' in the context of South Asia, is increasingly tilted in favour of women, gender, in essence, is an umbrella term which encompasses men and also the LGBTQ community. The Indian state's engagement with men as an integral component of gender is somewhat ambivalent, since as per traditional social norms men are always seen from a vantage point whereas state and its legal apparatus view them mostly as perpetrators. The state's

most 'infamous' involvement with men was a 21 month programme launched in 1976 that aimed at mass sterilisation of men for population control. In 1952, Margaret Sanger, an American birth-control activist, emphasised "population control" for the masses for countries like India, rather than focusing on birth-control measures for women. She gave an address in Bombay urging for government-led family planning policies, linking large family sizes with national instability. "The cry for babies is the cry for armament, the cry for war," Sanger said. The solution, in her view, would need to come from the top down, "It should be [health officials'] duty to the State, to the public and to our future civilisation to see that those who do not have the individual initiative and intelligence to plan and control the size of their families should be assisted, guided, and directed in every way to eliminate the undesirable offspring, who usually contribute nothing to our civilisation, but use up the energy and resources of the world."[91] From the 1950s, government was attempting to control its citizens' fertility on a large scale, and early efforts focused on women, in sync with the international birth control movement. By the 1960s, however, the government had already started to redirect its family planning efforts toward men. This discourse was to a large extent influenced by American communications scientists who felt that men should be made targets of contraceptive interventions. State governments across India began holding "mass vasectomy camps." These were intended to not only sterilise men but also to promote fertility control through "festival-like productions," which included poster exhibitions and dance routines. The Emergency would accelerate this shift to the breaking point. Karan Singh, India's minister of health and family planning, wrote in a 1976 statement, "In addition to individual compensation, Government is of the view that group incentives should now be introduced in a bold and imaginative manner so as to make family planning a mass movement with greater community involvement."[92] However, men were targeted more than women, since it was felt that the medical system was equipped to do many more vasectomies than tubectomies (though neither procedure was performed in the safest of conditions). Men were also easier targets for threats like job loss or fines, since they were more likely to be employed outside the home, to take public transportation, and to go out and pick up government food rations. An astonishing 6.2 million Indian men were sterilised in just a year.[93]

The campaign to sterilise men involved many levels of harassment. As Mohan Rao notes, "population control during the Emergency was not just about compulsion. It was an experiment in 'integration,' in which every branch of government would take part."[94] A new national policy, for example, froze the number of representatives each state was allotted in the Lok Sabha, so that states would not have political incentive to grow their populations. Records show that wealthier Indians were able

to buy their way out of this system. After spending time with upper class Indians, a Washington Post reporter found that, while some approved of the aggressive family planning policy, none of them had had to experience it themselves. The results were bloody. In addition to the approximately 2,000 men who died in botched procedures, some particularly aggressive government officials were killed by protesting villagers— and even more civilians died during police retaliations.[95] After the Emergency, the Indian government began to turn its family planning policy 180 degrees—back towards women.

With regard to the **LGBTQ community (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer)**, homophobia runs deep into the society. Social stigma, segregation and violent behaviour towards those, whom the society labels as 'deviants,' portray the level of prejudice. Social acceptance still eludes them. In a survey conducted by the Azim Premji University on societal acceptance of same-sex relationship, the percentage was around 10 in terms of acceptance, whereas an overwhelmingly 75% of the respondents completely disagreed that relationship between two men or two women should be accepted.[96] The survey noted with regret that more than 50% of the respondents approached, refused to answer the question on societal acceptance of same-sex relationship, "Considering that over 50 percent of the responses across the states either reject the acceptance of same-sex couples or do not offer any opinion, the reluctance of society in general to even consider, much less begin a conversation on, the acceptance of LGBTQ members evident."[97]Although, in the general perception, urban centres are generally considered more tolerant and accepting of diverse identities compared to rural areas, the survey results show striking similarities in urban and rural responses and in fact, a slightly more conservative urban populace. Five percent more urban respondents reject same-sex couples than their rural counterparts.[98]

This prejudice traces its legacy to the colonial period when in the legal sphere homosexuality was considered a criminal act by Article 377 of the Indian Penal Code which deemed sexual activities against the order of nature as a crime, "Whoever voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal, shall be punished with imprisonment for life, or with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine." The government's stand on the issue, see-sawed, over the decades. In 2008, Additional Solicitor-General, speaking on behalf of the government, condemned homosexuality as a social vice and observed that "if it is allowed then [the] evil of AIDS and HIV would further spread and harm the people. It would lead to a big health hazard and degrade moral values of society."[99] The government stand was that homosexuality is a reflection of perverse mind and is not a natural trait. Its stand was reiterated in February 2012, when the government once again unequivocally

claimed that homosexuality is seen as immoral and hence condemnable. However, just a week after, it was forced to reverse its stance, following reprimanding by the Supreme Court.

In December 2015, Congress MP, Shashi Tharoor introduced a bill for the repeal of Section 377, but it was voted out in the Lok Sabha, 71-24. Following increasing pressure from various human rights' lobbies, the Supreme Court decided to review the issue of criminalisation of homosexual activities in February 2016. In a landmark judgement, the Supreme Court ruled that right to individual privacy is an "intrinsic" and fundamental right under the country's constitution. The Court's 547-page judgment also emphasised the protections provided by the Constitution, including free speech, rule of law, and "guarantees against authoritarian behaviour."[100] In January 2018, the Supreme Court agreed to refer the question of Section 377's validity to a large bench, and heard several petitions on 1 May 2018. In response to the court's request for its position on the petitions, the Government announced that it would not oppose the petitions, and would leave the case "to the wisdom of the court." A hearing began on 10 July 2018. On 6 September, the Court issued its verdict where it unanimously ruled that Section 377 is unconstitutional and goes against the very tenet of the Constitution, since it infringed on the fundamental rights of autonomy, intimacy, and identity, thus decriminalising homosexuality in India. However, in spite of pressures from several lobbies, the government is yet to come up with legalisation of same-sex marriages, adoption and inheritance rights of same-sex couples. Homosexuality is still looked down upon and ostracised in society.

The Government, however, has adopted some concrete steps towards the transgender community. They have been recognised as the Third Gender and granted voting rights in 1994. In April 2014, the Supreme Court ruled that transgender people were a socially and economically deprived category and hence should be entitled to reservations and asked the central and the state governments to work towards ensuring and creating a safe environment for them. In light of the directive, the government documents, namely, passport, voter card, driving licence, bank forms now contain the option of designating oneself as OTHER, THIRD GENDER, TRANSGENDER. In 2015, the Rajya Sabha passed the *Rights of Transgender Persons Bill, 2014* guaranteeing certain rights to the transgender people as also 2% reservation in jobs. It also contained provisions to prohibit discrimination in employment as well as prevent abuse, violence and exploitation of transgender people. The bill also provided for the establishment of welfare boards at the centre and state level as well as for transgender rights courts. The *Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2019*, was introduced in Parliament after the 2019 general election. The Bill entitled a person to identify oneself as male, female or transgender. The bill prohibits

discrimination against transgender people in nine fields, such as education, employment and healthcare.The bill was passed by the Lok Sabha on 5 August 2019 by a voice vote and by the Rajya Sabha on 25 November 2019. It was signed into law by President on 5 December, becoming the *Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019.* Pro-active measures were taken up by several state governments. The states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala were the first to draft a welfare policy towards the transgender community, the most important of which was to free sex assignment surgery in government-run hospitals. The West Bengal government had set up a transgender welfare board in 2015 to facilitate interface between the transgender people and the society. Workshops, seminars in schools and colleges to raise awareness and mainstreaming of the issue are being regularly organised to eliminate the stigma and garner acceptability. Manabi Bandyopadhyay became the first transgender person to take the office of a college principal in India when she was appointed to the post by the Government of West Bengal in 2015.

13.7 Conclusion

The ceatreat and the various state goverments have launched several scheames and progrommes with the safe objective of creating a safe space for people of all spectrum, speacially the women and girls-the most vulgerable of the lot. One of the flagship programmes of the present goverment in the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP) scheme to add the declining child Sex Ratio and related issuses of copowerheat of women on a life-cycle continuum. Special invities are around the week of International Girl Child Day (11 October) to geaesate awareness and reinforce the goal of gender equality like West Bengal has introduced schemes like Kanyashree Prakalpa of prevent early drop out of girls Based as conditional cash transfer, it aims to impove the and well-being of girls, specialy those from the socio-economically disadvantage families. Under the West Bengal Lakshmi-s Bhander Scheme" inaugurated in 2022, income support of Rs 500 per month for households headed by women of the general category and Rs 1000 per month for those beloving to the schedule Castes and Tribes would be provided associal security measures. Although the dope system might not angur well but it is helped that in the long-run, Women would be able to face them selves from these head holding and would became indepandeat enough to stand on rheir own feet and coaquer the world.

13.7 Summary

State and Gender, thus, share a somewhat shaky relationship.The trajectory delineated above, display the degree of tenuousness that marks this interaction. While on paper, the state may have done much, but at the ground level, still much needs

to be done to achieve gender parity—the ultimate goal of any societal set-up. In that sense, the state needs to gear itself up to play a more goal-oriented role to fructify its objectives. Crimes against women show no signs of abating as evident from various sets of collated data, whereas the LGBTQs still languish at the social periphery. The state cannot rest on its laurels as long as this othering and marginalising continue to inform and influence gender/social relationships. Change in mindset is a long-drawn process and hence the state has miles to go before it can claim to achieve its aim of a gender-just society.

13.8 Questions

1. Answer in Detail:

1. Narrate the ideological position of the colonial administration with regard to gender. Was there any change in approach between the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries?

2. What was the indigenous response to colonial government's intervention in the domestic affairs? Was the response uniform or do we see differing responses over a period of time. Elucidate with suitable examples.

3. Why the necessity was felt to fix the age of marriage? With reference to the Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929, analyse the varying positions with regard to the debate that preceded the passage of the Act.

4. With reference to the debate preceding the passage of the Hindu Code Bill, explain how this exposed the fractures within the society. What role did the women parliamentarians and women's organisations play in furthering the cause of the Bill?

5. How did the Five Year Plans, through launching various schemes, try to bring about qualitative changes in the lives of women?

6. What was the philosophy behind passing the PWDVA? How has it tried to address the issue of violence within home?

2. Answer Briefly:

1. How would you define gender?

2. Write a short note on the various constituent features of the state.

3. Write a short note on any of the acts passed in the colonial period.

4. When was the Hindu Code Bill passed? What are the various acts that constitute the Bill?

5. How many Five Year Plans have been formulated till date? State each of

these plans with their respective time-frames. In which Plan for the first time a paradigm shift can be noticed when the approach changed from 'welfare' to 'development?'

6. Name some of the landmark women-centric laws passed by the government over the last two decades.

7. When was the mass sterilisation programme of men taken up? Approximately how many were sterilised?

8. What is the government's stand with regard to the transgender community?

3. Answer Very Briefly:

1. "Consent remained a constant engagement and a veritable ground of contest." Explain with reference to the colonial period.

2. Based on your understanding of the module, attempt an analysis of the elements of continuity and change embedded within the approach of the colonial and the post-colonial government with regard to the issue of gender.

3. With the help of suitable examples, explain the interaction between gender and state in pre-independent twentieth century India.

4. Do you think the post-colonial Indian state is sensitive enough to gender of all categories or do you see some biasness? If so, do you think that biasness is justified?

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over a definite fraction of the joint family property and so can transfer his share. The widow has a right to succeed to husband's share and enforce partition if there are no male descendants. On the death of the husband the widow becomes a co-parcener with other brothers of the husband. She can enforce partition of her share.

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Unit 14 ❑ Women in the Labour Market

Structure

14.1 Learning Objectives

1. To understand the social connotations of women's work

2. To understand the different problematics of capturing and assessing women's work

3. To understand the influence of globalization on women's paid work.

14.2 Introduction

The concepts of 'work' and 'labour' are the cornerstones of the development discourse, often emphasized for their economic importance despite having significant social and cultural connotations. In economic parlance, 'work' refers to "any activity performed by persons of any sex and age to produce goods or to provide services for use by others or for own use" (International Labour Organisation 2013). In official statistics, the term used is 'economic activity' (in keeping with the United Nations System of National Accounts) rather than 'work'. Different agencies define 'work' differently. The Labour force comprises "all persons of working age who furnish the supply of labour for the production of goods and services during a specified time-reference period" (ibid) as well as those who are available for work but not currently employed. Both these key and other associated concepts are extensively used by planners, policymakers, administrators, researchers, workers' organisations, employers' associations and so forth for assessing the levels of economic growth and prosperity of any country.

However, these concepts also underscore succinct sociological connotations. In fact, sociology of work is a well-defined area of study which tries to understand "how work connects individuals to the social structure" (Feldberg and Glenn 1979: 527). Women's work is an important indicator of the ideological foundations of a society, with prominent ramifications which vary following the markers of social identity such as caste, class, ethnicity and so forth. Indeed, women's participation in the labour market subsumes a number of complex conceptual, methodological and practical issues. These issues range from the very process of conceptualising what counts as 'work' for women to what could be the ideal modalities for capturing and measuring women's work to encouraging women's labour force participation, not only in the interest of the family and community but also for the woman herself. The latter point merits some discussion here. The national and international policy discourses construe women's participation in the labour force as an instrument for accelerating demographic dividends such as lowering of total fertility rates, smaller family sizes, better chances of children's survival; social benefits such as higher literacy rates, better health and nutrition outcomes for the children; economic advantages such as asset creation for the family, augmenting family income etc. Rarely is paid work seen as having intrinsic worth for the women themselves, such as acquiring greater decision-making power, strengthening sexual and reproductive rights, expansion of freedom to choose etc.

Women's participation in the labour market, thus, is associated with profound cultural subtexts, which in turn, tend to problematise the linear relationship between

increase in labour force participation rate and economic development. On the one hand, women's participation in paid work is considered as an important signifier of their economic empowerment; while on the other hand, it is subject to stringent cultural controls, whereby women's participation in paid work tends to decrease with increasing family incomes. That is, as empirical evidence has shown, while increasing number of women are drawn into the labour market to supplement family incomes in the face of economic downturns, yet it is these rising family incomes that compel women to withdraw from the labour market. This has been abundantly observed in India in the post reforms era. It is therefore evident that the issues around women's participation in the labour market are not merely economic or statistical but also social and cultural. That said, it would be worthwhile to understand the theoretical insights in this context.

14.3 Women and Work : Theoretical Insights

14.3.1 Women as Wives, Women as Mothers

The division of labour between the sexes is remarkably similar across the world. The deep seated belief - "man-as-breadwinner-and-woman-as-homemaker" appear to be universally true. Not solely that. The control of the sexual division of labour extends beyond the confines of the households and influences the fundamental principles based on which the labour market opportunities and outcomes are organised. This point would be elaborated later in this chapter. Suffice it to mention here that women's secondary status in the labour market which results in lower wages, casualisation of work, lack of access to skills and resources, gender segregation of occupations etc. are actually manifestations of the age-old understanding that home is a woman's primary place and domestic work is her sole responsibility. Surprisingly, plenty of empirical studies conclusively observe that not only the men but also the women tend to accept this stereotype unequivocally. It is this belief that lends most women to prioritise the interests of their families and accept part-time, flexible, low paid and home-based work, often without much ado. However, this line of argument has also been countered on the ground that women's acceptance of less-remunerative, informal jobs actually signifies lack of freedom of choice and enabling opportunities. It has to do more with the way girls and women as well as boys and men are brought upto believe that women's participation in the labour market is of secondary importance compared to that of men. According to Purcell (1978: 154), "girls are brought up to think of womanhood as a career in itself in a way that boys do not regard manhood and equally if not more importantly, boys are also brought up to regard women's main career as a wife to a breadwinning male

and mother of his children". "Being a women" is seen as the central career option for women such that their competencies, competitiveness and commitment to professional careers vis-à-vis men are often questioned. Let us understand the processes through which the stereotype of the "home-centred-women-worker" gets constructed and bolstered across cultures through time.

Some classical Sociological studies delved into the construction and reproduction of the mother-wife role since the 1970s. Purcell (1978:154) observes that "[w]hilst motherhood and the housewife role may be seen as jobs or careers in themselves, they are in fact parts, sometimes stages, of the career of being a woman. The pinnacle of this career is the achievement of motherhood…" Pahl and Pahl (1972) in their study on managers and their wives note that "the developmental sequence of the career may serve as a compensation [for lack of biologically determined career such as his wife has] particularly if its most rapid development is co-incident with his wife's child-rearing and production so that he gets promotion to, say, regional sales manager as she gets their second child.' The authors further observe that "since they clearly both 'get' 'their' second child both in the sense of begetting and thereafter 'having' an addition to 'their' family, the implication that its birth is both a productive coup for the woman, and an addition to her workload, reinforces the career/work implication of motherhood and wifehood. Husband and father are seen to be predominantly relationships rather than roles carrying prescriptive 'career' connotations which are assumed to take precedence over any other career, job or activities which the person may have."

14.3.2 Ecofeminist Thought and Women's Care Work

Why is it that women have come to be associated with reproduction/nature and man with production/culture? The theoretical grounding of the sexual division of labour could be traced back to the gamut of positions articulated under ecofeminism. One of the core approaches of Ecofeminism, although much critiqued, is that of essentialism. Celebrated proponents of this approach namely Mary Daly, Andree Collard, Charlene Spretnak argue that women experience their bodies much more intimately, they menstruate, carry babies, give birth and breastfeed; it is due their biology that they are more closely connected to nature. The tenderness required to nurture children and the household make women more humane, more sensible, better managers and protectors of environment. This approach is in effect a counterposition to the prevailing ways of viewing social realities through a hierarchical masculinist perspective which privileges rational over emotional, culture over nature, production over reproduction, mind over body and so forth. However, this approach has been vehemently critiqued on the ground that, by essentialising

the body and claiming the superiority of the feminine over the masculine, it tends to relegate women to the reproductive and care roles.

Another position within the discourse of eco-feminism looks at women's responsibility of doing reproductive work as a social construction. The type of work that women are socialized to do through generations, such as cooking, cleaning, provisioning of natural resources and so forth place them in close contact with nature. Thus, scholars like Vandana Shiva, Bina Aggarwal argue that the intimate association between women and nature is routed not through biology but through the everyday struggles that women engage with for survival in the developing world.

14.3.3 Ethics of Care and Women's Employment

In the context of women's engagement with public spaces, Day (2000) notes that the constraints women face arise "from their commitment to caring for others" (p 20). This argument could also be extended to women's participation in labour market which is located in the public domain predominated by men. Their commitment to caring for others as a guiding principle, be it public space or labour market, could be explicated through the feminist theory of "ethic of care". According to Day, "an ethic of care towards public space and their uses is less often adopted, but has much to contribute" (2000:104). The ethic of care, as articulated by Carol Gilligan (1982), is a model of moral development, which privileges taking care of others' needs and nurturing relationships. Based on her study with white middle-class girls and women, Gilligan observed that "women make moral decisions in a different voice" (Day 2000:105). It is a counter position to the theory of "ethic of justice" , as developed by Lawrence Kohlberg (1981-1984) which considers "standards of fairness, autonomy and respect for others rights" as the pinnacle of the stages of moral development. While the ethic of justice signifies competing rights, the ethic of care signifies competing responsibilities (Day 2000). According Gilligan, the ethic of care is neither the prerogative of only women, nor is it practiced by all women, however, most women are likely to value care-giving more than their male counterparts. They tend to define themselves in a relational context and even assess themselves based on their ability to care for others. Such pervasive is their submission to the ethic of care that they fail to bring themselves within the ambit of caring, lest they risk being written-off as 'selfish'. Thus gets entrenched the feminine ideal of the 'selfless' woman (Gilligan 1982). Notwithstanding the fact that this theoretical position has also been critiqued for essentialising women as innately caring and hence morally superior to men, it cannot be denied that much of women's constrained experiences in the labour market accrue from adherence to an ethic of care: forgoing wage work or choosing part time/less remunerated work for maintaining work-life

balance, working in typically feminine jobs that are often extensions of the care work they do at home, insufficient support services such as child-care facilities in the workplace, inadequate day-care centres and public transit systems etc. which preclude women's participation in the labour market and so forth.

14.3.4 'Being Woman' as a Career

Not that all women are restricted to reproductive and caring roles only with no participation in the labour market. However, given that they are socialized into the concept of the 'respectable womanhood', one that privileges others' interests over those of the self, one who strives for the image of the 'selfless woman', the 'ideal wife' and the 'ideal mother'; it is perhaps obvious that they appear to unequivocally accept the sexual division of labour which deifies their role as wives and mothers (see Ann Oakley, 1974a). However, as Purcell asks: "how are these myths reinforced in adult women whose experience as wives and mothers conflict with the ideological picture and why it is that their own experience appears to be discounted, deflected and sometimes ignored when it challenges the authenticity of what they believe to be the natural or normal experience?" (p- 155) These are extremely crucial questions that need to be reassessed to understand women's continued association with domestic labour, materially as well as figuratively, even in the 21st Century.

In trying to find answers to these questions, Purcell examines how the mother-wife role could be construed as a job or a specialized skill within the career of 'being-a-women'. She uses, following Alan Fox (1974), the concepts of tasks (narrow- wide) and discretion (high-low) to make her point. 'Task' is a component of a job which could be narrow (such as that of a brain surgeon) or wide (such as that of a senior manager) in scope. On the other hand, depending on the level of "exercise of wisdom, judgment or expertise"(Jacques 1956), discretion could be low i.e. requiring minimal agency such as the job of an assembly line worker; or high in terms of virtual autonomy such as the job of a brain surgeon. The following tabulation would make it simpler to understand.

| | | Discretionary content | |
		High	Low
Task range	Narrow	Brain Surgeon	Assembly line worker
	Wide	Senior manager	Daily help

Source : Alan Fox 1974, cited in Purcell (p-155)

In the above table, Purcell tries to fit the role of the 'mother-wife', while also acknowledging the fact that it is very difficult to do so, given that a mother-wife experiences varying levels of responsibilities through her lifecycle, hence her roles also keep transitioning through varied range of tasks and degrees of discretion, depending on her socio-economic class. Let us take the task of doing housework, which could vary from applying mere manual labour in maintaining modest household infrastructure and doing the regular chores such as cooking, cleaning etc.; to the more sophisticated maintenance of the household using state-of-the-art technologies. The task range is indeed expansive with the degree of discretion varying from low in the former case to high in the latter case. Similarly, let us is consider the task of mothering, which could vary from bringing up a child following spontaneous motherly intuitions and received wisdom; to being more 'professional'in approach, be it selection of toys in terms of promoting learning skills or carefully monitoring her child's psyche following professional advice. In this case too, the task range is varied with distinctly different degrees of discretion. So where do we then locate the 'mother-wife' role? In the words of Purcell, "Whether we think of the husband-father or society as her overseer, both the actual and perceived pressures, sanctions and rewards will vary widely amongst individual mother-wives. In addition, the working environment of the home, the tools of the trade and the expected and perceived task range vary widely according to the norms of different subcultures…".

An important point that must be noted here is that, the professional activities such as those of a nurse, dietician or a teacher which might be associated with the mother-wife role have actually emerged as the "women's jobs" even in the public world of paid work. Indeed, rarely do we see a male nurse or a dietician! According to Purcell, these women's jobs "have more often been pointed out as extensions of the 'expressive' career of being a women to outside the home than professional elements brought into it from the world of work."

Let us revisit the question with which we began this section, why is it that women, despite being involved in paid work, continue to be primarily looked at as the 'mother-wife'? According to Purcell, this derives from the difficulty in "conceptually separating the role of mother and the role of mother-wife." Scores of studies observed that women who work full-time continue to bear the primary responsibility of the wife and the mother; albeit with the support of female domestic helps and this is their only difference with the full-time mother-wife. One reason behind this could be the "apparently 'self-employed' nature of the mother-wife role which the dominant ideology promotes, stressing the 'essentially cultural' nature of female activity in the home" (Middleton, 1974, cited in Purcell 1978: 156). The wife-mother role subsumes two main jobs: the house-keeping part - which has a

wide task range with low discretion; and the childcare part which has a narrower task range and wider discretion since it requires greater 'exercise of wisdom, judgment or expertise'. Now if we are to locate the 'mother-wife' role within the matrix presented previous, lypreviously, we need to separate the emotional relationships of motherhood and wifehood and the job of mother-wife. This could be done with much lesser difficulty at the analytical level than at the level of practice. It is easier in households where the daily domestic chores are carried out by paid helps. Nevertheless, according to Purcell, "most mother-wives fit somewhere towards the middle of the matrix with a comparatively varied task-range in comparison to the assembly-line worker and a certain amount of discretion, if only over the organization of prescribed work." She further observes that "women's expertise as mothers is sanctified as ultimately deriving from 'maternal instinct' and although the task range of childcare (as opposed to the familial relationship) may be relatively narrow, the autonomy of the mother and the responsibility with which her work is invested confers high discretion to what is clearly a socially important occupation."

Several social science studies on housewives/mothers highlight that women tend to view their mother-wife role as full-time job having high discretion power. Following are a few examples, cited by Purcell, on women's own perceptions about the advantages of motherhood:

'You're your own boss.' (A. Oakley, 1974).

'A homemaker is not responsible to anyone higher up.' (H. Lopata, 1971).

'Not meeting a clock or calendar.' (H. Lopata, 1971).

Often, such "fulfilled moments" as "baby's first smile, step or word, its triumph over the potty, its eagerness to discover the world, its unexpected displays of affection and generosity and its poignant vulnerability" (Comer 1974) are viewed as, what is termed as the "perks of motherhood". However, according to Comer (1974), these are nothing but "fringe benefits", which are nothing but social constructs, and to confuse these with the perks one might expect to receive from a professional career actually results in blurring of the distinction between emotional relationships of motherhood and wifehood and the job of mother-wife.

That said, Purcell argues that those women who are employed in jobs with narrow task range with low discretionary content, for instance daily wage labourers, are most likely to evaluate the complete "mother-wife package" positively. For them, if not the mother-wife role, then poor employment with narrow task range and low discretion is the alternative option. She cites the study by Beynon and Blackburn (1972) to make her point. Their study was based in a food factory where they observed that women workers, particularly those in part-time work, appeared to be

less committed to work, did not unionise much, did not concern themselves much about the working conditions, did not have much aspirations- so far as job satisfaction was concerned. Rather, these women came to work in the factory since it was located nearby and offered convenient working hours which helped them in balancing their domestic responsibilities. Hence they concluded that women were more family-centred. Purcell counters their position. She argues that,

> "their [women's] choice of work, commitment to work and their legitimation of their dual workload as working women seems to me to reflect their enforced experience and the range of alternatives available rather than a legitimation of a deferential mode of interaction between the sexes and uncritical acceptance of the myths of the division of labour by sex and motherhood. 'Women's insistence' on part-time jobs may well reflect a home- centred approach to life, but it might more plausibly reflect a lack of alternative childcare facilities. The fact that more highly qualified women, who are also the women who can earn more money, more often opt out of the full-time mother-wife role, is more likely to reflect the capacity to purchase alternatives and command more flexible hours and conditions of work"

14.3.5 New Generation Jobs and the Production of 'Respectable' Femininity

Similar scenario is palpable in the present-day experiences of women working in one of the most modern sectors of recent times- the Information Technology (IT) and Information Technology enabled Services (ITeS). These sectors, especially the IT is often considered as 'suitable' for women primarily because these are based on intellectual labour, provide flexible work arrangements such as work from home, flexi-timing, provision of day-care and crèches etc. Thus these 'modern' sectors have arguably blurred "the boundaries between male and female, revalorise the feminine, providing the technological basis for a new form of society that is potentially liberating for women" (Plan 1998, cited in Wajcman 2010). The female employees of these sectors are often projected as privileged signifiers of a 'New India' where women are no longer subjected to patriarchal controls (Radhakrishnan 2009). However, studies abound in showing how these apparent 'liberation' enjoyed by women is actually played out within a limited context and how their labour force participation continue to be framed within the discourses of domesticity and motherhood. Singh and Pande (2005) in their study of call centre employees note that women workers working in the night shifts find it exceedingly difficult to manage their domestic chores. Night shift work also casts an added burden on women, that

of preserving their identities as 'respectable' women, given that patriarchal norms disapprove women's presence in the 'wrong place' (mainly public places) at the 'wrong times' (mainly during night times). Article 66 (c) of the Indian Factories Act (1948), which prohibited employment of women in the factory premises beyond 6am to 7pm, was amended in 2005 to address the need of the hour necessitated by globalization whereby employment of women was "allowed" between 7pm and 6am. According to Patel (2010),

> Instead of re-envisioning women as individuals who have an inherent right to work whenever they see fit, this law focused on the ability of industry to employ women at night while also ensuring that provisions for their protection would remain in place. *Allowing* women to move about in ways that are considered as inherent right for men reflects that women remain tethered to a patriarchal framework that dictates what a woman can and cannot do. The "dignity and honor rule" inadvertently marked women as outsiders and spatialized the factory as a site where undignified and dishonourable behaviour is a norm from which women must be protected (p 50).

Patel (2006) studies the call centre employees and concludes that with the emergence of transnational Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) centres and the subsequent nightshift requirements of the global economy, the urban nightscape has undergone an infusion of women workers. This undoubtedly creates new opportunities and spaces for women "upon which they re-invent their identity" (Patel 2006:10). However, the anxieties over women's presence in the public spaces during 'odd' hours continue to hold sway which get reflected in the various security measures adopted by the BPO companies to ensure the safety of their female employees. Some of these measures include GPRS tracking devices in vehicles or security guards escorting women to their homes, strict and thorough background checks of the drivers and security guards who accompany women employees at night, strict monitoring of the women's pathways till their arrival at home, self defence etc. (The Times of India, December 25, 2012). Through these strategies, "notions of women and respectability are constructed as a way to control and confine women, with respectability used as a mechanism operating between identity and space and producing gendered subjectivity, spatial knowledge and ultimately gendered space (Boyer 1998: 267-68 cited in Basi 2009: 151).

Shanker (2008) in her study concludes that women working in the IT sector are experiencing emancipatory transitions in the public sphere but in the private sphere there seems to be little change in the prevailing status quo. Dutta and Hussain (2010) in a study of women workers in the IT sector of Kolkata observe that contrary to the claims that IT sector provide less exploitative avenues of employment for

women and would enable them in strengthening their bargaining position at home, the organizational process in this sector does get shaped by the social context and patriarchal ideologies. Valk and Srinivasan (2011) also note that the societal role expectations, women's career ambitions, and the nature of the IT industry challenges the manner in which women attempt to strive for a work-life balance. Similar observations have been made by Paul (2016) in her study on women workers in, what she terms as, 'New Generation Sectors' which include IT, ITeS and Organised Retail. She notes that within these 'modern' sectors, women's professional career opportunities are significantly shaped by their primary identity as wives and mothers; marriage and the associated gender role expectations at home as well as in the workplace pose as major hindrances to their professional development. The IT sector employment, in particular, is marked by frequent relocations, within and beyond the country, as a prerequisite for rapid career growth. It is this requirement which further tend to marginalize women, who lack freedom of mobility, especially after marriage and becoming mother. Paul also notes that these sectors sector underscores a tacit gender segregation of jobs that essentialises masculine and feminine attributes. In the IT sector, men work in the core technical functions such as development of software, process and tools, delivery and operations; while more than 50 percent of the female samples primarily work in the non-technical jobs such as learning and development, content management, quality assurance and human resource management. In the ITES sector, while majority of the women worked in the voice-call processes in the front office, the men mostly worked in the back office in the more technical jobs. Further, job appraisals made by the companies often discriminated on the basis of gender roles, women in their 30-s, married and having children tend to be viewed as 'family-oriented' rather than 'career-oriented', and their performance judged accordingly. As the NASSCOM (2008: 18) report on gender inclusivity quotes Subroto Bagchi, Co-founder, MindTree Consulting: "A woman professional must also know that, at the top, life is very demanding and very desexed. It is just not possible to become an IndraNooyi, Naina Lal Kidwai, Mallika Sarabhai or Vasundhara Raje Scindia by trying to juggle work, home, husband, mother-in-law and making pickle. The other part is that to get to the top, whether you are a man or a woman, you must travel a lot, sometimes work weekends, network outside the workplace, learn on your own initiative, engage continuously and finally, give an awful lot more than you get".

It is not only from the side of the employers, but also from the side of the women employee themselves, that the gender role stereotypes apply to women's labour market engagements. Paul (2013,2016) notes that women in the new generation sectors practice conscious strategies such as avoiding loitering in the office and post-office social parties, to mention a few, to espouse 'respectability.' As put by

Radhakrishnan (2009: 208) 'The workplace provides a context in which women assert respectable femininity as a mark of Indian culture". At home, they try to do so by taking up the primary responsibilities of domestic chores, not neglecting their 'mother-wife' roles. It can be argued that the reason why women choose to assert their identity as 'respectable' and 'good women', to quote Purcell, is "not because they subscribe to some sort of patriarchal values but because society in both their primary and secondary experiences contrives to place upon them, in Coser's terms 'the cultural mandate to give primary allegiance to their families". Women need to dissociate themselves from the role of mother-wife if they are to avoid this social pressure. This could be done, according to Purcell, "either by not marrying and/or having children or by accepting the status and affective relationships of mother and/ or wife whilst rejecting the jobs attached" which could be plausible only "if someone else does the maintenance jobs attaching to the status(es)" (p.161). However, this luxury is not available to all women, not only depending on economic class but also on cultural sanctions, both explicitly or implicitly. In fact, examples abound as to how 'equal' opportunities are made available in the labour market for the women to access and yet, these are hardly successful in breaking the patriarchal stereotypes. The case of the new generation sectors cited above bear testimony to this fact.

14.3.6 Beyond the private-public divide

The preceding discussion does not suggest that women are tenaciously tied to the private sphere of the home; nor does it imply that reproductive labour does not count as 'work'. In fact, much of the work done by women, especially in Third World countries like India, transcends this private-public divide. Several scholars tried to show that reproductive labour must also be recognisedas work. For instance, Seccombe (1974) argued that "domestic labour … contributes directly to the creation of the commodity labour power while having no direct relation with capital" (p-9). Thus, although reproductive work can be discounted as non-productive in strictly Marxist parlance, yet it can not be undermined that "wages are not only exchanged for labour performed on the job, but also for the labour needed to reproduce that labour power" (Tancred 1995:14). This is the crux of the domestic labour debate and although such line of argument could be critiqued for trying to fit women's work within the existing binaries of the private and the public; yet it could be credited for providing a common framework for evaluating productive and reproductive spheres.

Another important contribution in terms of looking at women's work outside the binary framework came from Veronica Beechey. In her essay 'Rethinking the Definition of Work' published in 1988, she tries to theorise gender in the sphere of work rather than redefining the concept of 'work' itself to make it inclusive of

women's work. Anne-Marie Daune-Richard (1988), tries to reconceptualise women's work as "the space where commodities are produced and the space where individuals are produced and reproduced" (Tancred 1995:14).

Miriam Glucksmann (1990) puts forth the concept of "total social labour" (p 28) which encompasses productive and reproductive labour and calls for a "unified and internally coherent analytical framework capable of examining women's position both in social production and in private reproduction, in paid employment and in the household" (p. 17). She sees the "domestic and public sectors as 'two poles' which are connected by the links of the employment and wages of men (and now of women), and the purchase of commodities for use in the domestic economy. The position of each gender in the domestic economy integrally affects its relation to the wage economy - and this is as true of men as it is of women" (p.265 ff, cited in Tancred 1995: 14).

14.4 Skills as social constructions

One of the pre-requisites for decent employment is possession of skills and one of the primary reasons behind women's marginal location within the labour market is their inadequate skills. There are two issues here: one, they do not get adequate opportunities to acquire skills that might enhance their employability; and second, most often than not, skills targeted towards women tend to be low-end in nature, generating work in non-remunerative activities which signify extensions of their reproductive roles, such as tailoring, food processing etc. Hence, it would not be misplaced to argue that skill is gendered. According to Turner (1995: 16), "the socially constructed nature of skill includes a very strong emphasis on the gender of the worker habitually associated with a particular skill." As it has already been discussed at length in the preceding section that housework encompasses a wide task range- including child care, nurse, teacher, food-maker, dress-maker and so forth. A common approach prevailing in the labour market is that the tasks undertaken by women within the confines of their reproductive sphere require minimal skill; while the same activities if undertaken in the public sphere of production, especially by male workforce, then extensive trainings and higher qualification are essential. For example, cooking food within the home for the family or even for the community (community kitchen) is considered as a feminine task while the same act of cooking at a professional level, like that of a chef, is viewed as a masculine task. Notwithstanding the economic rationale operating behind this perception or approach, one can argue that, to quote Turner, "the 'socially constructed' aspect of skill underscores the assumption that "women are born with certain 'natural' skills which

require neither talent nor training and which are merely part of their 'natural', 'feminine' behavior" (Ibid: 17). Due to such essentialist assumptions, feminists refer to the concept of "invisible skills"- meaning those skills which *all* women are assumed to possess by virtue of their 'being women'. It is like saying that since all women are instrinsically nurturing, hence they must be nurses. Now, from caring for the family members to caring for, say, the patients in a hospital, the competency of nurturing/caring does not quite acquire visibility as a specialized skill; rather nursing gets labelled as a woman's job and hence less valued and less remunerated. Thus, the competencies women make use of in performing their essentialised sex and gender roles within the private sphere of reproduction gets mapped onto the public sphere of production resulting in bunching of skills. A close examination of official data would reveal that women tend to be bunched into specific skill sets such as tailoring, food processing, etc.

The problem is not that men and women do different kinds of jobs but that the work done by the latter are typically undervalued. Why might the society undervalue the profession of nursing when the care-work rendered by the women within the reproductive sphere forms the basis of the sustenance of the family- the primary unit of the society? As Tong argues, "the list of 'objective' criteria (e.g. knowledge and skills, mental demands, accountability, working conditions) for the evaluation of a job are, in fact, profoundly subjective" (1989, pp. 59-60). This happens because these criteria are defined from an androcentric perspective, which accord minimal value to women's experiences of labour such as "the ability to deal with several tasks simultaneously", "the complete lack of any direct control" (Beechey 1987, p. 84), knowledge acquired through formal as well as informal means. It is these "invisible skills" and subjective criteria in evaluating jobs determined from the perspective of male workers that marginalize women's labour.

14.5 Measuring Women's Work

14.5.1 Understanding the conceptual biases

The inadequacies of conceptualizing women's work apply not only to the theoretical ramifications but also to practical applications in terms of defining, capturing and measuring work. Given that (waged) work is primarily defined trough the modal experiences of the male workers rather than the predominant experiences of the female workers, certain deficiencies in capturing different types of activities pursued by women follow, particularly in the context of subsistence work, informal sector work, domestic work and voluntary work.

Firstly, in a capitalist economy, output which is transacted in the market is only included in national accounts and the workers participating in producing that output is considered as workforce. Unremunerated work and the person doing such work are not given any recognition. This is the case with subsistence work which is primarily done by women in the developing countries. However, during the 1950s, international bodies and academia highlighted the importance of including subsistence production in national income and in 1966, International Labour Organisation (ILO) defined labour force as "all persons of either sex who furnish the supply of economic goods and services" (ILO 1976). According to Beneria (1992: 1548), "the justification of this inclusion had to do with the view that subsistence production was just a step short of being exchanged through the market." However, inclusion of subsistence work could not address the problem of accounting for women's work because of other issues such as process of data collection, enumeration procedures with respect to defining 'family labour', perception of both men and women regarding what counts as 'work' etc.

Secondly, informal sector plays a very important role in the developing economies, and it is primarily women who tend to dominate these sectors. Work in this sector is remunerated and hence do not suffer from conceptual deficiencies, like that in the subsistence sector. However, here the problem is that of adequate statistical information about the expanse of this sector, due to its precarious, unregulated and unstable nature.

Thirdly, the domestic production and related activities carried out by women within the reproductive sphere, unlike subsistence activity, do not get counted as a substitute for market-oriented production. These types of work fall outside the production boundary of the national accounts. However, such activities, also termed as "production for own consumption", constitute a considerable part of the economy of developing countries and have been advocated for inclusion in the national accounts.

Fourth, volunteer work is a different category of work done by women which also suffers from undercounting, both from conceptual as well as methodological perspectives. Conceptually, volunteer work refers to those which are not carried out for the benefit of the immediate family members, which are not paid and which are part of a larger organized programme.

Box 1 : Do you know?

What is informal sector?

According to the International Labour Organisation, an informal sector enterprise is one which fulfils the following criteria:

- It is an unincorporated enterprise, which means that it is not constituted as a legal entity separate from its owners; it is owned and controlled by one or more members of one or more households; it is not a quasi-corporation (it does not have a complete set of accounts, including balance sheets);
- It is a market enterprise : this means that it sells at least some of the goods or services it produces. It therefore excludes households employing paid domestic workers;
- And at least one of the following criteria : (a) The number of persons engaged / employees / employees employed on a continuous basis, is below a threshold determined by the country (b) The enterprise is not registered (c) The employees of the enterprise are not registered.

Source: https://www.ilo.org/ilostat-files/Documents/Statistical%20Glossary.pdf

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14.5.2 Measures to address the conceptual gaps- India and Abroad

Since the 1950s and especially since the 1960s, international and national agencies grappled with issues regarding measurement of women's work. To start with, the way work was defined, be it by the UN System of National Accounts (UN SNA) to calculate a country's Gross National Product (GNP) or the ILO to measure labour force based on the "work done for pay or profit", it was firmly rooted in the production of market value. Such definitions were criticized on the grounds that these ignored 'subsistence production', i.e. the production for own use and consumption which indeed constitutes a considerable share in the developing countries. Subsequently it was voiced that these activities must be included within the production boundaries of SNA (see Beneria e al 2016). Gradually, the UN SNA production boundary was expanded to include " primary production in agriculture, fishing, mining and forestry, the processing of these products to make cheese, butter, flour and so on, as well as the production of other commodities which were consumed or sold in the market" (Waring, 1988, cited in Deshpande and Kabeer 2019: 4). Not only the UN SNA production boundary but the ILO's definition of labour force was also expanded to include all production and processing of primary products, whether for the market, for barter or for own consumption. However, discrepancies continue to exist across the countries regarding measuring women's work. For instance, while

some countries "included categories of subsistence activities (such as crop production for self-consumption) but excluded others (free gathering of wood and fruit, processing crops to store or tending and milking animals for family use)" (ibid). Besides, the ILO definition also excluded unpaid domestic work carried out by women such as cooking, caring, cleaning etc.

Feminists objected to the exclusion of these unpaid activities while estimating labour force and GNP. They distinguished between "instrumentally valued production of goods and services for markets (exchange value) and the intrinsically valued production of goods and services for the social reproduction of labor on a daily and generational basis (use value)" (Beneria, 1981, cited in Deshpande and Kabeer 2019: 4-5). They argued that "many aspects of the unpaid work of social reproduction could be carried out as a market exchange so the decision to treat such work falling outside the sphere of the economy is completely arbitrary" (ibid: 5).

Given feminist advocacies, the more recent definition by ILO tend to accommodate some of these concerns. In its Nineteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians held in October 2013, the ILO aligned its definition of work with general production boundary given in the System of National Accounts 2008 (2008 SNA). In the same resolution, ILO identified five "mutually exclusive forms of work" that are to be measured separately:

(a) own-use production work comprising production of goods and services for own final use;

(b) employment work comprising work performed for others in exchange for pay or profit;

(c) unpaid trainee work comprising work performed for others without pay to acquire workplace experience or skills;

(d) volunteer work comprising non-compulsory work performed for others without pay

(e) other work activities which include such activities as unpaid community service and unpaid work by prisoners, when ordered by a court or similar authority, and unpaid military or alternative civilian service, which may be treated as a distinct form of work for measurement (such as compulsory work performed without pay for others) " (p-3).

<div style="border">

Box 2 : Do you Know?
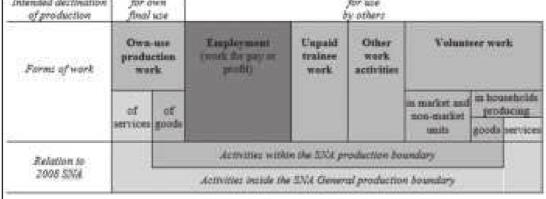
What is System of National Accounts?

The *System of National Accounts 2008* (2008 SNA) is the latest version of the international statistical standard for the national accounts, adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC). It refers to a set of recommendations on how to compile different measures of economic activities, however it is only a conceptual framework. It does not intend to provide comprehensive compilation guidance on how to make estimates.

The most recent version of the SNA was put into place in 2008, which was an updated version of the 1993 SNA. The 2008 SNA addresses the challenges resulting from the rapidly transforming economic environment, advances in methodological research and the user needs. The UNSC encouraged the Member States, regional and sub-regional organisation adopting the 2008 SNA to use it for the national and international reporting of national accounts statistics.

Figure 1 : Forms of work and the System of National Accounts 2008

Source: International Labour Organisation (2013)

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14.5.3 The Indian Scenario

Such changes in the definitions of 'work' and 'worker' can also be traced in India. The Census defines work as "participation in any economically productive activity with or without compensation,wages or profit. Such participation may be physical and/or mental in nature and includes a) effective supervision and direction of work, b) part-time help or unpaid work on farm, family enterprise or in any other

economic activity, and c) cultivation or milk production, even if solely for domestic consumption" (Census of India, 2011). There has been a major transformation in how the question on work is being canvassed to the respondents by the Indian Census. In 1961, the Census asked respondents to report their activities which were subsequently categorized into main and marginal. The 1971 Census asked "what is your main activity" which was answered back as "housewives" by majority of the female respondents. This way of asking the question culminated in immediately dividing the population into workers and non-workers. Quite naturally, the 1971 census saw a remarkable decline in the labour force participation rate compared to that in the 1961 census. The 1981 census canvassed the question on 'work' as "have you worked anytime at all last year?". If the answer was "yes", then the respondent was subsequently asked to identify their 'main' activity (i.e., the work which they did for at least six months or 183 days) and all the other activities were categorized as 'marginal'.

Another major source of data on employment scenario in India is the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO). The NSSO defines work as "any activity that results in production of goods and services that adds value to national product as an economic activity." The latter is divided into two components- market activities and non-market activities. Market activities are those which fetch either pay or profit while non market activities are those which are undertaken for own account production and self-consumption. Further, those outside the labour force are classified under the categories as non-workers:

– attended education institutions (NSSO Code 91)
– attended domestic duties only (NSSO Code 92)
– attended domestic duties and were also engaged in (NSSO Code 93)
  • (a) free collection of goods such as vegetables, roots, firewood, cattle feed, etc. and
  • (b) sewing, tailoring, weaving, etc.
– rentiers, pensioners, remittances recipients, etc.(NSSO Code 94)
– not able to work due to disability (code 95);
– others (beggars, prostitutes) (NSSO Code 97)
– did not work due to sickness(NSSO Code 98)
– children 0-4(NSSO Code 99)

It is a matter of concern indeed that the persons engaged in domestic duties (code 93)and also in (a) free collection of goods such as vegetables, roots, firewood, cattle feed, etc and (b) sewing, tailoring, weaving, etcare treated as non-workers in

Indian data despite the fact that they are engaged in economic activities covered under the production boundary of the United Nations-System of National Accounts (UN-SNA) (UN 1993, 2008). It has been argued that these activities are excluded because their number is negligible. However, Hirway (2012) raises the question, and aptly so, as to whether those engaged in these excluded activities (code 93) are really negligible in number or the employment and unemployment surveys of the NSSO are not able to capture their strength correctly. Those who report domestic activities (code 92 and 93) as their usual principal status are further asked follow up questions : "whether they pursued certain specified activities , along with their domestic duties, more or less regularly for their own household consumption which provide economic benefits?" These specified activities can be grouped into three broad categories: those related to agricultural production, processing of primary products and other activities for own consumption. The latter two activities are excluded from the Indian System of National Accounts (ISNA) though UN-SNA does include them.

14.6 Globalization and Women's Work – Opportunities and Challenges

The latter part of the 20th Century marked the beginning of a new economic regime characterized by new technologies, flexibility of capital and labour, new modes of organization of work, new systems of market regulation and labour control etc. In India, which opened up its economy and embraced the Structural Adjustment Programme in 1991, following changes have become palpable: unrestricted operation of giant multinational corporations, rapid mobility of capital in its quest for cheap labour, flexible organization of production, promotion of temporary/part time work based on sub-contracting etc. All of these have resulted in the generation of precarious employment opportunities for both men and women. It has been well documented that women are particularly negatively affected. With the adoption of these SAPs, the market tends to become volatile, income inequalities increase and more and more families are pushed into poverty. In order to cope with these economic shocks, women and children are compelled to seek paid work to compensate for the declining family incomes. Following aspects are observable in the post reforms era so far as women's work is concerned:

Firstly, continuous introduction of newer technologies tend to displace women from their traditional livelihood. Having very limited access to skill and resources required for getting work in the emerging sectors, they tend to flock in the informal sectors. These sectors are characterized by inhuman working conditions, extremely

poor wages, occupational health hazards, denial of fundamental entitlements of workers (e.g. maternity benefits, minimum wages, compensation for health hazards etc.).

Secondly, women tend to find work in the export-oriented labour-intensive sweat industries such as garments, toys, shoes, semi-conductors etc. This has often been interpreted as feminization of production. However, experiences have suggested that the women, though initially recruited in these industries, tend to be fired first as the production process becomes technologically driven.

Thirdly, the big corporate giants practice 'flexible' employment to maintain competitiveness in the global market. It basically means promotion of temporary or casual work, working from home facilities etc.; which though might have drawn more women into the labour market, yet has actually lead to precarious employment opportunities marked by part time, non-unionized, in the low-wage service sector, and with more erratic wages, diminishing benefits, and less standard (9 to 5) shifts than in previous decades (Boushey, 2016, Howell &Kalleberg, 2019; Kalleberg, 2011; Kalleberg& von Wachter, 2017; Schultz, 2019; Wilson, 2019).

Fourth, the spectacular rise of information and communication technology (ICT) sectors have absorbed an overwhelming number of women and made room for them to work in non-conventional sectors. However, plenty of research suggests that even within these high-end modern sectors, women are confined to lower rungs of occupational hierarchy, less-technical 'soft' jobs, unequal opportunities of career growth (Patel 2005, 2010; Paul 2013, Radhakrishnan2009, Raju 2013; Valk and Srinivasan 2011).

14.7 Conclusion

The sexual division of labour significantly affects women's participation in the labour market. The reproductive and care work they perform within the confines of the home gets mapped onto the public spaces such that their labour market experiences often tend to be exploitative and discriminatory vis-à-vis men. Patriarchal norms cage them within the reproductive sphere, restrict opportunities to acquire appropriate skills, and thrust them into the doing of unpaid domestic work, subsistence activities and voluntary community work which are little remunerated. This is not only true for low-end jobs in the informal sector, but also for high-end jobs in the 'modern' sectors.

Over the years, discussions on how to capture women's work has emerged as a cornerstone among development practitioners and academia. This has resulted in

significant shifts in the way 'work' is usually conceptualized, albeit with some reservations. The problem of measuring women's work does not only stem from biased definitions used by computing agencies but also due to perceptional biases among the men and women themselves regarding what counts as 'work'. All these factors together contribute to gross undercounting of women's labour force participation rate.

It has been abundantly documented that globalization adversely affects the marginalized, those with poor assets and skills, particularly the women. Through new modes of organization of production, such as flexi-timing, sub-contracting, outsourcing, home-based work etc., the globalizing processes tend to exploit women's weaker position within the labour market. They are further pushed into all forms of precarious employment; having less skill, they are unable to utilize the emerging opportunities in high-end sectors; having been engaged in home-based work due to sub-contracting and flexibilisation of workplace, they miss out on opportunities of unionizing and fighting for their labour rights.

In fine, the gross inequalities experienced by the women in the labour market could be aptly considered as a fall-out of the social perception that women's primary role is not earning wages but reproducing and caring for their families. Women seem to internalize this stereotype and reproduce the same through their labour-market behaviours i.e. their acceptance of low paid, low skilled, part-time, temporary and home-based work. However, this is partially true since women's secondary status in the labour market is not merely a matter of choice that they consciously make, it is rather the lack of it. In other words, they are offered little familial and social support to engage with paid with as much freedom and zeal as their male counterparts.

14.8 Summary

We basically tried to understand the social and cultural connotations of women's work. In order to do so, we first delved into the theoretical ramifications of the concept of 'sexual division of labour' and tried to understand how women's reproductive roles within the private space influence their labour market outcomes. We, then, tried to grapple how the conceptual deficiencies in capturing women's work lead to definitional and informational biases and how these gaps have been accommodated by international and national agencies. Finally we looked into the influence of globalisation on women's labour market participation.

14.9 Questions

1. Answer in Detail:

1. What do you understand by essentialism? Discuss how essentialist ideologies are operationalized to limit women's labour market experiences.

2. What are the conceptual issues in measuring women's work? How have these issues been addressed by international and national agencies for a more inclusive definition of work?

3. Discuss how globalization influences women's labour market participation.

2. Answer Briefly:

1. What is meant by informal sector?

2. What do you understand by the System of National Accounts?

3. What do you understand by Ethic of Care?

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14.12 Glossary

Sexual division of labour: Sexual division of labour refers to the division of tasks/ activities based on sex. In all societies, men and women perform distinctly different roles. While women are responsible for all reproductive and care work within the home, men bear the responsibility of all productive activities outside the home and supporting family.

Labour force: Labour force consists of all the persons of working age groups who are engaged in production of goods and services as well as those who are not presently employed but available for work.

Main and Marginal Worker: According to the Census of India, 2011, 'main workers' are those workers who had worked for the major part of the reference period i.e. 6 months or more. 'Marginal workers' are those who had not worked for the major part of the reference period i.e. less than 6 months.

Globalisation: Globalisation refers to the phenomenon which cause rapid economic, social, cultural, political changes across the world. In the wake of the globalising processes, interconnectedness between countries and economies drastically increase such that geo-political boundaries become less and less important. Other significant changes associated with it include transnational movement of labour, capital, goods, services and information; preponderance of information technology; homogenization of markets, consumer tastes; sharp increase in income inequalities; prominence of liberal democratic ideas etc.

Unit 15 ❑ Feminist Movements in Bengal : Connections with The Global

Structure

15.1 Learning Objectives

The purpose of this module is to familiarise the students with the various nuances of the feminist movement in Bengal, both in the colonial and the post-colonial period. A region-specific focus would help the learners to appreciate the ramifications of the movement and the changes it has brought about in the lives of thousands of women over the years. While learning about the global connection, the readers would be acquainted with how the feminists have been able to strike a balance between maintaining the individuality of the movement in Bengal, while at the same time connecting with the larger issues at the global level.

15.2 Introduction

Bengal is blessed with a rich history of feminist movement, both at the individual and collective level, even before the coining of the term 'Feminism.' The move towards emancipation of women, thanks to the convictions of stalwarts like Raja Rammohun Roy and Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar in the nineteenth century, can be hailed as the beginning of what is later labeled as feminist movement. Over the years, feminist movement in West Bengal has acquired a character of its own acting as change-maker for thousands of women. Although lot still needs to be done, but as agents of change, the movement can definitely boast of its share of success in empowering women across the state. Keeping pace with the global scenario, the movement has indeed attained a character of its own, ready to take on the newer challenges.

15.3 Defining Feminism

Feminism, as an ideology is a western import. It can broadly be defined as an ideology that professes equality amongst the sexes. Reversing of societal stereotypes, which prioritise the male viewpoint leading to unjust treatment and 'othering' of women and consequently of their subjugation, remains the be all and end all of feminism. Creating an environment of equal opportunity for all is the primary goal of feminism.

The term was coined by French philosopher and Utopian socialist Charles Fourier in 1837. Western feminism can essentially be categorised into four waves. The first wave can be traced to the 19th and early 20th centures in the US and UK, which focused on women's rights vis-à-vis marriage, property, parenting. The second wave roughly commenced from the middle of the 20th century, when the campaign to reform family laws gained momentum. Second-wave feminists see women's cultural and political inequalities as inextricably linked and encourage women to understand aspects of their personal lives as deeply politicised and as reflecting sexist power structures. The feminist activist and author Carol Hanisch coined the slogan "The Personal is Political", which became synonymous with the second wave.[1] Early 1990s saw the beginning of the third wave which tried to deviate from the all-white nature of feminism. Race-related issues were highlighted in the third phase, when non-white feminists tried to use post-structuralist interpretation of gender and sexuality. 2012 saw the emergence of the fourth wave. The proliferation of social media in everyday lives that led to increasing toxicity with wide-spread trolling of women and with moral policing on the rise, feminism needed to live up to the

challenge and hence the fourth wave came to be defined by technology. Social media came to be deployed as an effective tool for countering the hatred perpetuated in the social media itself.

Concomitant with the successive waves, feminism also has several strands, often overlapping: liberal feminism, radical feminism, ecofeminism. The term Feminism has acquired a wider connotation over time, to enfold trans rights also.

15.4 Feminism in Bengal : Colonial Period

If we try to trace the genesis of feminist movement in Bengal, we need to rewind to the colonial phase. It forms the backdrop of the full flowering of the feminist movement in West Bengal in the post-independence period. The untiring efforts of men and women in Bengal paved the way for West Bengal emerging as one of the leaders in feminist movement in the country often acting as representative in the global sphere.

15.4.1 Individual

Feminism in Bengal owes its origin to well-meaning individuals who tirelessly worked towards improving the condition of women from the first half of the nineteenth century and in spite of social obstacles and derision never veered from their conviction. Freeing women from the clutches of social evils remained their mission. The pioneers were Raja Rammohun Roy and Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, whose indefatigable spirits saw the abolition of the heinous practice of Sati in 1829 and the introduction of widow-remarriage in 1856. For thousands of women and girls in Bengal, who led a caged life of sub-human existence, Rammohun and Vidyasagar were the messiahs. However, at this stage, the women themselves remained mere agents for change whose body became the sites of tussle between the coloniser and the colonised. Their voices remained unheard. In an incipient, inchoate form voices of women for the first time could be heard against the backdrop of the latter half of nineteenth century colonial India, which witnessed an intense tussle between the coloniser and the colonised over the question of domestic reforms. Be it the abolition of sati or the re-marriage of widows, the early half of the nineteenth century saw an intense engagement with the women's question. However, whereas in the first half of the nineteenth century women's voices remained stifled and muffled, they increasingly surfaced from the second half which witnessed a surfeit in non-fictional writings.

Between 1856 and 1910, nearly 400 works consisting of short poems to full-length novels, travelogues, autobiographies, essays, were penned by women.[2]

Bamasundari Debi in her essay *Ki Ki Kusanskar Tirohito Hoiley E Desher Shighro Sribridhhi Hoitey Parey?* explores the ritualistic ills that shackle the life of a girl-child. As the very title suggests, Bamasundari was trying to reach to the pith of the issue by identifying the problem areas as also equating the removal of the same with the progress of the nation. Her prescription included the abolition of child-marriage and kulinism, as also remarriage of child-widows.[3] Carrying on in the same vein, **Kailashbashini Debi** in her essay *Hindu Mahilagan-er Hinabastha* analyses the various domestic relations to catalogue how the life of a woman revolves within the matrix of violence—ostracised and ill-treated right from her birth. Kailasbashini laments, "Whereas great care is taken to educate the boys of the family, girls are treated as a burden. What is the point in educating them? Would they go out and earn for the family?"[4] **Saratkumari Chaudhurani** in her essay *Ekal O Ekaler Meye* argues that women have a greater social role to play apart from cooking 'sager ghonto' and 'mocharghonto' as also spending hours in *bratas* and pujas.

Late nineteenth century can thus be treated as the precursor of the era of the politicisation of the domestic space and the domestication of the political space that ensured greater visibility of women in the next century. The 'voices from within', by giving vent to their emotions, desires, opinions, help us in appreciating their world-views, their responses to the male-dominated world, in short, viewing the world from their perspectives. Their journey towards self-discovery testifies to their willingness and readiness to take off and soar high with the wind beneath their wings.

In fact, the writings of **Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain** at the beginning of the twentieth century, offer a glimpse of the change in this mental make-up. Through her writings, Rokeya expresses the burning desire to break free from all societal shackles. Her collection of essays in two volumes *Motichoor* (**1904** and **1922),** thunders against the prevailing system of subservience of women, "In this twentieth century what are we? Female slaves. They say that slavery has been abolished in the world. But have we been freed from our slavery?"[5] Her most revolutionary piece is *Sultana's Dream* (**1905**)—a feminist utopian fantasy that describes society in an imaginary country—Ladyland—where women are the decision-makers while men are kept cooped up at home. Women are bestowed with brains and intelligence, while men do all the back-breaking household chores. While women have freedom of unrestrained movements, men remained tied to the mardana (men's quarters as opposed to zenana or female quarters). Women give orders and men meekly obey.

Education was identified as the window to liberation and pioneering efforts by upper class women, offered girls the opportunity to partake of some modicum of learning. **Nawab Faizunnessa** of Comilla, in 1873, set up an English medium school

for girls who strictly observed the *purdah*. In 1897, the **Calcutta Girls' Madrasah** was set up with the patronage and generous donation of an affluent aristocrat lady of Murshidabad, **Firdaus Mahal**.

This period also saw the germination of women-centric organisations, working for the betterment of their conditions. Set up at individual initiatives, these organisations were one of the firsts to address the plight of women. One of the pioneers is **Swarnakumari Debi,** who founded the *Sakhi Samiti* in 1882 with the professed aim that "women of respectable families should have the opportunity of mixing with each other and devoting themselves to the cause of social welfare…to help the helpless orphans and widows."[6] In 1892, thirteen year old **Banalata Debi** set up the *Sumati Samiti* for providing shelter and rehabilitation to homeless women and widows. **Kadambini Ganguly**, an enlightened Brahmo lady as also the first practicing woman doctor of India, established the *Bharat Mahila Samiti* for forwarding the cause of women.

Ambujasundari Devi of Jalpaiguri urged the local women to forego foreign-made goods and switch over to indigenous products. Partition infused new enthusiasm amongst women across the country.[7] **Kumudini Mitra** started a journal named *Suprabhat* **(The New Dawn)** which preached revolutionary ideas. *Swadesh Anurag* **(1905)** of Khairunnessa, appealed to women to boycott foreign goods.

On the Bengal side, **Tanika Sarkar's** study shows how women came out literally in hordes. To them the movement was more of a religious mission. Midnapore took the lead. **Sindhubala Maity** of Contai was arrested and sentenced to three months imprisonment for picketing. After her release, an undaunted Sindhubala plunged headlong into the movement, leading processions, reading out protest notes at meetings and mobilising people in general. **Urmibala Paria** of Keshpur village became the first woman martyr of the movement in Bengal, when she succumbed to the brutal torture in police custody in June 1930, while protesting against the chaukidari tax.[8]

Gandhiji staunchly believed that, "When woman, whom we call *abala* becomes *sabala*, all those who are helpless will become powerful."[9] His allegories of women as Sita, Rani of Jhansi enthused them to associate themselves to the greater cause of the nation. Gandhiji believed that if women were to be 'free' they had to be 'fearless.' He rightly realised that it was more a matter of psychological fear and helplessness, culturally imposed upon women by society, than physical weakness which had kept women crippled. His constant message to them was that bravery and courage were not the monopoly of men. The main contribution of Gandhi to the cause of women lay in his absolute and unequivocal insistence on their personal

dignity and autonomy in the family and in society.[10] She had the right to say 'No' even to her husband, "I want woman to learn the primary right of resistance. She thinks now that she has not got it."[11] Gandhi's placing of women at the centre of his movements typified his method and his goal. Indian women epitomised the plight of Indians as a whole, and exemplified the technique of turning apparent liabilities into assets which Gandhi recommended to Indians. For Gandhi, the nationalist movement was not merely a political struggle but also means of regenerating and rejuvenating society by eradicating the evils which needed reform including the treatment of women. He encouraged women to participate in all aspects and phases of nationalist activity, particularly in the constructive programme and the non-violent *satyagraha has* initiated by him. Constructive work included relief work in emergencies like floods, the founding of national schools, the promotion of *khadi* and other cottage crafts, anti-liquor propaganda, and social work. As **Banerjee-Dube** points out, "Gandhi valorized women for their powers of endurance and self-suffering, and spiritual and moral courage."[12] Juxtaposed against the notion of the nineteenth century social reformers who deemed women as victims who needed the salubrious touch of the patriarchy for their redemption, Gandhi emphasised the inherent strength of womenfolk that would aid in the regeneration of the nation. His overarching ideal, as **Ashis Nandy** opines, "the essence of femininity is superior to that of masculinity" was the main plank of his appeal to women.

Although time and again, especially during the Quit India movement, women did violate the *lakshmanrekha* as fixed by Gandhiji, his vision did not veer from the social prescription of femininity which was skillfully blended with his vision of a regenerated India. Geraldine Forbes characterises this as 'feminine political role', "women did not do the same things as men. Instead, they used their traditional roles to mask a range of political activities. While the public and the private continued to exist as distinct categories, usual definitions of appropriate behaviour in each sphere were redefined and given political meaning."[13] However, with no decisive role reversal for women, as **Madhu Kishwar** points out, "The role of the women in the national movement thus remained auxiliary and supportive."[14] **Soma Marik** corroborates, "The nationalist ideal thereby ensured that the middle-class women's entry into the public sphere would be hemmed in by the family and family-related responsibilities in a relatively liberal space created under male patronage."[15] Thus although a natural extension of household activities into the public arena ensured greater visibility of women and bestowed them with greater responsibility as the custodian of the nation, the very ethos of Gandhian philosophy resulted in the reification of gender roles with men heading protest demonstrations, while women confined to spinning charkha, sheltering the protesters at home, tending and looking after them.

The role reversal which Rokeya envisaged in the beginning of this century, fructified from the 1930s, when the trajectory of women's participation in the freedom struggle took a new turn, with women vying shoulder to shoulder with men in taking the British administration head-on. Dubbed as revolutionaries, as opposed to the passive resistance of Gandhi, these fire-brand women changed the course of history. A series of daring activities involving women marked their entry into the arena of revolutionary nationalism, which had so long been the forte of men. **Pritilata Waddedar** was a key member of the Chittagong Armoury Raid and committed suicide by consuming cyanide before being caught by the police, in 1930. A slew of attempted assassinations, mostly carried out by women, followed. Fourteen year old **Suniti Chowdhury** and fifteen-year old **Shanti Ghosh** killed C. G. B. Stevens, the District Magistrate of Tippera in December 1931. **Bina Das** shot at the Lieutenant-Governor Stanley Jackson during the convocation at the University of Calcutta in 1932. Although the aim misfired, the very act sent the whole country in a state of fervour. Recruited through groups formed in colleges, schools and universities, they participated in much the same type of training as their male counterparts: sword and lathi play, target practice and handling bombs and munitions. These hardened them to bear the unbearable torture meted out by the brutal police force. Shanti and Suniti were both subjected to inhuman treatment in the custody with their nails being uprooted and forced to go without food or water for days, to extract confession. They, however, remained unflinching in the face of such bestial cruelty. As Shanti Das later explained, "Our mission was to rouse the women of India by our dead defiance and courage in successful action."[16] In accomplishing their mission, as **Durba Ghosh** points out, there was considerable 'un-sexing' of these women as they refused to subscribe to the traditional social diktat and somewhat blurred the distinction between the sexes by breaking gender stereotypes and participating on equal footing with the male counterparts. As **Pritilata Waddedar** eloquently questions, "I wonder why there should be any distinction between males and females in a fight for the cause of the country's freedom? If our brothers can join a fight for the cause of the motherland why can't the sisters?…Why should we, the modern Indian women, be deprived of joining this noble fight to redeem our country from foreign domination? If sisters can stand side by side with the brothers in a Satyagraha movement, why are they not so entitled in a revolutionary movement?"[17]

Such acts of valour continued into the decade of the 1940s, with women from the grass-root level plunging headlong into the **Tebhaga** movement in Bengal in 1946 The Communist-led Tebhaga movement, witnessed the never-say-die attitude of landless peasant women, crowning it as "one of the most important political events in twentieth century Bengal."[18] Demanding their just share of the harvest, which they have so long been denied, Tebhaga (literally one-third of the share)

witnessed rural women fighting at par with men. **Peter Custers**'s study details how peasant women took up the cudgels of leadership when the menfolk were arrested.[19] In Twenty-four Parganas, after the police had rounded up the men and were about to leave, suddenly the sounds of conch-shells, gongs, utensils filled the air. Women— Hindu, Muslims, tribals—rushed out of their huts with brooms, sticks, knives and surrounded the police party. A pitched battle ensued and the women-only mob could be dispersed only after the police opened fire. In northern Mysmensigh, the tribal women found leadership in the fearless Rashomoni. Under her aegis, the women formed resistance groups to thwart police raids. During one such raid, Rashomoni, armed with just a knife, fought valiantly against the police force, lethally injuring one till she succumbed to the police bullet. In Narail sub-division of Jessore district, around 250 women formed the *Nari Bahini* under the courageous leadership of an unlettered peasant woman named **Sarala**, to repel police raids. When the police contingent arrived by boat on the riverbank, the *Nari Bahini* dragged the boat back to the river. The hapless policemen literally had to beg for mercy and beat a hasty retreat.[20] As **Kavita Panjabi** eloquently points out the Tebhaga movement obfuscated the distinction between the private and the public spheres leading to an overwhelming sense of liberation and belonging.

Such acts of courage and defiance, though have eluded the pages of mainstream history, nevertheless, testify how women, across class and caste defied the socially prescribed norms to chart out paths of their own. Through their valorous acts, these women provide an effective counter-narrative to the essentialist construction of Indian women.

15.4.2 Associations and Organisations

Such individual valorous acts were complimented by organisations and associations dedicated to the cause of the women. One of the earliest organisations founded by a woman for women in this century, was that of **Sarala Debi Chaudhurani**, niece of Rabindranath Tagore, married to a Punjabi, based in the Lahore area. Her *Hindu-Sahayak Sabha* founded in 1906 at Lahore, attempted to impart physical training to women to make them physically fit in order to answer the call of the nation. Later branches of this Sabha were founded in Multan, Jhang, Sialkot, Lyallpur and Gujranwala. In 1910, she set up the *Bharat Stree Mahamandal* at Lahore with branches in many Indian cities and village for imparting education to purdah women.[21]

By the early 1930s women's organisations emerged as a consolidated force and were able to respond to national and international issues. The **Girls' Student Association** (GSA) was formed under the aegis of the Communist Party of India

stemming from the need "for a separate women's organization because otherwise it was difficult for girl students to come into the organization. Girls could not enter boys' colleges and vice-versa."[22]It was formed at the initiative of leftist students in 1938–39 to draw in more girl students since social mores made it difficult for women to take part actively and where women's own problems were less likely to be taken up. The GSA, which functioned at least till the immediate post-war years 1945–46, drew in a large number of women in Bengal. By 1943, the membership of GSA shot to 3050.[23]During the turbulent decade of the 1940s, women's organisations played stellar roles in tackling situations arising out of war and famine. One of the frontline organisations at this juncture was the *Mahila Atmaraksha Samiti* (MARS) which started out as an organisation for self-defence of women, but soon catapulted itself to a conglomerate of units whose primary focus was social upliftment. By 1944, the MARS had 331 primary units with a membership of 43000.[24]Essentially geared towards providing self-defence training to women, the activities of MARS took a new direction with the onset of the Bengal famine of 1943. Recollecting the experience Uma Sehanobis, one of the frontliners in the organisation, narrated how MARS was involved in relief work during the devastating famine, providing succour to the famished souls by running canteens to distribute food and other items of daily consumption like coal. Langars or community kitchens were opened to distribute khichdi amongst the hungry and emaciated. The MARS volunteers worked untiringly, to provide medicines and handle emergencies.[25] Another pioneering association that was formed during this calamitous time was *Nari Seva Sangha*. Formed in 1944 by **Seeta Chaudhuri**, the organisation rendered yeomen service during the famine, working primarily amongst the women, providing them with relief and succour.

The decade also witnessed women's organisations speaking out in favour of women's rights. As the nation inched towards freedom, the associations became more vocal about garnering for women their due place in the society. The protracted debate over the Hindu Code Bill that originated in 1941 and continued into 1956, offers a glimpse into the prolonged fight that women had to wage to gain their rights. The Hindu Law Committee, constituted by the government, to evaluate and suggest amendments to the existing laws governing women's rights to property, marriage presented tow draft bills in 1942, pertaining to intestate succession and marriage. The Committee travelled all over India, eliciting opinion from the public and finally submitting its report along with the final draft of the Hindu Code, in February 1947. In its report, the Committee made a special note, "Almost all women's associations of standing came out strongly in favour of the Code. Women who confidently claimed to represent the views of the vast majority of their educated sisters heartily welcomed the proposals and only wished that they had gone much further."[26]

Thus the indomitable spirit of women, whether at the individual or at the collective level, shone right through the early decades of the twentieth century. They participated in every committee and planning group set up to discuss India's future, while at the individual level, their courage and bravery set the pages of history on fire. Women, it almost seemed, had been accepted as an equal partner in the nation-to-be. They carved their own niche and identity and expressed a mind of their own against male domination.

15.5 Feminism in West Bengal

Independence and the dawn of a new nation, it was believed, would help re-calibrate the role of women who would now actively come forward to take part in nation-building. At the individual as also at the collective level, women more than lived up to the challenges. In West Bengal, feminism, given a head start that it received during the colonial period, more than lived up to the challenge. Both at the individual and at the collective level, the movement gained from strength to strength, to eventually link itself with the national and the global.

15.5.1 Post-Independence : Individual and the Collective

The resilience of the women was felt in everyday lives, when the battered nation was recovering from the aftermath of the Partition. With the nation torn asunder, families were uprooted from their natal set-up and had to eke out a hand-to-mouth existence and begin life afresh in the new country. Once again, women showed their determination and spirit amidst trying times. Ordinary homemakers, to whom the world revolved around the four walls of their sanctuary in the pre-Partition days, were suddenly thrust into a situation where their worlds literally came crashing down. However, fighting against all odds, the refugee women held forth. Over 18,200 women applicants were registered in the Government-managed Employment Service Organisation in 1948.[27] Women successfully made forays into the male bastion. To quote **Jasodhara Bagchi**, "Calcutta was no longer a city of male elites in which women also ran."[28] **Pushpamayee Basu** reminiscences, that while previously the main objective of most girls was to acquire a modicum of education which would help them find a suitable match in the marriage market, the post-Partition years saw these same girls planning to use education as a means of seeking gainful employment to supplement the income of the men folk of their families.[29] In many cases, the women were the sole bread winners of the family in the absence of any adult or able-bodied male members in the family when she was left with no option but to knock from door to door in search of jobs for the most pressing need – to balance the family budget. Like **Gita Sengupta**. They were a family of five – consisting of

her parents and three sisters, she being the middle one. Coming over to Calcutta from Mymensingh after 1950, an uncertain future started at them. It is precisely at this stage that Sengupta and her elder sister took up the reins of the family. The latter found a teaching post in the Patna Government College while at the tender age of sixteen, Sengupta entered the job market as a primary school teacher of *Shishu Vidyapith* on a pay scale of Rs.40 per month. Thus began their combined struggle for survival not only of themselves but their whole family. Even after her marriage in a middle-class politically conscious family, she remained the steering force behind her in-law's family of nearly 15 mouths. Her husband having lost his job because of his leftist orientation, it was solely on her income as a school teacher, that her family was dependent on. Gita Sengupta had to sacrifice her academic pursuits – her university career being cut short as she had to leave her studies mid-way and devote herself towards maintaining her family – she smilingly bore with all these, her only motivation, her only goal being to feed the hungry souls, to clothe the bare bodies.

As in all other social calamities, it was the women who were at the receiving end during the post-Partition years, "It is their homes that are destroyed, their bodies violated, their men killed and they are left with the task of rebuilding the community."[30]For every fire that is lit it is the job of the women to rise from the ashes like a phoenix and build a future for their beloveds. Having been rendered homeless once, they were determined to set up a new home amidst the new setup and protect its sanctity at all costs. Hence we find the women rendering yeomen's service in the setting up of the squatter's colonies. Like **Renu Saha's mother**, a resident of the Azadgarh Colony. The police in order to evict her from the land, hurled abuses at her, threatened her with dire consequences and even once kicked her on the back. But she refused to be intimidated and clung steadfastly to her shack of *mulibansh* and *hogla* leaves. Another unforgettable name, in this respect is **Sandhya Banerjee** of the Sahidnagar Colony. She used to drive the women out of their homes and organise protest marches. Using ordinary ladles, knives and choppers, they staged a defiant battle against the nefarious agents of the landlords. Partition and consequent hardships had hardened their attitudes to the extent that their nerves were steeled to take on the machinery of the state head-on. As against the government move to forcibly cart-load the refugees to the inhospitable terrains of Dandakaranya, protest demonstrations in the form of gheraoing of police-stations and other government establishments had sizeable number of women in their ranks. **Binodini Haldar**, an active member of the refugee organisation United Central Refugee Council (UCRC), recollects those days of agitation:[31]

I joined in the meetings and processions of the UCRC and was jailed thrice. Our first agitation was against Congress government's decision of deportation to

Dandakaranya. We demonstrated in front of the district court in Asansol. Section 144 was imposed and we were arrested for violating the order. At around four in the afternoon, barring eight of us, the rest were released. We were put in judicial custody, where we stayed for a week. But we were undeterred. When the next agitation began, the police cordoned off our procession and started firing. I started running, my sari got torn in the process but I did not stop. I took refuge in a shop at the back of the court. The Dandakaranya issue was the main agenda of our agitation. We resisted. As a result, cash doles (monetary relief given in the refugee camps) of eight families were stopped arbitrarily. We registered a case against this highhanded action, and voluntarily courted arrest. This time we were detained for about a month. The case dragged on for a year and two months. We won the case. Doles were reinstated.

Spontaneous protests erupted in several relief camps located across West Bengal, with women being prominent agitators. Inmates of the Bhadrakali Women's Camp in Hooghly district under the leadership of **Sarajubala, Manjulika Brahma, Surabala Seal** and **Priyabala De**, sat on a hunger-strike in March 1952, demanding improvement for basic facilities like sanitation.[32] Women taking to the streets became a common sight in Calcutta of the 1950s and 1960s. In February 1956, responding to a call by the UCRC, nearly 300 women gathered at a meeting at Raja Subodh Mullick Square to protest against the high-handedness of the government with regard to rehabilitation of the Partition migrants. Be it the anti-tram fare resistance movement or the Teachers' movement, women's participation remained a common thread. The former witnessed large-scale picketing organised by the opposition parties, where women remained undaunted in the face of police bayonets and tear gas. One of the leading faces of the Teachers' movement was **Anila Debi**, who was associated with the All Bengal Teachers' Association (ABTA). When a decision was taken to defy Section 144 imposed by the government to counter the agitation, the members of the MARS mobilised their units throughout West Bengal, to gather in Calcutta in large numbers to defy government-sanctioned restrictions.

An echo of the **Tebhaga** movement resonated from the middle of the 1960s in West Bengal, with the **Naxalbari** movement gaining momentum. Women's participation spanned across the urban and rural areas with upper-caste, middle-class urban women with university education forming the 'rear guard', and poor peasant women from rural areas being at the forefront. Their acts of valour in taking the government machinery head-on and withstanding unbearable torture that often left them maimed and crippled for life had added new dimension to the movement. On 25 May 1967, in response to an attack on a police party the previous day, a fresh contingent of policemen fired eighteen rounds on a congregation of peasant

women led by **Dhaneswari Devi**, killing on the spot eight women and three infants.[33] However, their roles have often got unrecognised and uncatalogued, barring their own memoirs. However, a recent spurt in interest on part of feminist researchers have helped to unravel and bring to the fore the pioneering role of these nameless, faceless women, who valiantly bore the brunt of cruelty and repression at the hands of the police force. **Archana Guha** recounts, "Then I was taken to that torture chamber [in the police headquarter at Lalbazar police station] and they hung me head down in that crouching position. They had tied me up with ropes and put a rod through my bending knees. Then they started hitting on my feet. Runu Guhaniyogi kicked me with boots from time to time and singed my elbows, toes, nails with his cigarette. […] A few hours later they started a new technique. I was hanging. They put a water-vessel right above my head and drops of water started to fall on my head continuously. After a point of time each drop seemed like a bludgeon. […] A strapping policeman made me stand up by pulling my hair and then threw me with force on the wall. But just before my head hit the wall he caught me with my hair and pulled back. He went on doing this. Then one of them caught my head tightly and started to pull out my hair. I was semi-conscious. Then two of them stood up on two chairs side-by side and started to hang me between them with my hair. […] Runu asked two of his men to bind my hands and then hit me on head with a leather club. […] After four days I completely lost consciousness."[34] Crippled for life, Archana now leads a cursed life in Denmark where she has been sent for rehabilitation. Her sister-in-law Latika, too, suffered custodial torture which she narrates in her memoir *Narak Prakashito Hok.* Their courage, resilience and steadfast resolution in the face of brutality have largely remained unrecognised barring a few scholarly works.

The decade of the 70s brought new hope in the form of the setting up of **National Committee on the Status of Women** in 1975, to examine the status of women in the country and to investigate into the extent to which the constitutional and legal provisions had impacted on women's status including their employment and education. The Committee was the first major attempt to review and evaluate data on various aspects of women's status. It was also empowered to comment on the directions of change in women's roles, rights and opportunities due to development. The Committee came out with its findings in the form of a report, popularly known as the ***Towards Equality*** Report (1974), which became a major landmark for the women's movement. The beginnings of the women's movement in India, has often been traced back to this report. The report revealed the deplorable condition of women in the country evident from demographic data, an analysis of the socio-cultural conditions prevalent, the legal provisions and safeguards, economic role played by women in all sectors, women's access to education, political

participation, the policies and programmes for welfare and development, the impact of mass media, etc. The report also made several recommendations which included stressing the important role of the State and the community in the achievement of 'gender equality'.

This watershed event coupled with the UN Declaration of **International Women's Year** in 1975, brought about a sea-change in the coalescing and crystallisation of women's movement in India and West Bengal with the formation of 'autonomous' women's organisations, with expanding base in both urban and rural areas. These organisations rejected formal structure and traditional leadership styles and despite having no prototype to follow, they experimented with leaderless collectives with decision making by consensus, a volunteering of tasks and rotation of responsibility, "The variety of organisations are support groups, agitational groups, grassroots groups, wings of political parties, professional women's groups and research and documentation centres."[35] Dissemination of the messages and issues highlighted by them through newsletters, magazines and booklets in regional languages as well as in English provided creative way of handling Indian women's problems. In 1978, the **Pragatishil Mahila Samiti** (PMS) was formed in Calcutta— a fledgling organisation of women from diverse backgrounds. On a concerted level, this was the first West Bengal-centric organisation which voiced protest against atrocities against women in general. Their presence was felt during the trial of the Debjani Banik murder case when the PMS activists demonstrated outside the court where the case was being heard. They also picketed the house of the lawyer of the accused.

The decade of the 80s increasingly articulated the demand for the study of women's issues in academic institutions and to conduct research based on experiential material and affirmative action. Responding to the call, the University Grants Commission (UGC) financed the setting up of **Women's Studies Centres** (WSC), within or functioning autonomously of the university system for conducting empirical studies on women's issues that would aid the government in formulating policies specifically for the target groups. In West Bengal, the first of such centres was set up at Jadavpur University in January 1988 under the pioneering leadership and vision of **Jasodhara Bagchi**, with the aim to integrate women's experiences, issues, problems and perspectives into other branches of knowledge. The attempt was not only to add a woman's perspective but to transform traditional disciplines through considerations of gender. The development of a feminist perspective went hand in hand with attempts to empower women. The School also aims at dispelling contrived barriers raised by traditional academic disciplines experimenting with new forms of interdisciplinary.

A major objective of the School has been to promote a dialogue between academics and activists, social work and policy making. By facilitating research and extension work, it seeks to enhance the visibility of women and gender issues within the academic community of the University and indeed in wider society. It aims to work towards creating a platform for sensitising government agencies, members of the academia and activists.

At the activism level, after much forethought and deliberations the *Nari Nirjatan Pratirodh Mancha* (Forum Against the Oppression of Women or FAOW) was launched. The first issue to be taken up was the gang-rape of three juvenile Ranchi tribals by the police. When the report appeared in newspapers, a protest meeting and procession were organised and a memorandum was served to the representative of Bihar government in West Bengal. Just before that, the Forum made its first public appearance at the Calcutta Book Fair, a popular and highly respected annual gathering, where all the member organisations jointly took a stall and sold posters, cards, books by women writers, feminist literature, tracts, and leaflets. It was immensely successful and created awareness about the existence of the forum. Apart from the bookstall, the Forum organised a procession of members and a cultural programme at the Book Fair auditorium. The feminist themes of the songs, poems, and skits were something different and created an impact despite the fact that the artistic standards were not too high.[36] Together with **Association for the Protection of Democratic Rights** (APDR) the FAOW took up the case of Archana Guha demanding the suspension of the guilty police officers and the speedy disposition of the trial. Their indefatigable spirit crowned this as one of the most visible crusades of the Forum.

The momentum generated in the 1980s was maintained in the 1990s, too. Increasing collaboration between the women's rights organisations and the WSCs resulting in blending of hands-on experiences and academic rigour added new dimensions to the women's movement. With the liberalisation of the economy in 1991, India entered into a new phase in the socio-economic-political sphere. As **Samita Sen** points out **Empowerment** became the buzz-word.[37] The government of West Bengal set up the West Bengal Commission for Women in 1992 with the goal of protecting women's interests, while spreading awareness and creating a holistic approach to build stronger and more responsible structure where women would be self-sufficient and not at the mercy of men.

The FAOW now reoriented its activism and branched out in three directions—campaigning, counselling, and demonstration. It received cases of individual victims and tried to provide emotional and legal support. These campaigns included custodial rape, the discriminatory population policy, mothers' rights, and the rights of workers

in the sex trade. One important area of campaigning was to combat the rising communalism that reared its head from the early 1990s.[38] 1995 saw the birth of **Maitree**—a network of 22 women's organisations and like-minded individuals. **Maitree** has gained acceptance and visibility with its campaigns against domestic violence, sexual harassment, and interactions with the police. It was thought during meetings with police top brass that better results would be obtained if there was gender sensitisation at the local police station level.

Several non-governmental organisations now took up the cudgels to further the cause of women. Their roles became all the more crucial during ghastly incidents like the Bantala rape and murder in 1990 or the Nehar Banu rape case in 1992. Picketing outside police stations, protest demonstrations stepped up the pressure on the government. **Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Samiti** started working with the sex workers of Songachhi—the largest red light area of Kolkata—from 1992 to sensitise women and their clients about the need for safe sex, arranging for treatment of the afflicted sex workers, condom programming. Gradually they expanded their horizon by running micro-credit programme for sex workers, financial support to aged sex workers, educational and crèche facilities for the children and alternative employment generation for aged and retired sex workers and those who want to opt out of the profession. Women's rights organisations, like **Swayam**, whose tag-line is Ending Violence against Women, was set up in 1997 to provide succour to the victims of domestic violence and to sensitise the society in general on the issue of violence against women and campaign for equality. Another organisation doing pioneering work in this field is **Sachetana**. Established in 1981 by a group of academics and development workers, it is one of the earliest feminist organisations in the state that still continues to be a beacning light in the field of women's movement in India. Sachetana offers legal aid and counseling services, holds discussions on both academic and political subjects, and publishes a magazine, Sachetana, that addresses a wide range of issues. Through its magazine and street plays, Sachetana actively tries to raise the consciousness of its readers and change their mindset. One of Sachetana's plays, *Meye dile Shajiye* (The bride be-decked) examines the commodification of the woman in marriage, while *Bandar Khela* (Monkey show) is a critique of the dowry system.[39]

Another major plank of women's emancipation in West Bengal has been the Self-help Groups (SHGs). SHGs represent a unique approach to financial intermediation. The approach combines access to low-cost financial services with a process of self-management and development for the women who are SHG members. SHGs are formed and supported usually by NGOs or (increasingly) by Government agencies. Linked to wider development programmes, SHGs are seen to confer many

benefits, both economic and social. SHGs enable women to grow their savings and to access the credit which banks are increasingly willing to lend. SHGs can also function as community platforms from cohere women become active in village affairs, stand for local election or take action to address social or community issues (the abuse of women, alcohol, the dowry system, schools, water supply). Even in the remotest areas of West Bengal, SHGs have helped thousands of women to find meaning to their wretched existences. From manufacturing low-cost sanitary pads to incense sticks to lentil dumplings, women associated with the SHGs have thus waged a silent revolution to change the course of their lives. In the tribal belt of Purulia, the tribal women have become environment-conscious, thanks to the SHGs. They have learnt efficient water management techniques and multi-crop approach to achieve self-sufficiency in food crop production in a district which was labelled –drought-prone. **Sadmoni Hembram** who spearheads an SHG named **Petre Madwa** at Tilaboni village of the district prides in the fact that she has a multi-crop land that yields two vegetable and one paddy crop in a year.[40]

The interface of SHGs and NGOs has brought about significant qualitative changes in the lives of thousands of women in West Bengal. NGOs like **ASHA** collaborate with local SHGs to provide holistic betterment of the lives of women. It has been working relentlessly in nearly 100 villages in South 24 Parganas to combat malnutrition amongst women as also promoting primary health care following mixed approaches of behaviour change communication, and facilitating access to formal health service delivery structures. The main issues addressed include safe motherhood, essential new-born care, family planning, management of reproductive tract infections/sexual tract infections, HIV/AIDS control and community participation. In alliance with the SHGs, **ASHA** has implemented several health projects in Murshidabad and Bankura districts. With specific focus on adolescent girls, ASHA has worked with **out of school adolescent girls in these districts** including those working in the beedi making industry in Murshidabad district as well as girls from scheduled caste and tribal families in Bankura district. Along with **Community based Life-skill Education** for adolescents, intensive community sensitisation sessions are being held with parents, teachers, religious leaders, Panchayat members and Government officials including Health & ICDS functionaries. **Peer Educators** are selected from the participants and trained to enable them to provide crucial information to out of school groups. Awareness about rights as women and girls and life- skills are being organised at the village level followed by regular follow up sessions at village level **Drop-in Centers (DICs)** to help empower the adolescent girls in choosing a better future for them.[41]

15.5.2 Stepping into the Millennium

By the turn of the millennium, feminist movement in West Bengal has gained sufficient momentum to become independent enough and chart its own path. The stepping into the new millennium was marked by the historic signing of the **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)** by leaders of 189 countries at the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000. These are essentially eight goals with measurable targets and deadlines to improve the condition of the world's poorest and marginalised lot. The deadline set was 2015. Amongst the goals set two were directly linked with women—to promote gender equality and empower women and to improve maternal health. At the individual and organisational level, fight for gender parity and justice, thus, continued with renewed vigour.

A study conducted by the Centre for Social Research in 2003, showed that nearly five crore married women in India were victims of domestic violence, of which only a paltry and shocking 0.1% were reported.[42] Conviction rates, as evident from the available data, were low. In 2000, the conviction rate in 498A was a meagre 21.7%.[43] On 8 March 2002, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government introduced a separate bill in the Lok Sabha called the 'Protection for Domestic Violence Bill, 2001.' To pressurise the government to pass the bill without any ado, feminist organisations like Swayam campaigned relentlessly. Even after the passage of the bill into act, to ensure that the Act becomes a potent weapon against domestic violence, feminist organisations in West Bengal took the lead in forming the **Maitree** network—a conglomerate of women's rights organisations across the state. Formed in 2009, it remains committed to building a strong women's voice where women are brought together and mobilised to claim their rights and end any form of injustices committed against them, which is deemed to be the key to achieving gender equality and lasting change. Networks like **MAROMI** initiated by **Swati Chatterjee**, works with the medico-legal issues related to the violence against women.

The feminist movement in West Bengal has had a telling impact in the rural areas. Not only has the women at the village level become aware of hygiene and sanitation, thanks to the untiring efforts of NGOs, but they had also become vocal about their rights as evident during the Singur and Nandigram agitations. Fear of police brutality did not deter these women. In the context of Singur movement the women protestors, as mentioned the Interim Report of the Citizens' Committee on Singur and Nandigram on 29 January 2007, "…were beaten up by male policemen, filthy language was used…."[44] **The National Confederation of Human Rights Organizations (NCHRO)** mentions on 5 December 2006 that during the Singur protest, "The female arrestees at Chandannagar police station alleged that they were

manhandled, beaten, molested and sexually abused by the male policemen at the time of arrest and while being transported to the police station."[45] The women protesting land acquisition did exhibit a well-developed consciousness about the goal of the movements and the difficulties involved in attaining it. In the context of Nandigram, the Muslim women surrounding the members of the Citizen's Committee expressed their obstinacy, "Jami amra chharbuni" (we will not leave our lands). They continued with the same vigour, "Even if we lose our sons and husbands, we will fight on, how many policemen can they send, there are more of us."[46] The ***Bhumi Uchchhed Pratirodh Committee*** formed to oppose land acquisition counted amongst its front-runners many village women who played a stellar role in the on-going agitation. As a price for their defiance many women faced brutality and abuse. **Tanika Sarkar** has pointed out that women at Nandigram were prepared to admit rape and sexual abuse in defiance of social conventions. Sarkar met a mother and her two daughters who were raped and beaten by several pro-government activists on 15 March 2007. All three travelled to Kolkata and narrated their rape and humiliation, including the youngest daughter, who was twelve years old. Sarkar was struck by how these women were willing to present evidence of their abuse as their bodies now appeared to them as mere sites for torture and violence, no longer bodies of women.[47]

The indomitable spirit of organisations and individuals came to the fore whenever women's bodies have been violated or rights infringed on, be it the Park Street rape case or the Nirbhaya rape and murder. Candle light vigils, protest demonstrations, mobilisation of the media went a long way in whipping up mass support against such heinous acts. The feminist movement in West Bengal was successful in stirring up the collective conscience of the society. As the millennium progressed that the movement was successful in empowering women became all the more evident when the individual and the collective merged during the agitation against the NRC. While organisations across the country and the state protested against this 'unjust' move of the government, individual heroics by women from impoverished and semi-impoverished background caught the attention. The sprawling Park Circus maidan in Kolkata was the epicentre of protest in the state. The sit-in demonstration saw mostly first-timers. The call for protest was issued by **Asmat Jamail**, a middle-aged homemaker. Her grit and determination sparked off a peaceful protest demonstration in the heart of the city. Inspired by her call, women of all ages—college-going students, housewives, even lactating mothers carrying infants in their laps—thronged the maidan. Without resorting to any political sloganeering, the women registered their protests through songs and poems. Feminism in the state has indeed come a long way.

15.6 Feminist Movement in West Bengal : Global Linkages

Feminism in India has always shared some sort of a complicated equation with western feminism. Whereas, on a pan-Indian scale as in Bengal, women's emancipation was initiated by men in the nineteenth century and the cause being taken up by women in the twentieth century, in case of western feminism, it is the women who were at the forefront right from the beginning. The western-educated male intelligentsia in Bengal, imbibing western ideals like liberty and equality tirelessly worked for the eradication of social evils that chained women within homes. As **Maitreyee Chaudhuri** points out, "The earlier Western ideological influence and the opposition to it were both more powerful and explicitly political…It was in the political sphere of colonial India that social reformers and nationalists sought to make history, sought to articulate a distinct nationalist and feminist identity."[48] While at the initial stage, feminism did engage and in turn was influenced by the West, especially during the colonial period, as Chaudhuri points out that, from the 1990s, presence of a sizeable section of non-West scholars in the academia of the West, specially scholars from South Asia, have helped break this western mould and issues pertaining to the non-West, which had so far remained subsumed and invisible now came to the surface. Thus as Chaudhuri emphatically points out, "voices of non-Western women are now validated in the West."[49]

West Bengal trained scholars like **Srimati Basu, Raka Ray**'s scholarly works are hailed and feted in the West. Working in the western academia, they have carved respective niches for themselves and through their academic pursuits help forge the connection between the global and the regional/local. Basu's works like *She Comes to Take Her Rights: Indian Women, Property and Propriety* (State University of New York Press, 1999); *The Trouble with Marriage: Feminists Confront Law and Violence in India* (University of California Press, 2015) or Ray's *Fields of Protest: Women's Movement in India* (University of Minnesota Press, 1999), or the co-edited volume *Social Movement in India: Poverty, Power and Politics* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005) having chapters titled "Domination and Subordination in Calcutta" "Calcutta: A Hegemonic Political Field" by bringing out the various nuances of women's movements in West Bengal, link the micro with the macro.

At the ground level, Swayam initiated the foundation of AMAN, an international network for combating domestic violence, in 2006. A conglomeration of nearly 150 NGOs from across the globe, it works towards knowledge-building and dissemination and organises workshops for advocacy, capacity building and driving institutional changes. As a part of the global network, leading NGOs from West Bengal form an

integral part of the delegation attending the meetings of the Commission on the Status of Women and also as experts to the Global Technical Consultation on the Coordination and Governance of Essential Services to Women and Girls Subject to Violence in Madrid, Spain organised by UN Women in June 2015. Swayam was part of the delegation of women's organisations who met members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in Geneva, in July 2014.

A Global Campaign for 16 days against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) was launched by the New Jersey-based Centre for Women's Global Leadership to address issues related to GBV. Now an annual event, the campaign runs between 25 November and 10 December. West Bengal organisations enthusiastically devise their own theme-based programmes to generate awareness through interactive sessions, street plays, leafleting, songs and dances, games and quizzes. In 2015, an event names *Take Back the Night* saw women staying out all night to protest against the violence and the lack of safety that women experience at night while accessing public spaces and public transport. In 2012, US-based playwright Eve Ensler founded the **One Billion Rising Campaign** to end rape and sexual violence against women. By the end of the year, activists from nearly 160 countries, including India, signed up for the campaign. In West Bengal, the campaign translated as **"Eksho Koti-r Utthan"** found ready resonance. A car rally with women on the wheel marked the campaign in 2014, while in 2015, the sound of the dhaak played by women rendered the air.

15.7 Conclusion

Not only with the west, feminists from West Bengal, have deep-seated connections with like-minded individuals and organisations across the borders. On the eve of the Bangladesh liberation war, networks were established with feminists of West Bengal to highlight the plight of Bangladeshi women and to draw the attention of the world at large. Leading activists of West Bengal at that time, namely, Geeta Mukherji, Bani Dasgupta, Nibedita Nag travelled widely to mobilise support for Bangladesh's independence and were deeply involved in their efforts to raise funds and bring to focus the Bangladesh issue in the wider arena. As one Bangladesh Mahila Parishad member later acknowledged, exposure to activism in West Bengal with its strong leftist leaning helped in establishing global networks.[50] Out of the realisation for the need of cross-border collaboration was born SANGAT in April 1998 with members from India, Bangladesh, Maldives, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Afghnaistan and Nepal. Spearheaded by the feisty Kamla Bhasin, SANGAT counts amongst its active members several West Bengal based NGOs and individuals. Such

linkages continue to nurture feminism obliterating the boundaries on the ground, as evident from networks and training programmes oragnised by leading NGOs of both West Bengal and Bangladesh. Case in point is the Two-Country Gender Workshop—an awareness generation programme spanning 15 days—organised by Swayam in collaboration with Progroshor of Bangladesh.

15.8 Summary

Feminist movement in West Bengal, thus, is endowed with a rich history. From being initiated by the patriarchy, it has now matured enough to chart out its own path, where it has gained sufficient autonomy to make its presence felt in the global arena. While it tries to break the stereotypes and change the overall outlook of the society, the movement is not anti-men, rather engages with men to sensitise them about gender-based violence and turn them into agents of change. An all-inclusive participatory approach is thus the hallmark of feminist movement in West Bengal.

15.9 Questions

1. Answer in Detail:

1. Were the women writers in the second half of the nineteenth century trying to break gender stereotypes through their writings?
2. Were the individual and the collective efforts in the second half of the nineteenth century and during the early years of the twentieth century geared towards women's emancipation?
3. Did the participation of women from the rural background enrich the Tebhaga movement?
4. Did Partition bring about a change by re-calibrating women's role in the society?
5. Enunciate the role of FAOW in furthering the cause of women.
6. Write a note on the 16 day global campaign to end violence against women and girls.

2. Answer Briefly:

1. Trace the beginning of feminism in Bengal. Do we see the visibility of the women at this stage?
2. When did women emerge as agents of change of their own lives and that

of others? In what mode do we see women making a start in this context?

3. Did Gandhiji's movements give a boost to feminism? Was Gandhiji envisioning a role reversal for women?

4. Was post-independence feminism in West Bengal, in the initial years, being confined primarily to individual initiatives?

5. Trace the role of some of the organisations in the growth of feminist movement in West Bengal?

6. How have the SHGs forwarded the cause of women empowerment in West Bengal?

7. How have women from the rural areas plunged into the cause to protect their rights and claim their basic right of livelihood?

8. How have the Bengal feminists kept pace with the global scenario?

3. Answer Very Briefly:

1. Can the role of women in the colonial period be identified as emancipatory? Did the individual and the collective merge in their efforts to improve the plight of women?

2. From the colonial to the post-colonial did we witness any qualitative change in feminism as practiced in Bengal? Elucidate your answer with examples.

3. Analyse the role of NGOs and SHGs in improving the condition of women in West Bengal.

4. "Feminism in West Bengal has a character of its own." Do you agree with the view?

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UNIT 16 ❑ Projection of Gender in the Mass Media Print and Electronic

Structure

16.1 Learning Objectives

After going through the sub units the students will be able to:

   ✓   To learn how gender is represented in mass media today.

   ✓   To understand the social background of gender roles portrayed in mass media in India.

   ✓   To develop an understanding of gendering in Indian mass media: print & electronic.

   ✓   To identify the existing types of projections of gender and its stereotypes.

   ✓   To learn about the voices and movements against sexism in mass media.

   ✓   To develop a critical overview of mass media and its relationship with gender.

16.2 Introduction

Information is power. It is a source of knowledge. Modern age is the age of information. Information plays an important role in each and every sphere of life. We are living in an age of information revolution. Newspapers, radio and television are all well-known resources for getting information. Although mass media as a subject of study is not very old but its history is as old as the humanity itself. Mass media and journalism have evoked into a strong force, over the years. Print media was the first phase followed by radio and television and later on internet and websites. In fact in broader sense, media has two different segments. One is print media and the other is electronic media. Electronic media may be more popular than print media, due to its visual power. But, print media has lasting value. Journalism and mass media deal with a wider range of information comprising collection, writing, editing, proof reading and publication.

With the invention of new communication technologies, the power of mass media has grown in stature. The mass media shapes our perceptions and views of social reality by presenting only some aspects of reality and by continuation repetition of images and messages. We can say that the role and content of mass media has changed dramatically, playing decisive role in reinforcing gender stereotypes and patriarchal culture by constructing new images and meanings by setting agendas for public opinion through selective themes and views. In this chapter, we would like to understand a global picture of representation of women in mass media – films, television, serials, and advertisements on the basis of available Indian and international research literature on women and mass media. It argues that women and their concerns are no longer invisible in the mass media. However, old sex stereotypes have continued by taking new forms. On the other hand, progressive discourse on women's issues often co-opted and re-constructed in the mainstream media to establish the hegemony of dominant social classes. Hence, the task of changing media images of women has become more in the context of market economy.

16.2.1 What is Media?

The media is instrumental in defining what we think, how we look and our social place and issues in the society. The term mass media is defined as a means of communication that operates on a large scale, reaching and involving virtually everyone in the society to a greater or lesser degree. Mass media has been influencing the social, cultural, economic, spiritual, political and religious aspects of society as

well as personal level thinking, feeling and acting. Media feed the people with the latest information and create the need for change in contemporary society. Mass media have both positive and negative role in the society. Media is all pervasive; its functioning is very subtle. Media plays a vital role in dissemination of information. It is called the fourth pillar of democratic policy. Radio, television, films and the printed word reach all of us in this age of information and each strives to perfect its modes of communications to become more effective as a medium. By gradually shaping public opinion on personal beliefs, and even people's self-perceptions, media influences the process of socialization and shapes ideology and thinking.

In advertisements across television and print media, women are usually portrayed as young, physically attractive, and adhering to the culturally accepted standards of beauty and devotion to feminine duties. Women in these projections are often objectified based on their physicality and desirability is an essential tool of sexism in mass media. It is thus important to study and understand the cause-effect relationship of gender and mass media in society today.

The term mass media denotes various forms of entertainment; television, films, music, newspaper, magazines, internet, advertising, etc., disseminating information and it is used by media organization to target and impact youth. Idealized beauty standards, irrelevant sexualisation and domestication are only some of the ways that women in media are portrayed today.[Indian journal of women and development, Oct 2008:45] The study provides a general overview of how we perceive things and states that these give a negative image to young people. Radio, television, newspaper, magazines and films play a vital role in spreading information, propagating, educating and enlightening, strengthening national integration, creating national identity etc. Mass communication essentially means dissemination of information, ideas and entertainment by the communication media. If one was to ask what is today's most powerful vehicle in moulding of beliefs, attitudes, values and lifestyles, one would say it is media. By becoming more gender aware in content and language, media can present a clearer and more accurate picture of the roles and responsibilities of both men and women in the society. The need for mass media to cover the entire population is widely admitted. Developing countries give priority to broadcast media, radio and television, even though the people's access is not always equitable and balanced. (Aggarwal 1994, Rao and Ann anta, 2000). Mass media has been influencing the social, cultural, economic and religious aspects of the society. The impact of mass media especially the television on the society has been compared with the effect of water dripping steadily on a stone imperceptibly eroding old values and attitudes in favour of new ones. It gives the people latest information and creates the need for

change in contemporary society.

Why do social scientists attribute importance to study of images and stereotypes of gender in media? Femininity, as well as masculinity, are not biological, but rather, cultural constructs. Representations and manifestations of femininity differ across cultures, time and societies. Femininity is culturally and socially constructed by the family, education, the public, and to a larger extent, the media. In this respect, the long-term change in women's images in media could help change the perceptions and stereotypes women face in a society.[1]

In the initial stages of its development, mass media-basedindustries were managed exclusively by men. The media images of men and women were tailored to men's preferences. In other words, men were creating media images of men and women they wished to see in reality.

Media images of women have become a subject of criticism in Feminist Media Studies since 1960s, when Betty Friedan in her book entitled The Feminine Mystique (1963) revealed and criticized the image of an ideal woman in post-war America. Friedan calls this image "the happy housewife heroine."[2] Following her, numerous organizations, feminist groups and journals researched and revealed the discriminatory nature of women's images in advertisements and films. The troublesome findings of their research were behind the reason of UNESCO's statement on Mass Media in 1979, namely: "Taking into consideration that TV programs give information and reflect on gender roles in real life, it must be stated that women's images are distorted and unrealistic in these programs. All kind of entertainment programs portray women in a dual image. On one hand, they are decorative objects. Yet, at the same time, they are passive individuals in the household and in marriage who are dependent on men for financial, emotional and physical support."[3] Despite the fact that today media increasingly associate femininity with independent and powerful women, qualities informed by sexuality continue to play a dominant role in the shaping of femininity.

Of the many influences on how we view men and women, media are the most pervasive and one of the most powerful. Woven throughout our daily lives, media insinuate their messages into our consciousness at every turn. All forms of media communicate images of the sexes, many of which perpetuate unrealistic, stereotypical, and limiting perceptions. Three themes describe how media represent gender. First, women are underrepresented, which falsely implies that men are the cultural standard and women are unimportant or invisible. Second, men and women are portrayed in stereotypical ways that reflect and sustain socially endorsed views of gender. Third,

depictions of relationships between men and women emphasize traditional roles and normalize violence against women.

Did You Know?

Gender Portrayal & Law

❖ The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986, punishes the indecent representation of Women, which means "the depiction in any manner of the figure of a woman; her form or body or any part thereof in such way as to have the effect of being indecent, or derogatory to, or demeaning women, or is likely to deprave, corrupt or damage the public morality or morals. It states that no person shall publish or cause to publish or cause to be published or arrange to take part in the publication or exhibition of any advertisement, which contains indecent representation of women in any form.

❖ Section 292 of Indian Penal Code prevents the sale of obscene books, pamphlet and other representation that shall be deemed to be lustful.

16.3 Socio-Psychological Perspective of Gender Portrayal in Media

Women's participation, performance and portrayal are the important domains, which is a matter of concern for the social science researchers and particularly feminists. The image of women portrayed by the media through TV serials, pop shows, films and newspapers, is need to be reconstructed for the empowerment and development of the women. It has been widely acknowledged that media can play substantial role in promoting and spreading information in the society and are regarded as the key players in the social, political and economic development of women. Media directly or indirectly affects human psychology.

Media can focus on all the problems faced by women by giving a space to women to talk about their rights or freedoms and most importantly by providing a democratic environment where women can participate, represent their womanhood and in which they will be portrayed positively. It is important to understand the psychosocial mechanisms through which symbolic communication influences human thoughts and action. Communications systems work through dual pathways i.e. direct

and mediated (social) pathway. In the direct pathway, it stimulates the changes by informing, enabling, motivating, and guiding participants. In the socially mediated pathway, media influences connect participants to social networks and community settings. The mass media in India has not made adequate efforts to discuss serious issues concerning women and prepare the women to play their rightful and equal role in society. The overall effect of the portrayal of women in media is to reinforce rather than reduce prejudices and stereotypes.[1]

16.3.1 The influence of mass media on Gender perceptions

During the last two decades, the media have undergone a sea change, particularly in their intellectual context and cultural ambience. There are two sources from which the transformation draws sustenance and inspiration: one emanating from outside and the other internally generated. The state which seeks to subordinate the media to global control, comes with a variety of promises of development, technology, and extremely appealing to the modernizing quest of the middle class. It leads to an intellectual climate in favourof a mode of development. After eighties, the transnational corporations not only created a strong hold over the economy but also on mass media, telecommunications and information technology as well as fibre optics and the internet. Their oligopoly propagates capitalist ideology leading to the strengthening of the global capitalist system (Hermen and Machesney, 1977). Capitalism leads by suppressing humanity. Suppression in society can be noticed in race, class or gender, for example: Women labour not considered for equal wage, marginalized castes not given equal standards or rights, etc. Currently, capitalism has found a powerful tool in the mass media, especially satellite and cable television and advertisements for reinforcing the patriarchal value system and reinforcement of gender and economic inequalities.

Talking of women in society; the male ownership of private property in society transformed women's social labour into labour for an individual and ultimately served capital. The latent maleness that existed in the vicious and brutal stage manifested as control of women's labour, their sexuality, and fertility also, which resulted in the oppression of women. The patriarchal value system itself reveals the truth and oppression of women by class, caste and gender. Media content creates needs primarily and then transforms into consumer needs. Women are treated as consumers and as commodities to be exploited in the advertising television, film and pornographic industry. Women even have faced the marginalization in economic labour force, in the post 1980s globalization women have been regarded as subordinate classes who bears the onslaught of globalization. The media, especially television reinforces the

conservative and pathetic role of women as the upholders of a value system by reinforcing consumer culture.[2]

Media influence has increased to such an extent that an individual finds it difficult to maintain an identity and self-understanding without using media s the reference point. The power of the media in shaping the world's perception has increased manifold over the years. Due to the outreach and technological sophistication, Media's role has now expanded and increased beyond the mere supply of information. It can be said, that can now 'create reality'. Media can effectively shape public opinion, influence personal beliefs and even alter people's self-perceptions. Ideologies, thought processes and the methods of socializations are greatly influenced by the media. It is time that media becomes highly sensitive to gender issues. There is no doubt that the stereotypical portrayal of women and minorities in India could help to reinforce cultural stereotypes rather than stimulate new thinking about the roles in Society. (Keval J. Kumar, 2008)

By 'gender' here we mean the roles and responsibilities that have been constructed by the society, in a given culture or location. These roles have political, cultural environmental, economic, social, and religious factors influencing them. Custom, law, class, ethnicity, and individual or institutional bias also influence 'gender stereotype'. Within the above framework, Gender attitudes and behaviours can be learned and can also be changed.

According to Gender stereotypical perceptions women are supposed to be dependent, weak, incompetent, emotional, fearful, flexible, passive, modest, soft-spoken, gentle, care takers while men are powerful, competent, important, logical, decision makers, aggressive, focused, strong and assertive.

Gender stereotype and gender inequality is so deeply engraved in the long history of social consciousness that it is now believed that only the media with its tremendous reach and power would be the ideal tool in bringing about gender equality. In India where a patriarchal society flourishes, 'son preference' is an age-old gender bias, in which the male of the family bears the responsibility of 'carrying forward' the family's name. He is supposed to support his parents in old age and also perform their last rites when they die. The fact that daughters are generally regarded as *'Parayadhan'* or 'somebody else's wealth' and the giving away as dowry to the groom ensure that daughters are often seen as an 'economic liability'.[3]

16.4 Portrayal of Women in Mass Media

The reach of mass media among a majority of the Third World War is much less due to the factors such as illiteracy, inaccessibility, lack of respite from household chores, inconvenient program timings, and traditional restrictions that inhabit their mobility to go out to the theatre or cinema hall. The ways in which women are portrayed in media has emerged as an important area of research and action among feminist researchers and activists in developing countries since the 1980s. It was the comprehensive study of Gallagher 1983 on the portrayal of women in the mass media that drew our attention to demeaning and derogatory media images of women across the world. (The study was conducted in several developed countries such as Australia, Austria, Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany, Denmark, Finland, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and developing countries of China, Columbia, Brazil, Iran, Jamaica, Philippines, Puerto, Rico, Senegal and Venezuela). The study concluded that except in the case of government controlled media in "socialist" countries (for e.g. China) media under represent or misrepresent women and their concerns use them in advertising as a commodity and present traditional stereotyped images of women as passive, dependent and subordinate to men. Subsequently, how media in different countries portray women have been discussed by women's group and researchers in various forms in the 1980s. Although periodically efforts are made to highlight the existing trends in the portrayal in media, most of the countries have remained fragmentary and essentially descriptive in nature. After Gallagher's study, probably no systematic review of literature on media portrayal of women has been undertaken in a large number of developing countries. It is against the gap in systematic and critical media research in developing countries that this session attempts to highlight continuity and changes in the portrayal of women in films, television and print media (newspaper and magazines) In spite of shortage of media content in divergent societal context, the Indian situation throws light on how media reinforces gender and social relations, while at times challenging them.

16.4.1 Television and projection of gender roles

Television for a long time has been a tool in promoting the stereotypes of gender roles and tends to show them as being natural. The television industry is usually male dominated therefore most of what is produced tends to take a male perspective therefore bringing about male gaze. Through such productions girls get to learn that this is a man's world and hence they get to change their personalities.

'It is a very powerful and highly influential means to make and communicate gender equality and gender culture of society are mass media technologies which have become an essential part of individual daily lives and culture in the world over' (Craig, 2003, p.93). The mass media are able to genuinely make legal gender ideas and philosophy shaped by gender politics and beliefs, and to increase the likelihood or chance of their reception by the general audiences.

The mass informs and also gives great pleasure and full entertainment. It is a dominant influence in distinguishing the roles of men and women in a civilized world. Morley in his work opines that, 'The younger generations are especially influenced by its depiction of gender roles. Even though television has improved very well in its representation of gender, women are still stereotype in conventional roles, and under-represented, while men are revealed or seen as dominant figures' (Lawrence, 2004, p.28). Generally, women are known to be mothers whiles men are depicted as the bread winners of the family.

There is a general agreement that the mass media act as very significant agents of interaction, in cooperation with the family unit and peers, and it contribute to ensuring the gender roles are shaped effectively. Without doubt, at individuals' level, it is normally learnt to be male or female ' this does not come naturally and the mass media helping in making such roles seem as if they are normal. And there is no doubt that the mass presents influential, compelling images of gender. It has been shown that many male individuals spend most of their time with male role-models on the television. But television as a means of socializing is not accountable for shaping the gender roles of individuals. There is abundance of instances of gender-typed conducts around the world today. An exceptional involvement of the television may be to present clear examples of models seen in a larger world than that which is more honestly experienced domestically and the locality. Wherever they get their thoughts from, by the age of about eight, it seems that most kids develop precise and definite stereotypes about what the sexes can perform or cannot accomplish. Most individuals tend to see the mass media as unavoidably socializing children into customary stereotypical roles, because of the commonness or popularity of such images on the television and the importance attribute to them by children (Donna, 2010, p.35). On the other hand, such records tend to overrate the power of mass media and underrate the multiplicity of ways in which people; mostly children tend to handle their life's experiences. Most television images of boys, girls, men and women are more different and less clear-cut than such arguments suggest. In the world today, the television offers conflicting images, which can be understood in several ways, and viewers are

far more dynamic interpreters than the inactive recipients suggested by such records.

Craig states that, 'The prospective influence of the television may be greatest during teenage years (between 12 and 18), since at this phase gender plays such a significant role in social life. At this juncture prevailing gender pictures on TV may tend to strengthen and support traditional expectations among adolescents, thus bringing to mind role variances' (Craig, 2003, p.90). Some individuals speculate that the space between a teenager self-concepts and highly fascinating media images may occasionally induce personal uncertainty. In a nutshell, although there are enormous gaps in our understanding of developmental factors, the developmental point of view gives emphasis to the problem of talking about the weight of television on a growing kid in general. And the critical significance of the family should not be ignored, either. It would be improbable for children not to be subjective by the contradictory ways in which their parents use the television. In some families in which the gender roles are basically traditional, the television may tend to serve to strengthen such gender roles. In this way TV most definitely plays a very vital role in the building of gender roles.

Despite the fact that there is little uncertainty that TV presents largely conventional gender photos there is this mixed evidence about the effects of such images or pictures on gender thoughts and behaviours? It is quite hard and extremely difficult to cut off the role of mass media (TV), since people are influenced by their entire environment, even though there is reasonably widespread acceptance that over time, still yet the mass media seems possible to influence people's thoughts concerning gender roles. The watching of television by individuals may tend to contribute to gender role development and/or strengthening amongst children and teenagers, and some associating stereotyping of gender roles with profound TV spectators. On the other hand, there is proof that opposing stereotypical portrayals do appear able to influence the perceptions of most kids, but in general such portrayals are uncommon. In summary, the influence of television gender images or pictures on kids is not very beyond question, partially because they have not constantly been well designed.

Rheingold writes, 'There is a modest relationship between presentation patterns and gender stereotypes. There is not much confirmation yet for any great impact of the mass media (TV). Kids are not inactive recipients of images shown on the television' (Rheingold, 2000, p.447). Their open feelings to gender role-play a significant part in understanding the meaning of images of gender on the television.

16.4.1.1. Television Research in India

Television expansion, both in magnitude and multiplicity, seems to be phenomenal in the eighties by any stretch on imagination. Earlier, it reflected a sad saga of extremes caution and was considered a luxury. Mid-seventies saw the Satellite Television experimentation, which opened the floodgate of an operational Satellite Television system capable of covering the entire country. In less than seven years, there is a conscious effort at all levels within the government for rapid and large-scale expansion of Television research on the one hand and towards having a multi-channel television system for the selected urban viewers on the other. The entire effort is towards providing Television signals in the technical sense to a large number of potential Television viewers. Also in this scheme, as of now, little effort seems to have been devoted to provide messages and programs relevant to a given region or linguistic group, leaving aside special target groups like the poor, women and children. Somehow technological expansion of television has followed the creation of audience research units and production facilities. Experience is that communication research production planning should follow the technological expansion of Television (Chitnis, 1977). Within the audience research units of Doordarshan, one observes two kind of communication research approaches being followed, one for rural viewers and the other for urban viewers, in which the urban Television research has an upper hand. At present administratively and academically the research in Doordarshan id replica of audience research unit of All India Radio except the Research and Evaluation Cells located in Cuttack, Delhi and Hyderabad. Major research planning and execution is conducted from its headquarters and suggestion for its research in most cases is initiated by the production of the administrative staff. Such audience research plays the 'audit' and 'fault-finding' with little positive function towards improving the quality of program production of enhancing the media utilization. The communication research, which is turned from "sender oriented " to "receiver oriented", makes significant organizational change and arguments with the audience research unit both by money and manpower.

16.4.1.2. Television Research on Women

A research was enhanced during Satellite Industrial Television Experiment (SITE) both women and children were treated as separate social categories for measuring the impact of effect of Television viewing on them. After the completion of SITE, social impact on survey on adult, it became evident that the difference between men and women were so significant in a variety of areas that separate analysis for men and

women should be essential (Agrawal, et.al. 1977). Results of the study indicated that women's participation in Television viewing was significantly smaller than men (Agrawal, et.al., 1977: 45). But the research revealed that those women who viewed Television gained more than men in areas like family planning, health and nutrition. Another significant finding of the study was that illiterate women, more than literate women gained knowledge from Television viewing in the same areas thereby indicating that literacy was no barrier for learning from Television (Agrawal, 1981). A detailed and in depth studyconducted during the same period indicated that information needs and the viewing behavior of women were different from men (Agrawal and Rai, 1980). In a recent paper Chandiram and Agrawal (1982) indicated that the proportion of telecast time for women had been not more than 5%. What emerges from these analyses is in general very little effort have been made to understand how best a medium of television can be utilized for the development. The few studies conducted so far clearly indicate that television as a medium of communication breaks the barrier of literacy and in certain social situations can act as a catalyst of the development of the women. "Telecast language was a single most important factor that affected the comprehension of the program in spite of the fact that four languages were used in the programs" (Agrawal, 1981: 27). Some of these observations as also research studies are indicative of the need for communication research if Television is to be used meaningfully for the development of women.

16.4.2. Advertisements and gender in mass media

In mass media advertisements, sex stereotyping tends to be at its greatest because the intended audiences are normally either male or female. Men are seen in further occupations than women; women are seen generally as house-keepers and mothers. Men have greater possibilities to be seen advertising car companies or marketing products; women are mostly advertising household products. Men are more likely to be shown outside or in a big business backgrounds; women in domestic settings. Men are more often seen to represent authority. Craig writes, 'As far as advertisement is concern, with older men gaining more authority than the younger men, at the same time as women seem to fade away. Television and radio commentary represent the interpretations of what is actually seen by the initiator of the TV or radio program me' (Craig, 2003, p.82). These commentary or voice over is the tone of power or authority. A recent figure shows that television commentary majorly male. Even though the number of female voice-overs in recent years has been on the rise, women still engage in their regular, domestic products and feminine care products advertisement. Male voice-overs are more likely to be linked with a far wider variety of products.

Advertisements have portrayed gender in distinct and predictable stereotypes. Gender representations in advertising reflect "fundamental features of the social structure," such as values, beliefs, or norms. Though gender roles are getting refined and narrowed over the years, advertisers often use traditional gender stereotypes in their commercials based on the hypothesis that as people are well aware with such type of images, it helps the receivers to understand the content of the message without any doubt.

It has been observed that women (compared to men) appeared more often as homebound and as housewives in television advertisements. Study also suggests that women are portrayed mostly as sex objects, physically beautiful and subordinate to men, in TV advertisements. They were the traditional housewife, mother and clerical worker who would perfectly and happily solve household problems. Another study finds that women were over-represented in advertisements for cosmetics, kitchen and bathroom products and were less likely to appear in advertisements for cars, trucks and related products. Women, as compared to men, were mostly portrayed in home setting to convey the message that the women's place is at home. Men in advertisements of consumer products are often posed in commanding position, or in an action position, where as women are rather positioned as an object of stare. Traditionally gender representation in advertisements highlights the ideology of the active and public male and the passive, dependent, domestic female. In other words, men are usually shown as strong, independent and achievers, whereas, women are shown as nurturing, empathetic, but softer and dependent.

16.4.3. Projection of gender in the Print Media

The lack of gender sensitivity in the media is evidenced in the failure to eliminate gender based stereotyping. Generally the media do not provide a balanced portrayal of women's diverse lives and their contributions to society in a changing world, often reinforcing stereotyped images of women and their roles in the society. It is a common practice to assess the professional success of a woman through questions and claims about her related to being a good mother and a wife. The prevailing portrayal of women in mainstream daily newspapers has the following characteristics (Cited in Indian Journal of Women and Development, Oct, 2008: 54). Positive images of women have a narrow scope and are based on new stereotypes of women's success: a pop star, a beauty queen, and a sports woman with an outstanding result. There is an absence of image of an active, assertive working woman, or a successful businesswoman, or a positive image of a woman politician. Average women are nearly always portrayed as victims of poverty, social injustice, domestic violence and organized crime.

Popular magazines with large circulations like the 'Sunday' and 'India Today' flash vulgar and obscene glossy photographs on their cover pages. The advertising world continues to use women to peddle its products and to present women as sexual objects. Advertising also reinforces housework as the sole responsibility of the women, with household equipment advertisements addressed only to women. The passivity of female characters in film and television is a major cause of concern. Barring few prime time serials like *Adhikar*, *Udaan*, *Humrahi* and *Aurbhihainrahein* which focused on issues concerning women and have women as their central character, rarely women is shown as capable of solving her problems, standing up to dignities or violence, facing challenges on her own, or taking decisions. Even many serials and ads telecasted at present i.e. *Bidai*, *BalikaVadhu*, *Jyoti* etc. reveals the dependency of women. The image of educated women is typecast as insensitive, self-centred and uncaring. The economically independent woman is shown as domineering and ruthless. Women are considered ideal only when she is in her nurturing roles and as a supportive supplement to man. Women specific programs on radio and television perpetuate sex stereotypes and cater to women as housewives and mothers, rather than provide knowledge and skills for their role as economic contributors. Several systematic research studies reveal that the mass media so far have not been effective instrument to inform and prepare society about women's new roles in national development. This is largely due to the very limited reach of mass media among women and girls, especially in rural areas. Even the limited exposure is mainly in the form of entertainment films or film based programs providing little opportunity for education about new values, tasks or skills. The expansion of media facilities especially of electronic mass media like television is both an opportunity and a risk in the case of women and girls. Widely basis, of a well thought of communication policy for women and girls, mass media like television can be a great instrument for social transformation towards women's greater participation and equality. The National Plan of Action for Women draw up in 1976 was the first major step towards fixing communication priorities and providing sufficient direction for subsequent media planning. The Sixth Plan focused on employment, economic dependence, education and health, whereas the Seventh Plan moves on to an essential intangible of the desired change. The long term objective of the development programs for women would be to raise their economic and social status in order to bring them into the mainstream of national development" (Mathur: 2008: 300-301).

It is an established fact that virtually throughout the world; women are portrayed in the media either in terms of their sexual appeals to males. This two dimensional image is not sufficiently counteracted by alternative contribution to contemporary

society. This is in part the result of women's lack of access to and control over the communication media. On the other hand, Gallagher has shown that the depiction of women in the mass media is remarkably consistent throughout the world. Baring media controlled by governments with a strong commitment to social change, the overall picture highlighted the negative features of media under representation of women and women's concern; the use of women as a commodity in advertising; an ambivalent attitude to women evident in certain stereotyped images in which women were exclusively and unalterably "good" and "pure" or definitely and unchangeably "bad" and "immortal" (Gallagher, 1983). 'The Portrayal and participation of women in the media', Paris, UNESCO, cited in Prabha Krishnan and Anita Dighe, an annotated bibliography brought out by Signorelli (1986) Role Portrayal and Stereotyping on Television, London, and Greenwood Press revealed that as far as media content was concerned, men outnumbered women by two or three to one, in addition, women were generally younger than the men and were cast in very traditional and stereotypical roles. Less than half the countries surveyed have carried out any research on women and media content, while globally, very little was known about women's employment in media industries.

As a response to the drastic growth of criticism shown on television programs with respect to women's concern, many countries have set up committees to intervene on behalf of women's citizens. For example, the Canadian Radio Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) established a task force on sex role stereotyping in the broadcast media. Williams research on sex roles on Canadian and US television was designed to reveal this," that although there were some minor changes in the portrayal of women, the Canadian and US television networks were still fundamentally conservative and traditional with regard to sex role portrayals. Males still pre-dominated on all networks and almost all the people portrayed as powerful, authoritative and knowledgeable were male (Tannis Williams, 1986). The portrayal of sex role on Canadian and US television, paper presented at the conference of the International Association for mass communication research, New Delhi, showed that although in the fictional world of television, men still hold the better professional positions. On the Indian scene we found a multiple of articles and papers on the relationship between women and media. The working group on Software for Doordarshan's set up in 1982, published its report in 1985, popularly known as Joshi Committee Report, it condemns television heavy reliance on feature films and film related programs, emphasizing the middle class orientation of the programs output and the near eclipse of working class women (ibid: 14).

Chandiram and Agrawal (1982) noted that in general, women characters continue to be portrayed in an inferior position relative to men. In this, asymmetrical relationship, the 'wife and the other' image is predominant. They further add that there seems to be a tendency to construct a pan Indian character of women, which is difficult to identify with any one region of India. (Chandiram, Jai and Agrawal, Binod, 1982. "Towards Equality, Women in Indian Television", June, 161-164).

16.5 Conclusion

In India, there is "Unity in Diversity" in terms of languages, religion, climate, people and its cultural entity. Nevertheless, women in our country, seldom enjoy equality with men. The ancient lawgivers like Manu and Kautilya assigned a lower status of women to so much that women were often grouped with dogs and *chandals* (i.e. the lowest caste). According to Jawaharlal Nehru, "If our nation is to rise, how can it do so if half of the nation i.e. our woman lag behind and remain ignorant and uneducated? Our civilizations, our customs, our laws have all been made by men and he was taken good care to keep himself in a superior position to treat women as the chattel and a play thing to be exploited for his own advantage and amusement. Under this continuous pressure woman has been unable to grow and develop her capacities to her fullest and then man has blamed her for her backwardness". "The women of India have to free themselves from the tyranny of manmade customs and laws. They will have to carry on his second struggle (along with their participation in the first struggle for freedom) by themselves, for man is not likely to help them.

There are a significant section of social scientists and media researchers engaged in studies related to women in mass media. These studies cover all continents and show how media have been biased against women. The International Association for Mass Communication Research has a separate work, which deals with this subject. The first meeting of this working group was held in Paris 1992. The focus on women implies identifying the structural constraints, which inhibit their fullest growth and development. There are major issues related to women in media and the other about the image of women projected through these media. Worldwidefeminist's movement of women has pointed out that the employment of women in media is low and particularly so in decision-making levels. Men who, not only lead women, but also constitute the bulk of the management on top editorial ranks dominate these worlds. We can hardly avoid the obvious male domination from their earliest history to the present time. It does not require much logic to prove that women have been and continue to be victims of poverty and under-developed on the hand and socio-economic

injustice and exploitation on the other hand.In India, the dominant stereotype images of women and girls are that of:

- Less competent human being,

- Key to commercial success in this age of advertising,

- Instruments for exploitation by men.

To break the vicious circle of existing undesirable images and project the reality lives of women and girls would need an overhaul of the content of existing communication message through a well thought out National Communication policy on women. A number of studies conclude that the overall effect of the portrayal of women in media is to reinforce rather than reduce prejudices and stereotypes. This distortion tends to justify and perpetuate existing inequalities. The exploitation of the women's image for commercial purposes has been noted and criticized varies widely. But the emancipation of women poses the most formidable problems in such values and practices of social, economic and cultural oppression and domination of women which evade attention. This is because there values and practices are a part of the "normal" social life of millions and millions of Indian people in day to day interaction between husband and wives, mother and children, brother and sisters, parents and daughters, wives and their in laws, employers and their women employees and so on. In these very ordinary relations, men and women are constantly violating in practices which they profess in words. Men are more often unconscious of what is being done to them. Whether in matters relating to distribution of food or other items of consumption, or of work or leisure, of property or income, women are subjected to discrimination and oppression which assume in numerable forms. Far from bringing these to light, the media, specially the feature films, are all the time idealizing and rationalizing them. In fact, myths, legends, images and symbols are derived from the vast treasures of Indian mythology and folklore which are injurious to women's personality and antagonistic to their emancipation and equality. Women constitute half of the population in India, as indeed in most other countries of the world. Women are also among the most under-developed, illiterate and exploited segments of the society. The role of women is ignored not just in India but even in developed and advanced countries. Women remain backward educationally and socially. However, women are slowly emerging out of their centuries old darkness, shaking off their traditions and man-imposed roles and are increasingly raising their voice to demand their rightful place in society and their due from it in economic, political and social. Television, the most pervasive medium and master of image and illusion, results that both programs and commercials are highly biased against women.[1]

A study authored by Mallika Das has thrown up interesting details. She made a comparative study of men and women portrayals in Indian magazine advertisements and in other western countries. The similarities between the two lay on the fact that:(i) Indian men and women were stereotypically represented, (ii) the stereotypical images in India seemed to be slowly 'softening', (iii) in both the cases, Indian and western ads, the two sexes advertised for different types of products, and (iv) role portrayals seem to be affected by the nature of the product in the case of women, as in other nations.

16.6 Summary

Print and broadcast media reinforce the stereotype and traditional roles of women in society. Women need to be portrayed in 'empowered' roles in their career, leadership so that the status and position of women in society is truly represents Indian culture and ethos. 'Sexual objectification' and constant glorifying of stereotypical roles of motherhood and wifehood shackle women to the fetters of these prescribed roles. They just cannot break free. The sexequality and equal participation that our Constitution guarantees remain questionable because of such conservative depictions. A sweeping change in the social outlook is required. The cumulative and unconscious impact of media messages encourages gender discrimination. The mass media possesses the power to influence and can help in removing such prejudice. Undoubtedly the media provides a lop-sided picture of women and their meaningful participation and contribution to the society. Much needs to be done with regards to the 'participation, portrayal and access of women to the media and its impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women'. India has been a traditionally conservative society where a woman's image has been cast and moulded by years of male dominance and female-subservience. The era of liberalization and globalization has to some extend changed the image of the 'BharatiyaNari' – the self-sacrificing husband worshipper whose sole purpose in life is to keep her husband and family happy. Advertisements, they say reflects the prevailing trends in the society. It is also said that if one wants to get the feel of a new place one has to see the advertisements in the media. A UNESCO report lists the words women are described in the media: 'the glamorous sex kitten, the sainted mother, the devious witch, the hard-faced corporate and political climber.' The report of 2009, fears that given the current rate at which stereotyping of women take place, it would take another 75 years to achieve gender equality in the media!

Gender sensitization of the Indian has to be made on a priority basis. Mere

reporting of facts and figures would not help in bridging gender differences. It should play a proactive role in inculcating gender sensitivity and ensure that women are not depicted in poor light. The media has to move beyond routine crime briefs on women and sensationalized stories. Public awareness on the rights and privileges of women should be created while highlighting Constitutional and legal rights. The latest rulings and judgments are to be discussed and public awareness created. Press Council should be given more teeth so that they could intervene effectively to counteract objectionable publications.

This is the time to rethink and revisit the country's mass media policy. There are many issues, which should be discussed threadbare to have an unbiased, and healthy media policy in the country. It is time the media walked the talk.

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16.8 End Notes

[1]http://feminism-boell.org/en/2016/04/08/women-and-mass-media

[2]Sue Thornham, *Women, Feminism and Media* (Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p. 23.

[3] Margaret Gallagher, The Portrayal and Participation of Women in the Media (Paris: UNESCO, 1979), http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0003/000372/037267EB.pdf, (08.07.2015)

[4]https://www.indianmediastudies.com/gender-portrayal-in-media/

[5]https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/2563/9/09_chapter%203.pdf

[6]http://www.isca.in/IJSS/Archive/v3/i8/8.ISCA-IRJSS-2014-109.pdf

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UNIT 17 ❑ The Evolution of Gender and Sexuality in the Hindi Cinema

Structure

17.1 Learning Objectives

After going through the sub units the students will be able to:

    ✓   To learn the evolution of Hindi cinema in India through the ages

    ✓   To study the depiction of women and femininity in Indian cinema, and in Bollywood

    ✓   To develop a critical understanding of gendered gaze in Hindi cinema

    ✓   To understand the motivating cultural and social factors informing

popular Hindi cinema

✓ To identify the types of sexualisation occurring in Hindi cinema

✓ To identify the movements and voices against gender based inequalities in the Hindi film industry

✓ To develop a critical overview of the Hindi film medium and its depiction of genders, gender roles and ideal types

17.2 Introduction

The notion regarding unchallengeable and immutable form of gender has lead to the rethinking gender, especially in Hindi Cinema. Since its inception, Hindi cinema has portrayed women as marginalized identities defined within the domain of patriarchal socio-cultural frameworks, struggling to break free from the shackles of ideological stereotypes which denied their self-hood and identity. Being visualized as ideal mothers, submissive housewives or dependent daughters or as immoral prostitutes, cabaret dancers and strippers; cinema in its early phase has emphasized upon women as having slightest importance. Within the domain of Hindi cinema, look and spectatorship have ever since assisted in inactive projection of female bodies, fetishism, voyeurism, and the effective subordination of the female to the look of male counterpart, be it on-screen or te gaze of male spectator. Movies, apparently, celebrate women's eroticism while decreasing her as merely a sex object.[1]

In traditional Indian society, there are certain prescribed roles, which regulate the conduct of women. For example, the conception of the woman as Sita is prevalent in Indian society and film. *Sita* is a character in the Ramayana, one of the great epics, which embodies values and the differences between right and wrong. She is the wife of Rama, who is representative of many virtues including honour, courage, and loyalty. Much of Indian popular cinema is influenced by the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, another epic, which involves the hero Lord Krishna. *Sita* is the ideal woman and wife that views her husband as an idol. Indian popular cinema represents this role of the ideal wife's admiration and unfaltering respect. Also, according to the *Manusmriti*, an ancient classical work dealing with laws, ethics, and morality, a woman should be subject to her father in childhood, in youth to her husband, and when her husband is dead, to her children. Within the guidelines of the *Manusmriti*, women do not enjoy independence. Women are supposed to adhere to the role of a happy figure that takes care of the household. They are supposed to be obedient to their husbands and go to every length to honour them even after death.Although Indian cinema continues to change and evolve, reflecting new trends in gender relations,

in some Indian cinema women who live by these traditional norms are portrayed as happy and ethical. Women who go against these rules of narrative and culture in film are punished and seen as immoral.[2]

These roles and constructions of women are reflected in a great deal of popular Indian Cinema. Four important roles to consider include the ideal wife, ideal mother, the vamp, and the courtesan (Dissanayake 77):

1. The Ideal Wife: This character is represented by sexual purity and fidelity. She must be consistent with traditional Indian roles by honouring the family and depending on the husband. She is closely connected to the domestic domain.

2. The Ideal Mother: Indian reference to the mother involves religious suggestion. The country is connected with the mother goddess, Shakti, who represents great strength. The role of the mother in Indian film is often seen as a strong force, such as in Mother India (1957).

3. The Vamp: The vamp in Indian film is modern and imitates Western women. Her behaviour can include smoking, drinking, and dancing. She can also be quick to fall in and out love. She represents unacceptable behaviour and is seen as unwholesome. She is almost always punished for her behaviour.

4. The Courtesan: The courtesan is outside the normal realm of Indian womanhood in that she is a type of prostitute or dancing girl. She embodies sexuality. She is a character who helps with the physical and emotional needs of men. Often in Indian film, she gives the man comfort and care, after which he leaves her to desperately mourn the loss of him.[3]

In India, the television and film industry has evolved from its initial limitations of serving a patriarchal society. Indian media has been bold in cases to break away from societal stereotypes and create an environment conducive for expression of the problems that society faces. However, this has not always been easy. Issues of sexuality have been deemed to be indecent. ShekharKapoor's film, the Bandit queen based on the life of Phoolan Devi faced opposition. The story of the famous dacoits life ran into trouble as the Delhi High Court banned it for its obscenity. This was however overruled by the Supreme Court which gave it an 'adult' certification. Cinema based media has been most active in entertaining people. One of the most striking features of cinema is that it plays a very significant role in shaping the

perceptions people have about society and also about themselves. Behavioural responses to situations that are projected via cinema are generally seen as acceptable. Cinema based media provides people, especially younger generations an ideal state of things, and therefore people start emulating all that is projected. Thus, an analysis of its content is essential.[4]

17.3 Indian Film Industry through the ages

Indian Film Industry consists of motion pictures made all over India, including the regional industries in Andhra Pardesh, Assam, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and and West Bengal. These movies are widely viewed across the world especially in South Asia and Middle East due to cultural and linguistic proximities. Indian cinema was emerged as the global enterprise in the 20th century. Indian films exhibited in more than 90 countries through dynamic and fast modern media. An increasing participation in the international film festivals and cultural delegations to foreign countries strategically contributed to effective branding and promotion of Indian films in the international market. Besides the possibility of 100% foreign venture has turned the Indian film industry lucrative for overseas investors and production houses such as the 20th Century Fox, Sony Pictures, and Warner Bros. Simultaneously, prominent native investors such as Zee, UTV, Suresh Productions, Ad labs and Sun Network's Sun Pictures engaged enthusiastically in filmmaking and distribution business. Tax benefits to picture houses have also led to the mushroomed growth of multiscreen cinemas known as multiplexers all across India. Around 30 movie-making enterprises had been officially registered in India by the year 2003, highlighting the commercial existence and standing of the Indian film industry in the region. Earnings through overseas exhibition of Indian films both via formal and informal media, accounted for 12% of the revenue, contribute substantially to the overall revenue of Indian cinema, the net worth of which was found to be US$1.3 billion in 2000. Music in Indian cinema is another substantial revenue generator, with the music rights alone accounting for 4-5% of the net revenues generated by a film in India. Screening of Indian films in American, British, Australian, Canadian, Pakistan and other overseas movie theatres are increasing since the number of South Asians immigrants have been proliferated in these countries in recent years.[1] However, the history of Indian cinema is quite older.

17.3.1 The Evolution of Indian cinema

The Indian cinema industry dates back to the 19th century, more than a hundred years ago, when the very first film to be shot was by the Lumiere Brothers. The

Brothers, born in France, were the children of a couple who ran a photographic portrait studio in Besancon, France. On the 7th of July 1896 the Lumiere Brothers showcased six films at the Watson Hotel in Mumbai. This marked the birth of the now gigantic Indian cinema. After the first films were shown in Mumbai, Indians were inspired and fascinated, which led to yet another milestone in the history of cinema. HarishchandraSakharamBhatavdekar, commonly and popularly known as Save Dada, who was then a still photographer, drew his inspiration from the 'Lumiere Brothers' production and ordered a camera from England during the 1800s. He shot a short clipping which then was shown as a film was shot at the Hanging Garden in Mumbai, known as 'The Wrestlers.' It was a small and a simple recording of a wrestling match that was screened in 1899 and was considered as the first motion picture of the movie Industry. The father of Indian cinema, DadasahebPhalke, released the first ever full-length feature film by name 'Raja Harischandra' in the year 1913. This the silent film was a commercial success. The reason behind this movie standing out among the others was not just because it was the first movie released, but because of the fact that Dadasaheb was the director, writer, cameraman, editor, make-up artist and the art director. He made the movie entirely on his own. He eventually stepped into the limelight with having produced 23 films from 1913 to 1918. The biggest achievement that Dadasaheb had was that his first movie became the first ever Indian film which was screened in London in 1914. Ever since then, new production companies emerged in the 1920s. The movies that were produced back then were mainly about mythological and historical lore and episodes from epics such as Mahabharata and Ramayana.

17.3.1.1. The Talkies

AlamAra (1931) was the first talkie feature film in India. Its dialogues in popular Hindustani (Hindi) and it's music made it a smash hit. This success introduced songs in Hindi cinema with movies like '*indrasabha*' which had around 71 songs. Film songs became a phenomenon, which is synonymous with Indian cinema. Movies were soon made various regional languages like Bengali, Telugu and Tamil. The trend spread to other parts of the country and movies were produced in languages like Gujarati, Oriya, and Malayalam etc.

17.3.1.2 Golden Era

Post-independence saw the blooming of the film all over India. 50's were the decade, which is generally characterized as the golden era of Indian cinema and Hindi cinema. Directors like Guru Dutt, Raj Kapoor, Bimal Roy were making artistic

cinema as well as commercial successes. This was time of optimism as India had just gained independence and the subject matter of the movies was generally social issues and issues of national integration. Pan-India cinema was thriving as directors like Satyajit Ray, RitwikGhatak were making splash on international film circuit. The mood was reverse in the 70's as Hindu rate of growth and unemployment had created critical mas of disenchanted youth, which lapped up the 'angry young man' portrayal by Amitabh Bachchan in movies like 'Deewar', 'Zanzeer', 'Sholay'. There was also a parallel movement in hindi movie industry with directors like ShyamBenegal, GovindNihalani at the fore front. 1980's can be called by far the worst decade for Hindi cinema and catalyst for the decline was the invention of VHS[1]. This led to low attendance in cinema halls and 'formulaic' films were being made in the wrong belief that it will lead to assured returns.[2]

17.3.1.3 Indian Cinema : Then and Now

Replete with blockbuster hits, box office record breakers and mega movies stars, this world filled with media attention and gossips is one of the most booming industries in India today- Bollywood. The life of a movie star seems so glamorous and luxurious, but it is only when we move back the timeline that we realize the struggle that the Indian cinema has been through.

Gradually, the industry witnessed immense growth especially during 1917 to 1932, but movie production declined during the Second World War. The modern film industry came into existence somewhere around 1947. During this time the movies that were released mainly focused on the common man's miseries. They focused on shining a light upon slavery, prostitution, polygamy among the others. This period in the history of cinema was remarkable and an outstanding transformation was witnessed in the quality of the movies, the actors and the script. The 50s and 60s are known as the golden age in Indian cinematic history. This era alone saw the magnanimous rise of exceptionally great actors like Guru Dutt, Raj Kapoor, Dilip Kumar, Meena Kumari among many more. Along with the improvisation and refining of the acting sector of the industry, the musical industry also began gaining predominance by playing an essential role in the making of the movies. Similarly, as Bollywood began dominating the industry as a whole, many more regional industries came into existence all over the country.

With the 1990s rolling right behind, there was a clear-cut difference between the evolution of the narratives used in the movies and in the development of script writing. By this era, conventional love stories had become very popular. The audience

loved watching these orchestrated love stories, and began rooting for actors to fall in love behind the screens. The theme or background of the movies commenced with mythological tales, moved on to delivering a realistic portrayal of the common man's misery on the silver screen, and slowly evolved to realign its focus on the fantasy world. Manmohan Desai, the pioneer of Hindi masala movies stated that he wanted people to forget the misery, and rather live in a dream world where there is no poverty, or beggars– a place where fate is kind and good triumphs over evil. Thus began the movie industry that we get to see today. The overview of these industries helps us understand and realise how the inspirational trend of cinemas spread through the country. Prior to cinemas, people indulged themselves in the theatrical sphere primarily through dramas, plays, cultural festivals and storytelling. With the coming of cinema the tastes of the audience developed, leading to the growth of the film industry at large. In the recent couple of years, there has been a spectacular innovation through the birth of independent films and short films featuring in international film festivals. Evidently, the Indian industry has come a long way.

17.4 Women in Indian cinema

The issues of media, identity and gender are being discussed all over today. They have become integral to the discipline of media studies. The reason is the popularity and diversity of media as a source of mass consumption and its influence on constructing ideas and generating debate. The media scene in India has expanded in the recent times as there is a plethora of media choices available to the audiences. Media structures and systems have also undergone a sea change with privatization and globalization. Huge corporations with their own profit motives own media houses. Media has been able to transcend borders and look at issues more holistically rather than in the context of nationalism. Hence, these developments are bound to affect the manner in which media scrutinizes and covers any issue – gender being an important one. Women are also major consumers of mass media and thus the way they are represented in media coverage is a major concern for the discipline. Several international forums have recognized the ramifications of such a transformed media environment on women's access to media, their role in the media structure and the presentation of their perspective in media coverage.

Over the years, women portraying central characters in Hindi cinema have been few and far between. Those portrayed, including the protagonists, are rarely holistic and mostly subject to ingrained biases. "Different features like occupation, introduction of cast in text, associated actions, and descriptions are captured to show the

pervasiveness of gender bias and stereotype in movies," a recent analysis of Bollywood movies by IBM and two Delhi-based institutions revealed.[1]

How real are the women characters in Hindi films? This is something to debate about because values, ideals, principles; morals have dominated the frame-work in which these films are placed. Thus, women rather than being depicted as normal human beings are elevated to a higher position of being ideal who can commit no wrong. Their grievances, desires, ambitions, feelings, perspectives are completely missing from the scene. They are really portrayed as the "other because they are shown as not belonging to this real and worldly life. For e.g.: Abhimaan (1973) begins with premise of the wife (Jaya Bachchan) being more talented than the husband (Amitabh Bachchan). This in itself is a defiance of the stereotype. However, the film crumbles from then on when the wife gives up her thriving musical career for satisfying the husband's ego culminating to a conventional closure that demands adherence to traditional values of marriage and motherhood.

Bollywood heroines have mostly been homely, content to stay happily ever after in the institution of marriage even if educated and keen to carve and identity of one's own. Where are the women building careers and working professionally? They have been almost silenced. ShahlaRaza (2003) talks about how Hindi cinema in the seventies had women in different working roles (Jaya Bachchan as a knife sharpener in 'Zanjeer' and a singer in 'Abhimaan', HemaMalini as a village *tonga* (horse carriage) driver in 'Sholay' and the general manager of a company in 'Trishul', Rakhee as corporate secretary in 'Trishul' and a doctor in 'Kala Pathar', VidyaSinha who works in a private firm in "Chhoti Si Baat . The working woman vanished from the popular blockbusters of the nineties which relegated Indian women to the boundary of the home. The concern boils down to the embodiment of women who stay next door, walk on the street, spend time working in office and return home after a tiring day. Where are these women in Hindi films?

In an era of information overload, it is not too radical to expect some social consciousness from the cinema medium. All this while, there has been discussion about media's responsibility to the society. So why cinema should be engaged only with creating leisure for its audience and not make them think critically? Popular rhetoric and culture need to be challenged and cinema can do it effectively if it exhibits some sensitivity to gender issues. This is because Hindi films now enjoy a huge international market in many South Asian and Western countries. Thereby, operating in a larger framework like this calls for a portrayal of women, which is not only accurate but also just to the cause of women empowerment.

The links between Women's Studies and Cinema are evident. After the women's movement, the field of women's studies has allied with almost every discipline to provide an alternative perspective of knowledge and reality as viewed by the practitioners and academia of the discipline. Feminist theory took up a distinct stance in relation to the objectification, exclusion and silence of women in cinematic narratives. It also evaluated the stereotyping of female characters in cinema. For e.g.: In "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema (Laura Mulvey, 1975), the male character was identified as the driver of the film's narrative, the character followed by the camera. The female character served as a spectacle to provide pleasure to the male spectator, for which Mulvey used the term "gaze". The theory of "Absences and Presences was concerned with the absence of a certain type of female characters in films and the presence of the other type, which was seen to be influenced by patriarchal values. Thus feminist theory in its critique of films incorporated the valorisation of women's experiences thereby posing a challenge to gender hierarchy as well as opening up new realms for a post-gendered future. The paper in its ensuing sections will build an argument about the portrayal of women in Hindi cinema based on various strands of feminist film criticism, which have certainly enriched our understanding of women on screen.

Another trend to be examined in the depiction of female characters is the clear dichotomy, which is followed. The woman is docile, domestic, honourable, noble, and ideal or she is the other extreme – wayward, reckless and irresponsible. Why does Bollywood shy away from taking the middle path? Where are women who are good or bad as per the situation they face in their lives? Where are the women who negotiate with troubles on a daily basis and emerge victorious? In David Dhawan'sBiwi no.1 (1999), the wife played by KarishmaKapoor is shown to have sacrificed her successful career to experience domesticated bliss with her husband Salman Khan. When the husband strays, it is the other woman (SushmitaSen) who is blamed for the same and is demonized all through the film. The husband is absolved of adultery and he returns to his legitimate partner i.e. the wife at the end of the story. The significance of the title i.e. Biwi no.1 is because the wife is successful in bringing the husband back to the domestic arena – seen as the victory of the "traditional (wife) over the „modern (mistress/vamp). Such a portrayal has strong moral connotations associated with it. It also shows how two women are pitted against each other to win over the same man, while he enjoys his fling openly.

The "man as the saviour and the "woman as the victim are also prominently seen in Hindi cinema discourse. The heroine is a damsel in distress who has to be rescued by the hero if she is in trouble. Scene after scene of heroes rescuing their

ladies from the clutches of villains have been captured by the camera. In recently released Ra-One (2011), the film's poster clearly depicts the hero (Shahrukh Khan) carrying the leading lady, KareenaKapoor in his arms. It builds up his image as her saviour, something that the films story too follows. The woman of substance is missing from such portrayals, the women who can lead her life independently and take decisions without relying on any male. In such a scenario, women are seen to be not just physically inferior to men but also intellectually inferior. Filmmakers don't take the effort to associate qualities like intellect and decision-making with female characters.

On the positive side, there are a chunk of film-makers who have reacted against the stereotypes set by mainstream cinema and have dared to explore subjects from the women's perspective. Contemporary films like No One Killed Jessica (2011), CheeniKum (2007), Chameli (2003), Ishqiya (2010), Paa (2009) and Dirty Picture (2011) have pictured extraordinary themes and portrayed women as central to the story line. These films have forced creators to take a fresh look at the different roles played by women and introspect into the kind of typecast that were being perpetuated earlier. It is also to the credit of the current crop of actresses who have not been hesitant to accept bold roles. Actresses like VidyaBalan (Paa, Dirty Picture, Kahani, Ishqiya) and KonkonaSen Sharma (Page 3, Wake Up Sid, Life in a Metro, Mr. and Mrs.Iyer) have led this change of direction. Other actresses like Jaya Bachchan, SmitaPatil, ShabanaAzmi and Nandita Das have also appeared in strong and independent roles, which for the time being shifted the camera's focus from the women's body to her identity as an individual. Such actresses have challenged the norm.[2]

Film scholar and author ShomaChatterji (Subject: Cinema, Object: Women, 1998) says, "Women in Hindi cinema have been decorative objects with rarely any sense of agency being imparted to them. Each phase of Hindi cinema had its own representation of women, but they were confined largely to the traditional, patriarchal framework of the Indian society. The ordinary woman has hardly been visible in Hindi cinema."[3] To understand this portrayal in much more depth, we need to have a look at some crucial glimpses, which defined the role of women in Hindi films. These images kept alive the notions of women as upholders of traditions, family bonding, thus depriving them of any sense of power and agency.

17.5 The Culture of Sexualization in Hindi Cinema

Films as medium of Mass Communication Film communication may be considered as a social process whereby a transmitted signal is received primarily through visual receptors (and, often, sound receptors) and is then treated as a message from which content or meaning is inferred. Film, as a symbolic form, is a process of communication that employs film, the medium, with its technology of optics, emulsions, and cameras, to produce a piece of celluloid with a variable-density silver nitrate surface. It is man who creates film communication. This definition suggests that a piece of film, in and of itself, is meaningless-that meaning exists only in a special social and cognitive relationship between a filmmaker and a viewer. This relationship occurs when a viewer chooses to treat a film not as mere signals triggering perceptual awareness and biological responses, but as message units that have been put together intentionally and from which meaning may be inferred.

Cinema is perhaps the mainstream of all art forms, most popular and most accessible, especially in India, a country which produces most number of films in a year compared to any other country (barring Hollywood, perhaps), and a country where we have a large base of cinema-going public. Cinema, more than any other art, has the power to influence people. Therefore, it is very important to understand how the country, its people and its aspirations are represented in the cinema produced in the country.

Cinema as a medium of mass communication can be seen at different levels, serving different purposes. It can be an art form, an entertainment, a social document or a social critique. Cinema can be all of these and at the same time be a means to something else – a mirror unto our lives, showing us exactly how we function as society. Mainstream vs Alternative Cinema Mainstream films can best be defined as commercial films that are made by major entertainment studios or companies that are owned by international media conglomerates. Because of better financing, these films can afford more expensive actors, wide releases or limited releases, and are sold at popular retail stores. This has become known as the studio system. Films made by major studios or companies that are not owned by a media conglomerate but are distributed by a company owned by a media conglomerate are also considered to be mainstream and are often referred to as mainstream independent films. As a mainstream medium (cinema needs money to be produced. Therefore, it must appeal to the mainstream audience, who will pay at the box office) cinema must, first and foremost,

appeal to the mainstream audience. The definition of mainstream varies from society to society, from culture to culture. Broadly, it means representing the prevalent attitudes, values, and practices of a society or group, for example, mainstream morality. A cultural construct, when applied to art, mainstream may mean something that is available to the general public, or something that has ties to corporate or commercial entities.[1]

Sexuality in Hindi mainstream films refers to the presentation in motion pictures of sexuality or eroticism and sex acts, including love scenes. Erotic scenes have been presented in films since the silent era of cinematography. Many actors and actresses have exposed at least parts of their bodies or dressed and behaved in ways considered sexually provocative by contemporary standards at some point in their careers. Some films containing sex scenes have been criticized by religious groups or banned by Govt. or both. Sexuality in cinema has been presented in many genres of film; while in some genres sexuality is rarely depicted.

Sex in films can be distinguished to a pornographic film and also from nudity in film, nudity can be presented in a sexualized context, for example nudity in naturalism would normally be regarded as non-sexual. In India, the entertainment industry is an important part of modern India and is expressive of Indian society in general. Historically Indian films have lacked the frank depiction of sex; until recently, even kissing scenes were considered taboo. On the other hand rape scenes or showing sexual assault were depicted openly. Currently some Indian states show soft core sexual scenes and nudity in films, while other areas don't. Mainstream films are still largely catered for the masses of India, however foreign films containing sexuality are watched by Indians because of the same process of glamorization of film entertainment that occurred in Hollywood, Indian cinema, mainly Hindi-speaking Bollywood industry is also beginning to add sexual overtones.

17.5.1 Audience perception on sexual content in Indian cinema

A journal of the Association for Psychological Science found that, sensation seeking did not entirely explain these effects; the researchers also speculate that adolescents learn specific behaviours from the sexual messages in movies. Many adolescents turn to movies to acquire "sexual scripts" that offer examples of how to behave when confronted with complicated emotional situations.

Mainstream Hindi cinema is most widely distributed cinema in India. Representation of sex in mainstream Hindi films has veered between the sarcasm, comic and the criminal. Mainstream cinema now has adopted representation of

sexuality in more realistic manner and is successful in raising, expressing and suggesting possible solutions to any problems in an effective manner. Sex in stories should be infused in such a way that the society starts accepting it. The authenticity and ingenuity of sex in real life should be accepted the same way in the films too. The society has grown in so many ways. Indians have embraced the western culture with open arms, but a hesitation still persists among the Indian audience such western trends i.e. sexuality in mainstream cinema. The reality quotient establishes an emotional connect with the audience. Movies containing sexual content create a negative impact on the viewers and on mass media. Still in Indian society, such obscene visuals have many ill effects on people.

17.5.2 Influence of Sexuality in Mainstream Cinema

Rajmeet Ghai points out that, Movies are harming our society. Gone are the times when parents and elders were ready to watch the movie with their children! With the more western perspective, it is becoming seamlessly difficult for our culture to accept Hindi movies. Keeping aside the action and drama, the vulgarity depicted knows no bounds. India has always been known for its culture. However it's rare to find movies based on any culture. Thanks to the media and the hype created of the celebrities personal lives, youngsters get influenced in the wrong way.

The movies that depict extreme violence, murder cause mental harm to children. Teenagers become easy fashion victim of the skimpy dresses worn. Most of the movies show extreme drama, which may hurt sentiments of people. The comedy movies, most of the times over do the humour by making a mockery of reality. Even though a majority of the movies are extremely entertaining, focus should be on culture, religion, etc. without hurting the sentiments of any community. Against Hindi movies can possibly be the best medium of entertainment. If made well, they can be easily used to educate the society on several issues. India being one of the largest movie producing country and due its wide acceptance, Hindi movies can be easily used to portray India's art and culture. Most of the country's population watches Hindi movies; hence it generates revenues rather than harming the society. They can be an excellent source of refreshment for stress.

17.6 A Feminist critique of Hindi Cinema

The issues of media, identity and gender are being discussed all over today. They have become integral to the discipline of media studies. The reason is the popularity and diversity of media as a source of mass consumption and its influence

on constructing ideas and generating debate. The media scene in India has expanded in the recent times as there is a plethora of media choices available to the audiences. Media structures and systems have also undergone a sea change with privatization and globalization. Huge corporations with their own profit motives own media houses. Media has been able to transcend borders and look at issues more holistically rather than in the context of nationalism. Hence, these developments are bound to affect the manner in which media scrutinizes and covers any issue – gender being an important one. Women are also major consumers of mass media and thus the way they are represented in media coverage is a major concern for the discipline. Several international forums have recognized the ramifications of such a transformed media environment on women's access to media, their role in the media structure and the presentation of their perspective in media coverage.

Popular cinema and culture derive from each other. Films are believed to be the opium of the Indian masses as people rely on this medium to help them escape to a world of fantasy. In a very explicit way, cinema2 has shaped the cultural, social and political values of people of this country. While, the other forms of cinema are also important when it comes to the representation of women, restricting to popular cinema is the core concern of the paper.

The interest in films taken by feminists, stems from concern about the under-representation and misrepresentation of women in cinema. It adopts a critical approach towards gender bias on celluloid. The feminist approach to cinema asks a few pertinent questions like how women are represented on screen, how women's issues are treated in cinema, what does feminism mean to film-makers, how does the feminist agenda manifest on screen, how is the women character positioned vis a vis the male character and what is the role of women film-makers and women writers in depicting women's issues through cinema. Feminist critique of cinema has helped to view the reality presented by cinema in a different way and thus has contributed significantly to the discipline of media studies as well as film studies. Certain underlying aspects of a popular medium can only be brought to surface by criticism, scrutiny and introspection and feminists have attempted to do it with cinema as well as with other fields of study and practice.

Realistic cinema, however, is different from popular cinema in the way that it takes inspiration for its subjects from real life situations and existing circumstances in the society. Though, it may apparently fall in the realm of popular cinema, its approach and treatment of characters is more convincing than popular cinema. It is interesting to examine some films from this brand of cinema, which is becoming

popular among audiences. This type of cinema combines popular appeal and critical acclaim. Movies like *Black Friday* (2004), Udaan (2010), *No One Killed Jessica* (2011), Once Upon a Time in Mumbai (2010),Akrosh (2010) etc. can be listed under this type of cinema. The portrayal of women in these movies which are not aiming to be commercial pot-boilers but want to present a real experience to the audience is a subject of inquiry in this part of the paper. For the purpose of specificity and clarity, Madhur Bhandakar's films have been selected for analysis. Bhandarkar's cinema is associated with gritty realism. He falls into the brigade of contemporary Hindi filmmakers who have filmed real time issues and have been appreciated for the same. He has also been the recipient of many National Film Awards for his work on social issues. His films have dealt with bold and unconventional themes like exploitation of women, cycle of poverty, organized crime, police and govt. corruption, cult of celebrity and journalism, ruthlessness of big business and industrial espionage.5 Majority of his films had female protagonists.

The females in Bhandarkar's films are usually shown as bold and empowered women who lead life on their own terms, take their own decisions, are „rebels‟ who don't conform to social norms and excel in their respective professions. A very positive portrayal of an independent leading lady characterizes the initial reels of his films. However, through the progress of the film mid-way, there is a downslide in the protagonist's assertion and she slowly gets inclined to fit in the society's mould. In the end, she either has to fit in the norm or end up as a sufferer. There is a subtle reinforcement of the very value system that the film critiques at its outset. His films have been disparaged for being too judgmental by giving lessons on morality to the viewer.

In Satta (2003), Bhandarkar tells the story of Anuradha who is a middle class working woman accidentally entering the murky world of politics. In the beginning, Anuradha is an educated and confident working woman who gives up her career after marriage. This questions the rationale of empowerment. Why did she agree to sacrifice her career for marrying a budding politician? Again she enters politics by default and not by choice. She is forced to make a political career for the sake of her family and her husband who is languishing in prison for a heinous crime committed by him. Thus, politics is not her first choice. There is no sign of protest when her family members ask her to contest elections in place of her husband. There is a mere conformity that goes against Anuradha's independent nature depicted before the marriage takes place. In her political journey, Anuradha is guided by the family's political mentor (AtulKulkarni). The message conveyed is that women have no knowledge of politics, and they are guided in political action by either their family

or mentors. Would it make some difference to the film, if she had emerged as a female leader who survives and succeeds on her own? For a woman to be a successful politician; is her own merit not enough? Does she need a man to be by her side? In the course of their political affiliation, Anuradha is shown to fall for her mentor. Could we not have an unattached woman who is just demonstrating her leadership skills? These concerns about protagonist's portrayal betray Anuradha's initial determination, strength and presence.

Corporate (2006) weakens an interesting premise based on gender and business. While NishigandhaDasgupta (BipashaBasu), is a successful corporate executive with the "Sehgal Group of Companies , she is also a dutiful lover to RiteshSahani (Kay KayMenon). She wants her lover to look successful in front of everybody in the company. For this, she prepares a report which is presented by him and for which he receives the credit. This is in contrast to Nishigandha's spirited and ambitious attitude. She has climbed up the corporate ladder and her career means a lot to her. Still, she prioritizes her responsibilities towards her lover over her career. She is shown to be taking up unethical activities in business and these are justified as she does them for the sake of love. In the end, she willingly takes up the blame for a fiasco that the company is involved in. She ends up being the sole accused sent to jail. Her rationality is secondary to her love whereby she is ready to be accused of a crime she hasn't committed. The portrayal of Nishigandha's decisions during the crisis period reinforces that women are not capable to think rationally and they will readily sacrifice not only their lives but also their reputation for the person they love. Though, she is a successful and intelligent businesswoman, she falls prey to the corporate tussle and covert business tactics where all characters other than her are absolved of morality. In the battle for supremacy in the corporate world, Nishi is a loser.

Meghna's is a story of a good girl in a bad fashion world (Fashion, 2008). A small town girl enters the world of glitz and glamour with dreams to fulfil. She defies her parents to pursue her ambitions. As expected, middle- class parents don't want their daughter to become a model, they want her to conform to societal norms, Meghna defies, she is shown to be a hard working professional who is determined to make it big, but she needs a man for it… enter AbhjitSarin (Arbaaz Khan) who makes her a show-stopper as well as the mother of his child. A relationship, which could have been shown as purely professional, becomes a personal and emotional one as Sarin uses Meghna. But she is also using him for her success, a point that the film never raises. In a scene from the film, when she becomes pregnant, Meghna tells Sarin that she wants to keep the child. This is a sudden invocation of Meghna's

womanly side. All this while, she has been a career-oriented ambitious woman and this sudden motherly instinct comes as a surprise. On her failure, Meghna fails to maintain composure and ends up doing all the morally degraded things that are common in the fashion world (drunken driving, having sex with a stranger). She is portrayed more as a victim than a person who has struggled to carve her own destiny. The portrayal of the other two female models in the film also suggests signs of victimhood (MugdhaGodse's marriage of convenience to a gay designer and KanganaRanaut's subjugation in front of her boyfriend). In the end when Meghna successfully returns to the fashion world, it seems more of a moral vindication than an assertion of her grit.

While Bhandarkar's films are an appreciative attempt to bring to us, strong female characters, he still chooses to let them be in the larger societal framework. His characters though give a shot at defiance; they are not made to move out of the restricted sphere of action. An analysis of other films made by him i.e. Page 3, Chandani Bar, Traffic Signal, Jail etc. may bring to light the deficiencies in his portrayal. It is also worth noting that after such a stint of realistic films, Bhandarkar in 2011 filmed a conventional romantic comedy "Dil TohBaccha Hai Ji .[1]

It is difficult to come to a uniform conclusion on the portrayal of celluloid women. Considering the fact that women in India are not a homogenous group – they belong to different religions, castes, class, socio-economic status and have different kinds of ambitions and desires as a result of which they lead different lives, it is improper to conclude that women on Indian silver screen have been portrayed in an identical manner. The portrayal of course has to be sensitive to the category to which they belong. For e.g.: an urban middle class woman's story would be entirely different from that of a woman in a village. Films thus have to be responsive towards the context in which they locate women characters. Women characters should possess agency to dismantle the existing power structures as well as be able to negotiate their own position within this structure. It is time that cinema seeks a redefinition of women as objects of male gaze. Women's experiences and dilemmasas points of narration are the need of the hour. Going beyond the stereotypes will do a great help to the cause of women in Indian society. Cinema has to create a separate and independent space for Indian women to help them realise their dreams. Cinema's only end is not to entertain. It must begin a quest for social change through entertainment. As a media product, identified to accelerate the process of modernity, cinema should not stick to the "formula film ; it should come up with more progressive representations of women. Such portrayals would do justice to women and their role in the society.

17.6.1 Indian Feminist Film Theory

Film theory as an academic discipline provides the conceptual framework for understanding films and their relationship to other existing forms of art. From a theoretical perspective, Indian film theory relies upon a host of film theories like Apparatus theory, Auteur theory, feminist, Marxist, psychoanalytical, structuralist, formalist, etc, which assist in transforming a film into a holistic and consistent whole. Within the domain of existing film theory, the notion of male gaze and spectatorship are crucial concepts in Hindi cinema. In cinema, projection of female bodies leads to voyeurism and fetishism and make woman a display object. Films ostensibly celebrate eroticism by the means of passive projection of celluloid females as sex-object. The cinematic gender representation implies how media reinforces certain oppressive patterns of thought and negative transformation of women's image. Commenting upon the representation of females in media, Chandrika Kaul in "Some Perspectives on Issues of Gender and the Indian Media," argues: *"The popularity of films, newspapers and television in India prompts speculation on the social consequences of such media portrayal: it is potentially very damaging. Not only is a patriarchal world order reinforced ... but the existing dichotomy of sex roles is perpetuated ... The relentlessly negative representation of women in India's media has had the effect of validating women's inferiority as real and natural"*.

Feminist film criticism in Hindi cinema is based on the cultural and social lines. Studies conducted in this regard reflect that the roles provided to celluloid females are restrictively dichotomous and stereotypical. Feminist approach to Hindi cinema began in 1980s with the writings of Maithili Rao, the first film critic in the country who consistently focused upon the celluloid projection of females in Indi (Hindi) cinema. Analysing Indi (Hindi) movies, both mainstream and off-mainstream, and regional cinema as well, Rao in "Images of Women" has argued that "Popular cinema creates instant mythologies for uncritical consumption and not histories of credible people". The misuse and abuse of mythology in Hindi cinema cannot be absolved from its inherent dangers. These images form a mind-set leading to a vicious circle, a trap that has no run away. Taking cue from myths in scriptures, the filmmakers have been retaining certain pre-ponderous elements of myths through films. Popular cinema has been creating "instant mythologies" and not authentic characters of "credible people" and this is true in relation to female hero than the male. Rao further claims that Indian cinema is:*"... so driven by its phallocentricism that its heroes inevitably acquire longer than life dimension with the archetypal overtones. The heroine is strait jacketed into a chaste wife, like the mythical Sita-Savitri. Her suffering*

makes her only more virtuous. She is a nurturing mother either self-effacing or an avenging demon, Durga/Kali or a titillating seductress oozing as a vampish character".

There exists the stereotypic syndrome; the beautiful heroine having these mythical classic virtues is always projected as wallowing in servitude and subservience to all. In "Avenging Angels: Icons of Death" (1988) Rao avers that the "assertion of power and aggressive action by woman is toned down to confirm to mythology... women power is accessible only when it is mythologized.45 Rao suggests that Hindi cinema has been captivated by the figure of the *Devadasi*- an umbrella term used to describe all kinds of courtesan and prostitutes from its very inception. This is because filmmakers have total control over the body of such woman and the film image, as Rao argues, *"...celebrates her eroticism ... reducing her to a passive sex object... the way her body is fractured and commoditised into an object for ... male gaze"*.

Likewise, Maithili also claims that transition in the cinematic portrayal of females as vengeful or androgynous have not altered the representations and celluloid females are still associated with traditional stereotypes. Hindi cinema is cultural specific so Indian modes of critique has to evolve that directly address different systems of meaning and signification. Focusing upon the cultural notions of femininity that inform different symbolic systems, Indian film theory calls for a most generic approach, inflected by history and culture, to films depicting women to provide a better understanding of the elements that construct their distinctive appeal. SumitaChakravarty in her renowned work National Identity in Indian Popular Cinema, 1947- 1987 (1993) throws substantial light on some of the major women portrayals in Hindi cinema. In one of her chapters on "Women and the Burden of Postcoloniality: The Courtesan Film Genre" she asserts, we are "indebted to (the first phase) western feminist film theory for our awareness of women in cinema as "object of the male gaze", the commoditised image as fetish and the independent woman who is not so independent after all".47 But as representations in Hindi cinema are associated with culture and nation, Indian modes of critique have to address various meanings and significations. So the focus should be on the traditional conceptions of femininity as they assist in understanding the roots of their distinctive appeal. Contrary to what various film critics have argued, she asserts that: *"The commercial popular film is the site where meanings and values that have long held sway in Indian culture are reworked, updated, renegotiated. The worlds of high culture and popular or "mass" culture are not polarized opposites but feed off each other. As such they perform complementary functions in the society, the one to affix points of reference and to suggest continuity, the other to scatter those points, to collect, bricoleur-fashion, the rags and pickings*

of the culture, to itemize the baubles of the moment, to keep, as it were, an ear to the ground. Knowing its own precariousness, subject as it is to changes in the economy, technology, and audience preference, it shamelessly raids high culture, nursing its "other" at its very heart. It is thus the yesterday's pop culture becomes today's high culture".

The evolution of a serious feminist debate on analysing and need to change the women images in Indian cinema emerged with ShomaChatterji in Subject: Cinema, Object: Woman: A Study of the Portrayal of Women in Indian Cinema (1998). Reading gender in Indian cinema, Chatterji highlights female's sub-cultural activity, resistance and pleasure that are all entrenched in Indian cinema. The notion of woman as a homogeneous, undifferentiated species of human existence is attacked by her and she denies the recognition of anonymity that patriarchy has invested it with. Constructing a space for the evolution of serious feminist debate, she avers that the clarion call should not be for the new cinematic structures but also on the serious solutions to existing social problems.

17.6.2 Patriarchy and Indian Cinema

Being a typical patriarchal society there exists a stern social structure in which the role of a woman is delineated, this specific role in the social scheme finds its way into the role of women in cinema as well. This is where the persuasion theory of alter-casting enters the discussion. According to Terry & Hogg, this theory suggests, when a person accepts what is socially ordained they automatically feel the pressure to conform. The social environment expects the person to behave in a manner that is consistent with the role. Alter-casting means that we force an audience to accept a particular role that makes them behave in the way we want them to behave. Women have somehow inherited specific social and cultural roles, which carry into the mainstream film industry and they end up being cast in similar roles. Inspired by '*Manusmriti*', a female actor is never allowed to transgresses the scriptural paradigm that mediates women's role as always in obedience and servitude to man, like *Sita* – the scriptural paradigm of femininity. The beginning of the woman's acting career seems to be governed by social norms and they mostly ended up playing the roles of a daughter, taking care of her siblings, helping the mother in the kitchen, and marrying the man of her father's choice, another typical role assigned to women is that of a great mother who is self-sacrificing, devoted and larger than life. This mother has no desires of her own nor does she have aspirations. The third and most abused image of a woman presented onscreen is the role of an ideal wife. Wife, such

as *Savitri*, the immortalized image of an ideal woman, wife of Indian epics, who sacrificed everything for her husband. Thus, the wife is expected to be immensely devoted to her husband at the cost of her own pleasures, desires, and ambitions. This ideal wife has to be sexually pure and epitomize sexual fidelity, she is responsible for all household chores, taking great care of her husband and children, and is expected to lead her remaining life embracing her husband's memories, once she becomes a widow. Through the ideas of loyalty and obedience to the husband, Hindi cinema successfully institutionalized patriarchal values. Films like "Dahej" (1950), "Gaur" (1968), "Devi" (1970), "Biwiho to Aisi" (1988), "PatiParmeshwar" (1988) depicted women as passive, submissive wives and perfect martyrs for their families. In these films, practices of patriarchy were implicitly patronized in the sense that the victim wife refuses to leave her husband's house despite severe physical and emotional violence. The idea is further reinforced by perpetuating Indian traditions and symbols like entering the husband's house at the time of marriage in a "*doli*" and leaving only at the time of death in an "*arthi*".

Representation of women in Bollywood is based on Manichean dualism where women are presented as one-dimensional characters that are good or bad. This dichotomy was reinforced in popular films, which distinguished between the heroine and the vamp, the wife, and the other woman. Being true to this tradition contrary to the atypical 'pure' woman of Hindi cinema another 'impure' image is also propagated, that of the stereotyped 'vamp', she is exactly the opposite of the role of an ideal wife or mother. The vamp is characterized as a woman who shows disrespect for tradition by emulating Western women. Furthermore, she smokes, drinks, parties and is promiscuous. Thus rendering her immoral, with unacceptable and offensive behaviour. By creating this binary it is demonstrated how the Madonna-whore complex functions in the Indian community. Madonna, symbolizes the girlfriend or wife, while the vamp is a whore, and as usual, is expected to be unchaste and impure. Mother, daughter, wife or vamp, whatever the role-played by the woman in Hindi cinema one thing remains consistent, she has little agency in the industry and serves only as a strategic instrument. Talking about the vamp one woman who surpasses all others is Helen followed closely by Aruna Irani and Bindu. Helen Ann Richardson played the stereotyped role of the classic vamp in many movies made in the sixties. This Burmese-born actor played the role of a *nautch* dancer and acted in more than seven hundred movies. Despite being very popular she was never offered the role of a leading lady in any of the movies she worked in. She set the screen ablaze by her dance numbers in songs like "Piya Tu Ab Tu Aaja" Caravan, (1971) and "Mera naam chin chin chu", Howrah Bridge (1958), yet she emerges as the most stereotyped and marginalized female actors in the history of Indian cinema.[1]

Coinciding with the rise of feminism an alternative genre of filmmaking did start evolving in Indian Cinema over time; it witnessed a mild shift in sensibilities. This new trend was more sympathetic to the marginalized female and tried to deal with women's issues, give them voice and representation in the male-dominated industry. Unable to comprehend the female psyche, movies made before this only forged a subaltern interiority that made no effort to destabilize hegemonies. Confronted with the might of sound financial backing and outdone by history and culture. Interestingly as more women directors emerged on the scene they started addressing vital issues and angst experienced by women that had been largely ignored till then. As it has been argued by the feminist critiques those films portraying women's issues made by even the most liberal and impartial male directors in India still present some proportion of patriarchal tendencies, realizing the pitfalls of stereotyping they made attempts to showcase empathy and identification. This empathy, however, was conditional and regulated by an ambivalent worldview. "Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam" (1999), "Cocktail" (2012) despite being women-centric have strong patriarchal residue, such refusal is ultimately premised uponconvenience, a hedonist intellectual and a moral vacuum- a recurrent feature of occupation. It ultimately falls back to the same tendency to stereotype. On the other hand, films made by some women, directors explored various themes like the question of female identity in a male dominated society. In movies like "Water" (2005), "Mr. and Mrs.Iyer" (2002), "English Vinglish" (2012), women's issues are brilliantly examined by them, most notable amongst these breed of directors were, Aparna Sen, Kalpana Lajmi, and Deepa Mehta. Women, who had always, have been a symbol of submission was for the first time given power to overcome patriarchy and carve an identity in a male-dominated Indian society.

These films emerge as a charter against the all-pervading religion and culture that constructs the ideal – a virtuous woman synonymous with subservience, docile femininity and lack of agency. After analysing the agenda of the few women-centric movies produced it is very difficult to understand why despite strong resistance to the dominant stereotypes more such movies are not made. The possible answer can be found in the difficulties faced by women directors who push a feministic agenda. Films by these directors usually face many difficulties in finding private financers. For instance, Kalpana Lajmi's"Daman" (2001) ended up being funded and distributed by National Development Film Corporation (NDFC), a government program offering much less money. She also served as the screenwriter and storywriter of the film. In addition to the funding problem, most of her technicians, who were men, aggravated her miseries because they were either new to the business or did not deliver quality

work. She was severely criticized for portraying very aggressive central characters and her movies received a fair share of negative criticism on technical issues. Lajmi angrily addressed these issues in an interview, where she said, "it's easy for someone to slash a woman- centric film. They don't see what goes into making a film. And with the kind of budget we get, what do they expect us to make? Even if we get half the money that producers of commercial films get, we can create wonders". Even actress KareenaKapoor, on the music release of her woman-centric film Heroine, confessed, "although women-centric films are being appreciated, and are more in number than they used to be in the past, the truth still remains that in a male-dominated industry, women are given a secondary treatment, and they will continue to be shown as glamorous dolls and will perform insignificant roles". In fact, various actresses have a mentioned on many occasions that it is very difficult, nearly impossible for women-centric movies to make half as much money as the films with male superstars in them.[2]

India is a large country with diverse groups of people. Women from one region differ substantially from other geographic divisions. It is not easy to homogenize the whole gender to give them one voice. They come from different backgrounds, be it socio-economic status, religion or caste, they have different kinds of ambitions and desires as a result of which they lead different lives. Ideally, different women have to be located in varied films, so as to provide them with an agency to dismantle oppressive stereotypes. Women have to be provided with strong role models who possess an individualistic identity and help female audience in negotiating a unique position within the existing power structures. Progressive cinema can become a tool for social change, a change for the better.

17.7 Conclusion

As we have discussed already that Indian society is a patriarchal one, so we can see that women have always been subservient to men.

Films have always represented women in stereotyped ways. Films not only depict women in several fixed roles but they also build a negative perception towards women in masses. In Hindi cinema, women are often depicted as weak, marginalised, and an object of entertainment. Objectification of women has led them to becoming vulnerable in society. Films have depicted negative notions about women, which seem to have infected the society.

From the last two decades, filmmaking and film viewing has changed significantly. Now, Bollywood produces masala films and makes films related to

social concern. In addition to entertainment and business, these films are creating social awareness among audiences. Bollywood has become mature in its approach of portrayal of women in films. The roles and characters of women are now central in films.

17.8 Summary

Films are being made on various issues of women. We also discussed films made on various issues of women like empowerment, honour killing, female feticide and women in sports are depicting satisfactorily. Earlier in typical Bollywood masala films, women were depicted as weak and marginalized. But in changed scenario, women portrayal in films has become different. Now they are portraying as women fighting for causes and rights. Films like "Tanu Weds Manu" and "Piku" have broken the image of so called stereotyped Indian girl.If we see the larger picture, it reflects the perspective of society towards women portrayed in films. In conclusion, we can say that there is a paradigm shift in the portrayal of women in films, from entertainment to empowerment. It clearly shows the approach and attitude of society and changing the reality in cinema also.

Cinema indeed is reflection of changes in socio-cultural norms thereby influencing people's perceptions and judgments. It is only when Indian society at large can perceive woman as naturally fallible as man that audience connect with all kinds of onscreen woman portrayals in Hindi cinema would emerge.[1]

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17.10 End Notes

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UNIT 18 ☐ Social Media and the Changing Femininity

Structure

18.1 Learning Objectives

After going through the sub units the students will be able to:

   ✓   To understand the relationship between social media and gender.

✓   To learn the cultural background of gender roles in society.

✓   To study the evolution of social media and its gendered components.

✓   To develop a critical view of gendering on social media.

✓   To identify the elements of changing femininity in today's context.

✓   To develop an understanding of the sociology of social media and its effects on femininity.

18.2   Introduction

According to Canadian Communication Theorist, Marshal McLuhan, mass media not only gives people information and entertainment, but also affects people's lives by shaping their opinion, attitudes and beliefs (McLuhan, 1964). It controls social life by transferring the dominant hegemonic ideology in an invisible way. In case of gender portrayal, society have established hegemony of males by institutionalizing dominance of men over women. Gendered representation of media across the world revolves around the stereotypical portrayals of masculinity and femininity. Masculinity is associated with male and Femininity is associated with female. The male body is essentialized in our culture around certain traits that characterize maleness or masculinity. Similarly, femininity is also culturally constructed based on the body of the biological female. Thus, the concept of masculinity and femininity are culturally produced to signify the socially accepted differences between men and women. Although many scholars argue that this difference is based on biology, some of them argue that these differences are socially constructed.

Throughout history, the content of gender stereotype has changed in relation to historical changes in the relationship between men and women. Media for long is reinforcing the notion of gender stereotyping through its content, be it underrepresentation of women in media or portrayal of stereotypes in different forms of media. With the emergence of internet, the field of communication studies have undergone massive changes by making one-way sender dominated communication channel to two-way receiver oriented one. New Media is the consequence of this communication revolution. New Media has started changing the scenario in almost all aspects of life. With the passage of time and advancement of technology, change has been witnessed slowly but steadily in the stereotypical portrayal of gender in media content. New media being carrying the notion of participatory culture is expected to bring some changes in the way gender roles has been represented till now in

media. Social media sites have been seen to allow information delivery, constant engagement and dialogue of those ideas which are falling outside the existing of gendered discourse. Social media provides platform to talk on issues which generally is silenced or overlooked in society.[1]

18.2.1. Women and Mass Media

Building egalitarian societies is one of the priorities of modern democratic states. Mass media play a unique and important role in the shaping of a society where men and women enjoy equal rights. Raising women's legal awareness is important for the creation of an egalitarian society. This is reached through several means, including psychological, social, economic, philosophical, awareness of human rights, political and so on. The role of media is important for being successful in all the mentioned spheres. The media can promote and speed up the reforms in progress, or, on the contrary, it can hamper their implementation.

A number of international conferences and conventions have voiced and publicized the need to break public stereotypes through change in the media policy. Mass media, however, continue to reproduce discriminatory stereotypes about women and portray them in sexist ways. As a rule, women are portrayed in a narrow range of characters in mass media. If we were to divide mass media into two categories, such as fictional and news-reporting, then in the former, women are often associated with the household or sex-objects, and in the latter category, they lack roles. Only in a limited number of news programs do women appear as main actors or experts. One of the reasons for this situation is the smaller number of women in these spheres, but even the existing number of women are underrepresented compared to their male counterparts. In advertising and magazines, women are usually portrayed as young, slim and with beauty that meets the accepted standards. Women with this kind of appearance are often associated with sex objects.

Why do social scientists attribute importance to study of images and stereotypes of women in media? Femininity, as well as masculinity, are not biological, but rather, cultural constructs. Representations and manifestations of femininity differ across cultures, time and societies. Femininity is culturally and socially constructed by the family, education, the public, and to a larger extent, the media. In this respect, the long-term change in women's images in media could help change the perceptions and stereotypes women face in a society. In the initial stage of its history, media were managed exclusively by men. The media images of men and **women were tailored to men's preferences**. In other words, men were creating media images of men and

women they wished to see in reality.

Media images of women have become a subject of criticism in Feminist Media Studies since 1960s, when Betty Friedan in her book entitled *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) revealed and criticized the image of an ideal woman in post-war America. Friedan calls this image "the happy housewife heroine."[1] Following her, numerous organizations, feminist groups and journals researched and revealed the discriminatory nature of women's images in advertisements and films. The troublesome findings of their research were behind the reason of UNESCO's statement on Mass Media in 1979, namely:*"Taking into consideration that TV programs give information and reflect on gender roles in real life, it must be stated that women's images are distorted and unrealistic in these programs. All kind of entertainment programs portray women in a dual image. On one hand, they are decorative objects. Yet, at the same time, they are passive individuals in the household and in marriage who are dependent on men for financial, emotional and physical support."* Despite the fact that today media increasingly associate femininity with independent and powerful women, qualities informed by sexuality continue to play a dominant role in the shaping of femininity.

Fragmental display of the female body and fragmentation of women's body in advertisements promote the objectification of women's bodies. When the TV screen or a commercial poster displays only **slender long legs, prominent busts**. It is difficult to perceive that body holistically and as possessing personality. In addition, the portrayed female characters are largely influenced by **the'beauty myth'.**They have flawless skin, slender stature and embody all components of beauty as perceived in society. As a result of globalization this myth is increasingly generalized across cultures and societies. The standards of beauty as portrayed in media, however, are impossible to achieve, since the models have been transformed into these images through a number of technical means.One of the reasons of discriminatory images of women in media is the fact that media products, as a rule, are created by men, in men's tastes and for men. In 2012 The International Women's Media Foundation carried out a study of world news agencies and corporations to determine the status of women in the news media. This first large-scale study illustrated that in all areas of media women were still facing problems in achieving equality.

The survey conducted in 59 countries, revealed that women make up only 33.3 percent of full time employees in 522 organizations that participated in the survey. In almost all countries men occupy higher positions. Interestingly, Uganda and Russia are among the top countries where men and women almost equally appear in leading

positions. Unfortunately, this has not changed the images of women in media. Social scientists and their research results illustrate that women's involvement in media work is not sufficient for bringing about change in how women are portrayed in media. Not only should women be represented in top management and have major impact on the decision-making process, but they should also undergo professional training. Otherwise, the female journalists and media executives, who have been educated with the media rules of patriarchal system, also often reproduces the sexist images of women.With this in mind, a number of international organizations have concluded conventions and treaties with states through which they support the training of media employees by giving them the necessary tools and know-how to develop gender-sensitive policies.

Despite the tremendous change that has taken place in the sphere of media thanks to feminist criticism, the contemporary media are nowhere close to the standards they claim. Even in US and Europe, where feminist ideas are widely spread, and women have legally reached equal rights with men, media continue to have discriminatory attitudes towards women and rely on male worldview when portraying women. Many researchers and analysts have documented the fact that in these countries women are also poorly represented in media which in turn has had a negative impact on the formation of value system.

The image of women and the voicing of women's concern underwent a revolutionary change due to modern technology and emergence of new types of media. Today, all of us, in fact, are part of the media not only as consumers, but also as producers. And anyone, woman or man, can cover their problems and story by themselves, make it public, and turn it into media for consumption. These new possibilities, however, also bring about new challenges. In case of traditional media, it is possible to work with the leadership and staff to undergo training and achieve some results. In case of social media, not only groups in need of support voice their opinion, and publicize their perceptions freely, but also those people who threaten these groups and spread discriminatory and offensive comments about them. Thus, the quality of information disseminated in social media and the comments on these pieces of information are much more sexist and patriarchal. Change in this sphere can be achieved only through indirect impact.In other words, the *sexist traditional media educates sexist citizens who spread their sexist perceptions through social media.* Change in the gender policy of traditional media and its compliance with international norms remain to be the most effective way for breaking this vicious circle.[2]

18.3 Images of Femininity in contemporary Mass Culture

In what regards the feminine identity, it is constructed according to the postmodern model. In other words, it is acquired when the woman manages to display an image commonly recognized as "feminine" and to play a role suited to her gender. Since the instruments of mass culture are used for educating the public, I intend to explain how they define femininity in order to understand how women appear portrayed in the post- modern culture. If individuals acquire an identity by constructing an image and playing a role, then an individual "becomes" someone if s/he is able to construct a personal identity that can be recognized by the others. A feminine identity has been successfully constructed if the external observers can recognize a "feminine" body associated with a "feminine" behaviour.

Media provide images and figures that spectators can imitate and identify with. These images play an important part in socializing and educating individuals using social and sexual role models (as well as a lot of different positions of the individual) that value certain patterns of behaviour and a certain style, while discouraging any others. This is particularly true when we refer to women's representation in the media. Media are efficient means for disseminating the dominant discourse of power and for disguising it into a matter of "common sense". Therefore, artificially created needs, norms and standards regarding the female body are presented as natural and normal. Firstly, I will analyse how is the feminine body represented in the media and secondly, what roles are women encouraged to assume.

The "feminine" and the "masculine" are defined using binary oppositions: subject/ object, essence/ appearance, culture/ nature, reason/ passion, active/ passive, spirit/ mat- ter. The second terms of these binary oppositions are attributed to the "feminine". In order to be recognized as "feminine", women must internalize the "feminine" values and to construct their identities accordingly. Since femininity is associated with matter, the symbol of femininity is the female body. In contemporary culture, the body, especially the female one, is regarded as an object that can be shaped and modelled to match the promoted beauty standards. The media are an efficient instrument that both reflect and shape social realities. The ideal of femininity media promote also reflects women's position in a certain society.

In what concerns women's social roles, mass culture provides the public with a variety of models that reflect, however, cultural beliefs and gender stereotypes.

Each model stresses certain qualities, yet some models prevail. We may say that some models seem dominant while the "alternative" ones are quite few and are often considered to be rather "unfeminine". The public is taught that some attitudes and activities are more suited to women than others. Media offer us traditional representations of women as well as different, "emancipated" ones. Women can choose from a wide range of social roles that can be performed both in the private and in the public space.

Once again, femininity is defined according to the binary oppositions mentioned above. The second term, associated to the feminine, appears as inferior, even opposed to the first term. The man appears as rational, active, independent, while the woman appears as passive, dependent, subject to passions. Therefore, the tasks that require responsibility, competitiveness, ambition, initiative, intelligence, strength (such as earning an income, taking political decisions, leading an institution) are traditionally attributed to men, while those requiring care, empathy, nurturing, obedience, submission, are attributed to women. Based on this separation between masculine and feminine, the roles women and men perform in the private and in the public space are divided as well: men are the central authority of the family, the bread-winners, producers of material goods and representatives of their family in the public space, while women are unpaid domestic workers, nurturers, reproducers and subordinates. This separation prevails in the public space as the top position within a hierarchy (be it a political, organizational or institutional one) is usually held by men, while women are usually subordinates and mediators, working in the low-paid sectors of the labour market, performing similar activities to those at home.

Family is a central value in traditional, patriarchal societies; therefore mass culture products celebrate the values of the traditional family. The traditional family appears as a hierarchy having the man at the top and the wife and children - as subordinates. Opposite to this traditional model is the egalitarian family. The two partners share private and public responsibilities so that neither one of them is subordinate to the other. The traditional roles for women are those of wives and mothers, of beautiful objects and reproducers. Traditional women find their fulfilment in the private sphere, in nurturing the other members of their family. On the contrary, the emancipated women invest their time and efforts in their personal development, in building a career. For them marriage and motherhood are an option they might decide not to choose. In the public space, these women appear as professionally successful, rational, ambitious, talented and hard-working. They are endowed with the so-called "masculine" features.

Anyhow, the "alternative" role models media promote are not radically different from the traditional ones. Moreover, the alternative media offer us a traditional model of femininity that has been added some liberal elements. To put it differently, besides beauties and mothers, feminine women also appear as professionals, successful in the public space. The growing importance of the image undermines women's social position. Besides their duties of mothers, wives, workers, women also have the duty to look good. They have to obey men's desires and beauty standards, being valued mainly as beautiful objects. The new ideal of femininity strengthens the male domination, since women must look good with the only purpose of attracting and keeping a man. These new standards require that women should be young and slim, domestic workers, reproducers, loving wives and mothers, intelligent, ambitious career women altogether. Media suggests women should be able to do it all. Women's failure to identify themselves with this model is seen as a personal failure due to personal flaws, while the model itself is not being contested.

Media presents a distorted model of the emancipated femininity: instead of liberating women from their status of objects and instead of placing them on an equal position with men both at work and at home, media creates "the perfect woman", setting standards very difficult to reach (and even more difficult to preserve) and promoting women who seem to match this ideal. When portraying a woman, media follow three coordinates: the image (if she subscribes to the ideal of beauty), the private life (if she has a partner, if she has children), the career (how talented she is in her work). This scheme is useful for manipulating women's attitudes towards the alternative models of femininity as our culture is centred on image and leisure time, therefore personal image and private life appear to be more important than any relevant activities in the public space. So, if a successful career woman is not young and slim, is not married, divorced or has no children, the readers will not look up to her for their system of values is different. Each time a woman appears as independent, rational, successful, the stress is moved on her personal life (she has no partner, no children or is not attractive) so as to undermine her professional achievements. The cost for being "different" is too high and women are not willing to give up their femininity (beauty and motherhood) in exchange for liberation.

The alternative models are present, though. Different models are accepted and integrated in the "official" culture only if they submit to some traditional aspects. In other words, a career woman is a fine model for women as long as she preserves her femininity, as long as she is attractive and appears as a wife and a mother. Media manipulates women into rejecting the "emancipated" model by portraying intelligent

or successful women as deprived of family or personal life. In our culture family is still seen as a source of fulfilment for women. Most women are not prepared to postpone the chance of getting married and having children in order to be successful at work. The image is also very important since it is the very symbol of femininity, so if the career women do not look feminine, the public will reject them and women will refuse to identify them- selves with such models.

Since middle-class women have been sequestered from the world, isolated from one another, and their heritage submerged with each generation, they are more dependent than men are on the cultural models on offer, and more likely to be imprinted by them. Given few role models in the world, women seek them on the screen and on the glossy page (Wolf, 1992, p.58). In these conditions, media representations of femininity have a strong impact on women and on the shaping of their identities. Women are sup- posed to have a variety of models to choose from when constructing their image and assuming their roles, but the truth is that their options are quite limited and induced by the media discourse. After they have internalized the standards of femininity, their choices regarding image and role models are quite predictable.[1]

18.4 Social Media and Gender

Some feminist commentators praise the rise of social media, including websites such as Face- book, because they privilege expressiveness and social skills, traits often considered feminine (Zacharias & Arthurs, 2008). Indeed, women outnumber men in social media. One global study reported that 76% of online women use social media, as compared to 70% of online men (Vollman, Abraham, & Morn 2010). Similarly, Junco, Merson, & Salter (2010) found that women spend more time on social networking sites than men. Feminists hoped that social media (websites that facilitate user interaction) would serve as spaces to empower young women to carve out their own identities that might counter mainstream media stereotypes; indeed, some hoped that women could construct new or altered definitions of whatit ultimately means to be a "girl" (Scott-Dixon, 2002; Koskela, 2004). They could do this by ex- changing comments, building relationships, and exchanging social capital (Bailey et al., 2013; Senft, 2008) via social media. As a result of the potential offered by this relatively new media technology, Senft (2008) posited that diverse narratives written by girls themselves could begin to upset the dominant, stereotypical definitions of "girl" and perhaps even challenge gender-based constraints that hinder social equality.

Women are clearly enthusiastic in their use of social media technology, and have utilized it in meaningful ways to enhance their social lives (Bailey et al., 2013).

There is a wide plethora of social media platforms to choose from, including (but certainly not limited to) Facebook, Tumblr, Google Plus, Twitter, Vine, and the wide array of online dating sites such as eHarmony. However, one key point to note about many of these sites is that they are both mainstream and corporate.

Corporate, mainstream websites tend to contain large amounts of advertising, and that advertising often portrays pre-existing stereotypes of what it is to be a "man" or a "woman". Given that women use social media in greater numbers and at a higher intensity than men, it seems likely that they bear more of the brunt of exposure to repeated messages reinforcing these gender norms. Evidence suggests that young women internalize the commercial images that they see in advertisements here and incorporate the stereotypes into their online social presentation to varying degrees (Ringrose, 2010). Ringrose concluded, "positioning the self as always 'up for it' and the 'performance of confident sexual agency' has shifted to become a *key regulative*" (2010, p. 176). Thus, women may experience a visual imperative to present the self as sexy on social networking sites. Girls in online spaces also reproduce other common stereotypes of femininity (Bailey et al., 2013). Often, they place emphasis on being attractive and having attractive friends (Manago, Graham, Greenfield, & Salimkhan, 2008), present themselves as eager to please males (Kapidizic & Herring, 2011), and generally work to look like a happy, carefree, and sexy but not sexual.

Thus, social media has proved to be a "mixed bag" offering and at times encouraging the enactment of traditional gender roles as well as, at other times, providing opportunities to "give voice" to users' unique ideas, including both men and women who may be uncomfortable communicating in face-to-face public venues. Despite its mixed reviews, social media in general offer multiple unique affordances that allow liberating gendered behaviors that are rarely readily available offline. Such affordances include as the following:

- Many venues offer *unfettered access to a mass audience* for the promotion of individual voices that might otherwise be silenced (such as gay teens) as well as public spaces for the organization of gendered social movements (e.g., the Arab Spring that advocated for increased women's rights). (

- *Gender-bending* occurs when biological males pose as female, biological female pose as males, or either sex poses non- gendered. Offline gender-bending occurs (e.g., cross-dressing), but gender-bending is more common online where fewer non- verbal cues are available to unmask the behavior. Samp, Wittenberg, and Gillett (2003) reported that feminine, masculine, and

androgynous individuals were equally likely to engage in gender-bending. Online gender-bending allows for the critical examination of social constructions of gen- der and potentially contributes to the long-term destabilization of the way society currently constructs gender (Danet, 1998). The act of gender-bending allows individuals to gather skills, tools, and data to challenge rigid notions of gender and sexuality. The performance of an alternative gender (identity through online interactions can "defamiliarize" individuals with their real life gender role (Bruckman, 1993), allowing users to address their sexuality and to interact in ways that he/she would not be comfortable doing in offline, as well as to understand the way sexual politics work in society (Danet, 1998).

- Young, Griffin-Shelley, Cooper, O'Mara, and Buchanan (2000) defined *cybersex* as "two online users engaging in private discourse about sexual fantasies. The dialogue is usually accompanied by self- stimulation" (p. 60). Cybersex requires the articulation of sexual desire to the extent that would be most unusual in face-to-face encounter. Both married and unmarried men and women participate in cybersex (Millner, 2008), resulting in a wide variety of sexual encounters online. Multiple websites match partners who desire single-single dating, affairs between partners married to others, online sexual encounters, and so on. Cybersex covers a wide range of relationships including but not limited to cyber romances (Gibbs, Ellison, & Heino, 2006) and cyber affairs (Young et al., 2000), yet many cybersex partners never meet offline. When and if they meet, the relationships are often of very short duration. In contrast, cyber partners who establish emotionally connected relation- ships often interact online for a very long time (Barta & Kiene, 2005). Thus, many social media sites offers opportunities to develop relationships with others who enjoy uncommon relational and sexual practices that users might be hesitant to explore in offline venues, including various polyamory practices (multiple loving partners) (Ritchie & Baker, 2006), homo- sexuality (Ashford, 2006; Walker, 2009), and exploitative relationships (Brookey & Cannon, 2009), as well as sexual practices beyond the status quo.

- Social media provides important information *tools for managing complex multi- faced lives* with both family and work responsibilities (Edley & Houston, 2011). Using online coordination, both men and women maintain demanding professional positions while they become increasingly engaged with their children's lives and care of older or disabled relatives.

- Because access to social media is free and relatively easy, many non-profit organizations maintain a social media presence. To facilitate working parents' success in enacting increased engagement in family life, educational, recreational, and health- care *organizations engage social media* as a means of information distribution and co-ordination (Atkinson et al., 2009; Palmen & Kouri, 2012). Additionally, nonprofit agencies that advocate for equality between the sexes (includegender.org), greater opportunities for women (now.org), and/or the rights of individuals engaged in nontraditional gender enactments (http:// transequality.org) also maintain an online presence via social media. (The same affordances that facilitate liberation also present some noteworthy challenges to users. A partial listing of such challenges that relate closely to gender are noted below:

- *Hiring decisions based in part on users' online profiles* have become increasingly common. Given that online information exists almost indefinitely and given that any information posted online can be retrieved by an experienced corporate hacker, any hint of unconventionality in sexual or gendered behavior may have financial consequences for users.

- *Deception* is common in social media, as users can enact inaccurately positive self- presentations that are accepted more easily online than they would be offline (Gibbs et al., 2006). Women typically lie for safety concerns and men lie to boost their socio- economic status, but both sexes believe that lying about such factors allows for openness and honesty regarding the more important matters of their emotional experiences and sexual desires (Ben-Ze'ev, 2004). Gibbs et al. (2006) concluded that "the Internet is the medium for identity manipulation" (p. 169), including gender-bending.

- *Online dating* sites bring gender directly to the fore as the convention of dating is heavily tied to gender roles (Fullick, 2013). Whitty (2007) argued that users on these sites are quite strategic in the ways in which they present themselves as they seek to attract the ideal romantic partner. Hancock and Toma (2009) report that both men and women exert a high level of control over their profiles in an effort to present their best possible or ideal selves (Toma & Hancock, 2011). However, Fullick (2013) points out online daters are well aware that they are putting themselves out there for consumption in a consumption based cul- ture, and as such must sell themselves. Part of selling" involves mimicking how other media sell gender.

- *Internet infidelity* takes many forms—cyber affairs among them. According to Limacher and Wright (2006), "infidelity can be understood as a breach of trust be- tween a couple, in which the secrecy and lies become the culprit in destroying the relationship, not necessarily the sex" (p. 314). Although the Internet can be used for factual sexual education, it also can be used for emotional and sexual maladaptive behaviors associated with cybersex (Millner, 2008). Some internet users spend up to 10 hours per week engaged in cybersexual relationships (Cooper, Boies, Maheu, & Greenfield, 2000). Biological sex "is a good predictor of motivation for infidelity" (Barta & Kiene, 2005, p. 341); women are more likely to engage in infidelity when they experience emotional dissatisfaction in their primary relationship; men are more likely to be sexually motivated.

- *Online pornography* is widely available on the Internet and the pornography websites are often formatted as social media to facilitate interaction. Multiple researchers have documented that adolescent and young adult males are more likely than females to view sexually explicit online content (e.g., Boies, 2002; Peter & Valkenburg, 2006). Men are more likely than women to seek visual sexual depictions as a means to experience sexual arousal for masturbation; women are more likely to seek out erotic narratives and chat rooms than men; women are less likely than men to self-stimulate when using online materials (Barta & Kiene, 2005). Men often think of pornography on the Internet as mere visual stimulation for masturbation with no emotional attachment (Limacher & Wright, 2006); however, female offline romantic partners often hold an alternative viewpoint. "Getting caught" using pornography can transform a safe and loving relationship into one of mistrust and distance. Wives who catch their husbands using Internet pornography typically perceive themselves as unpleasing to their husbands and experience emotional pain by the husband's "involvement" with another woman.

In sum, social media offer multiple unique affordances that allow liberating gendered behaviors that are rarely readily available offline. However, such affordances come with some noteworthy challenges.

18.5 Impact of Social Media on the development of gender identity and roles

Media is a powerful source of knowledge. In this Modern age media's influences

plays an important role in every human's life. Media has done a drastic change especially in dissemination of information at our fingertips. We receive information from all popular media like newspapers, radio, television, Internet and websites. Media can be divided into print media such as newspapers, books, magazines and visual media like television and Internet. Furthermore, media has developed the capability and has intervened in constructing the gender roles over the time in many forms. Gender refers to the culturally and socially constructed differences between females and males found in the meanings, beliefs, and practices associated with "femininity" and "masculinity"(Judith Lorber 1994:6).

There has become a situation in every sphere of life that without media intervention the day does not end for many of us and we feel lost. Popular media like magazines, newspapers, television, internet and music have performed a substantial role in constructing gender roles in the terms of their beliefs, norms, attitudes and values. These media subtly influences and constructs the roles of gender with the latest information and alerts them to change as to be in line with the contemporary society. As such, media has become more gender aware and creates its content and language to present it clearer to men and women their roles and responsibilities in the society.

In recent times young people are constantly exposed to media's beliefs, ideas and opinions. For example, young children are given the freedom of having their own television and music sets at their bedrooms, having the freedom to getting access to magazines that could develop child and/or teenager. Young children are exposed to Internet viewing at their own pace of time at home and the same with teenagers there is no border between child and teenager as they are equally exposed to some degree by what they see and read. Childhood or early adolescents are at the age of searching for personal identity which links to construction of the gender roles. As such at that age the child absorbs whatever information it listens, reads and sees and later puts it out. Consequently, they lead to a unchangeable stereotypes gender beliefs (Lippmann qtd, in Lester XII), media changes children's thoughts and imagination regarding their own lifestyle and opinions according to their gender. The messages in the media also influences young adults to "decide the kind of man or woman [they] want to be" (Martin).

For teens, the media contributes significantly to their lives and construction of their gender roles. Magazines and television are popular among young adolescents and it is central in their lives. Popular television programs or celebrity shows are key features in developing and sustaining gendered lifestyles. The images posts by artists,

characters imposed, enticing ads, oral messages and visual communication widely transmits ideologies of gender and work to support the difference of the male-female dichotomy. Popular media messages today throughout the last half of this century (Tinkler, 1995), contributes to the definition of femininity and masculinity and the benefits of their adherence to these categories.

Boys always go for action pack movies, adventure shows, sports, magazines read and focused mostly on sports, technology, vehicles, and so on. Let's take television programs the adolescent male models and artists featured somehow used to construct the gender roles from aspects of the characters for example from the drama and movies. The boys project themselves to the roles of adult men who are in commanding, authoritative and strong. The videogame industry is leading and increasingly becoming popular and has impact on people who use it especially the young boys where most of the games shows the primary objectives of the males are to save the week and distressed and this idea overtime instigates in constructing the gender roles of that men are important because they are being featured as strong characters. Young females who watch shows and movies on television often their role models will be the female adolescents who show them on screen how to look good, how to belong to the "right" crowd and how to keep themselves in par with other modern group of peers and to please them so that they are not left out. Young females interests in popular fashions, cultural and romantic are presented on television shows and they learn how appearances is defined in social acceptability (Pipher 40) and at early age they learn how to physically appeal to a man all these influences in constructing their gender roles.Similarly, magazines can also have great influences on the construction of gender roles not just in young people but with adults too.[1]

18.5.1. Representation of women on social networking sites

Several researches have shown that women outnumber men in social networking sites, which is very uncommon in traditional media. Generally, studies reveal that women use social networking sites more than men to foster their social connections. In a 2007 study, it is seen that women are generally using social media for social connection and posting photographs. Similarly, in a study on blog it is seen that women are writing blogs more than men and write on their family, romantic relationship etc. other than serious issues. A large-scale study conducted in Myspace has revealed the fact that both men and women tended to have majority of female friends in their list. One of the key findings of the study is that women are probably more popular in social networking sites as women can both give and receive positive emotions. The trend that women outstrip men in domain of social media is shaping

the opinion that social media would serve as strong platform to empower women to build their own identity replacing the gender stereotyping of traditional media. Sneft (2008) are of the view that diverse narratives written by women in social media may begin to reverse the prevailing definition of 'girl' and challenge gender based limitations prevalent in society (Sneft, 2008).

Many social network sites like Facebook, Instagram etc. have skew towards female users. According to Pew Research, in US women are more likely to use Facebook than men by 11%. Pinterest is also a female centric social networking site with 33% female internet users using it compared to 8% of all men. It is also seen that more than half of women in comparison to men are using social network sites as they give positive response to brands and support and promote brands also. It is however very clear that in comparison to traditional media, representation of women in terms of using social media is much more.

18.5.1.1. Women and Different Social Networking Sites

One of the most important trend of social media is Facebook. Facebook provides variety of ways for the users to show their identity. Users portray their identity on Facebook through connectivity and narrative. Gender identity can be displayed through comments, status updates as well as pictures. Different research study showed that men upload pictures that make them seem independent and active while women focuses more on looking attractive. In terms of usage, women are more active in Facebook, busy in maintaining social relationships. In terms of blogging, female can experience liberation. Blogs provide important platform for gendered self- expression, especially in countries with restricted freedom of expression. In different countries, female uses blogs as well as vlogs for uploading their personal content. Attwood (2009) studied blooks (blogs turned into books) as current trend. Through blooks a female can share their sexual openness, empowerment and pleasure.

18.5.1.2. Women Activism and Social Media

Other than high representation of women using social media in comparison to men as a positive facet, social media is also giving a platform for people to voice their opinion on social issues especially gender equality. Female activists are playing vital role in social media against atrocities on women and women centric problems. One can wonder how a click makes a difference in the world.

Social media offers an opportunity for female activists to make a difference in the causes they support in cost effective manner and with instant reach. There are

pages on Facebook which address vehemently on women issues especially against the growing crime rates against women in India. Pages like Facebook Campaign and Abuse No More are such forums that are making people aware about women issues which can be addressed by generating consciousness and directed interventions. 'Abuse No More' provides its members a forum to meet other members and talk safely without conversations been seen by others. Thus social media sites help women to share their plight without disclosing their identities.

I Never Asked for It- an initiative of Blank Noise invites women to send garments they were wearing when they were sexually harassed or eve-teased in public along with an account of the story. There was a severe uproar in the 2012 Delhi gang rape case among women. Several posts were there in Facebook, one of which said- 'Don't tell us how to dress. Tell them not to rape'. Anurag Dwinedi, admin of Stop Acid Attacks, a popular facebook page, started his initiative in 2013 in light of the increasing acid attacks on women. Story of Laxmi, her fight for seven years and how her struggle forced the government to rethink on this issue in totality is worth appreciating. SlutWalk fight backs against victim blaming and slut shaming around sexual violence. Such platforms are empowering women to participate in social movements. The Times of India report says, Nisha Susan, who initiated the widely popular Pink Chaddi campaign says, *"If I have a problem with something and post it on my blog, people who are interested can join. It is the same with social networking sites. It's simple because you don't have to reconcile with people who want to do it differently"*. Oxfam India shared the popular campaign named, *"We can Campaign towards reduction of violence against women and for political empowerment"* and launched, *"The Close the Gap Campaign in Social Networking"* like social networking sites having the tagline, *"Indians demand equality for women"*. These platforms are having influence on rural users too which helps women to deal with gender issues.

Social media, being the game changer has tried to be an influential platform for bringing women's rights issues in attention of wider public. Social media tries to bridge the gap between women's grassroots activism and policy makers. There are areas on which social media has fostered women activism.

18.5.1.3. Hashtag Activism

Hashtag activism in the recent era has helped to mobilise public attention on women's rights and issues. It is increasing the credibility of those issues which are not properly highlighted in mainstream media. UN Women's successful and high-

profile #HeForShe campaign focuses on the potential of social media to attract large number of audiences. The campaign engaged more than 1.2 billion users, highlighting the fact to engage men and boys to achieve gender equality.

The recent #MeToo campaign has become one of the largest trending topics on Twitter with over half million tweets and a large number of share in Facebook. #Me too is an international movement against sexual harassment and assault. It spread virally in October 2017 as a hashtag to help demonstrate widespread prevalence of sexual assault. It provided space for people to be vulnerable about experiences without being specific.

18.5.1.4. Queer Identity and Social Media

During 1990s queer theory came into prominence as a different way of critically examining sexualities outside normative binaries. With the blogging movement of late 1990s users can put themselves into online spaces that allowed them to be honest and open about their identity. Facebook allows a user to designate their sex as either male or female while creating account. Once after the creation of account, the user is free to post whatever they wish to post in terms of their gender identity. Marginalised individuals after the emergence of internet are able to exceed geographical boundaries and provide anonymous communication. Indeed, early research revealed that queers often found safe and seen as accepting online domain as more comfortable zone, and that these interactions are habitually helpful to users' psychological well-being.

18.5.2. Gender Stereotyping Still Continues

Despite of all these positive facts, social media also reinforces gender stereotyping. Commercials that appear in social networks are the main sources of gender stereotyping. Women are generally seen as object of sex in social media advertisements. Women are more often shown in commercials like cosmetic and domestic products while advertisements for men generally focus on cars, business products or investments. Another important aspect is that advertisements show frequently the complete figures of women and close-up shots for men. Showing entire figure of women objectify the female body, while the latter evoke positive associations. Thus culturally constructed gender roles and relationships continue to remain same element in both mainstream and social media.

18.5.3. Self-Representation in Social Media

The other significant way in which social media showcases gender difference

is in the way young generation showcase themselves in social network domain. Youngster boys and girls differ in the way they post contents in social networks. Girls share their own pictures and while boys were more likely to share pictures and comments that they described as self-promotion. The pictures often contain sexual content or references to alcohol. Such behaviour echoes gender stereotypes and media portrays the picture of "commodified" woman on one hand and the strong stable depiction of man. Teenage girls are also more likely to share personal information than boys, which sometimes expose themselves to possible sexual harassment or cyber bullying.

According to some scholars, gender differences are rooted in our culture. They are of the view that girls and boys are raised with different sets of cultural values. In traditional media, gender differences and portrayal of gender stereotypes persists which continues in the online world as well. Despite of the shortcomings, each and every social media networking sites offers diversity of gendered performances. The detailed survey of existing literatures on gender representation in social media shows that users sometimes perform gender stereotyping in social media and in other cases it promotes equality of gender. There are still enormous scopes to deal with this particular area, it is on the users whether they will employ it to benefit or harm themselves.[2]

18.6 Conclusion: Changing Femininity in the age of Social Media

Feminist protests have a rich and complex history. First-wave feminism's focus on social and legal equality issues brought the suffragette movement. Followed by second-wave feminism where the focus shifted to cultural issues along with social and political aspects, seeing women's liberation movements, fights for reproductive rights and lasting protests like 'Take back the night'. Third-wave feminism then responded to the shortcomings of first- and second-wave feminism, by addressing intersectional issues, challenging feminism's embeddedness in the concerns of middle-class white women. Throughout these waves and beyond, we have seen nuanced movements and schools of thought that shape feminist ideologies to the needs and challenges of different groups and generations. From black to environmental feminism, from post-colonialist to sex-positive feminism, each iteration has sought to address specific inequalities and issues faced by women.

The accessibility, connectivity and in some areas omnipresence of social media

allows communities to be created between diverse groups who support common causes. The speed and connectivity off social media means these communities can be created and mobilized quickly, seeing fast and impactful action, and messages that spread like wildfire. Social media provides a safe space not only for organizing and mobilizing, but also for debriefing, learning and follow-up planning.

Social media has also seen the creation of vast networks through 'peripheral users' who spread the message of core people in movements who are engaged and creating content. While often these peripheral users are put in the 'clicktivism' or 'slacktivism' baskets, they seem to play an important role in amplifying protest messages.As I discussed in my last post, social media provides a tool to address power imbalances. It can level the playing field somewhat for women and for other groups who typically have the scales tipped against them. This shift in power also comes with the creation of communities. Ordinary people can use social media platforms to do extraordinary things, through impassioned appeals, raw speeches, personal revelations or merely sharing the inspiring actions of driven individuals. Social media's 'leaderless movements' have paved the way for people to choose their own champions. People can choose who to follow and how to cultivate their own communities and ultimately drive action, often in the form of protest. This can be seen in the humanitarian sphere as well with the rise of grassroots champions in the UN and NGOs and the fading sparkle of celebrity 'It' girls who have been faces of many campaigns. It feels refreshing and relatable! But that's another story.

18.7 Summary

It would be naïve to think the Internet has created one big happy world of fairness and equal opportunity. Power dynamics in the online world are still governed by access; algorithms and gatekeepers controlling how certain content is consumed and which topics and voices go viral. But these power dynamics seem to shift more readily in the online world. Social media amplifies voices, which would have previously gone unheard, thanks in part to peripheral users expanding their reach. And for feminism, social media has become the 'entrance door' for many people to feminist ideals and the possibility of fighting back against sexism and the patriarchy.

There are many skeptics who don't believe in the power of social media and consider that the *hashtag* campaigns won't create a real change in the world. No one can deny the impact social media has on raising awareness on different matters. But, there is still a lot to do if we want social media to really change the world.However, when it comes to feminism, social media has the potential to become a force in

making women more confident in their abilities and fight against sexism. Social media cannot replace live demonstrations and rallies. But, it can help people communicate, organize bigger protests and give a voice to those who are not ready to show up yet. It gives people the opportunity to share their opinions on a national matter, irrespective of their location and background.

Even though it cannot be attributed entirely to social media, United Nations also shows positive results in the fight against gender inequality. Therefore, we can now find more women holding leadership positions and a growing percentage of women involved in politics.On the other hand, the freedom offered by social media has also some downsides. Social media is still used to stop women from expressing their ideas through online abuse. Women journalists or politicians are the main targets and abusers use different methods to attack and intimidate them.Aside from the threats, which are an ongoing issue, social media is here to stay, and it will continue to help women become stronger and move their feminism activities forward. It gives women the power to unite and fight back against all this misogyny and hate. In the end, it all depends on how responsible we are when using it and how we plan the future steps.[1]

18.8 Question

Answer the following questions in your own words:

   i.   What do you mean by gender stereotypes?

   ii.   What are the images of femininity in contemporary mass culture?

   iii. Write a note on women activism and social media.

   iv. What are the multiple unique affordances offered by social media that allow liberating gendered behaviors?

   v.   How is femininity changing in the modern age of social media?

   vi. How is the self-represented in social media?

   vii. How has social media popularised the queer identity?

 viii. What is hashtag activism?

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UNIT 19 ❑ Regionalism and The Feminist Perspectives: The Case of Bengali Cinemas

Structure

19.1 Learning Objectives

In this unit, learners will be acquainted with the concept of Regional Cinema and its characteristics particularly in the context of Bengali cinemas. After going through this unit, learners will be able to:

- ✓ Describe the concept of regional cinema;
- ✓ Analyze the portrayal of women in regional films(Specially in the context of Bengali cinemas)

19.2 Introduction

Cinema is a powerful means of communication that represents culture, traditions and current circumstances. In this unit, we will address how women have been depicted in cinemas in Bengal. What kind of characters are they portraying, and how have regional filmmakers lifted their perspectives? We will address the problems of women portrayed in Bengali cinemas in detail.

19.3 Regional Cinema

For way too long, Indian cinema has been synonymous with Bollywood whereas the truth is, right from Satyajit Ray's Bengali Pather Panchali in 1955 to Abhishek Shah's Gujarati Hellaro in 2019, non-Bollywood cinema disparagingly dubbed "regional cinema" have been the true hallmark of excellence in Indian cinema.

(Source: https://www.nationalheraldindia.com/)

Mani Ratnam's Roja, Bombay, Dil Se, Yuva, Hey Ram! and Guru are examples of such films. The omnibus term 'regional Language' refers to Indian languages other than Hindi and English; strictly speaking though this is incorrect, since under the Indian constitution all 23 recognized languages are 'national'.

The spectacular success of the war epic Baahubali 2: The Conclusion, a Tamil-Telugu bilingual dubbed in Hindi, took regional cinema to new heights in 2017. Online ticketing platform Book My Show reported average occupancy of 45-46% for regional films last year, compared to around 39-40% in 2016. Within the regional space, Gujarati films registered a 44% increase over 2016 in terms of transactions on the site, followed by Malayalam movies that regisLtered a 38% rise.

Source- livemint.com/Consumer/6tn1zI84rp8aLk78fn3wnN/How-regional-cinema-trumped-Bollywood-in-2017.html

2010-2019 : The Rise of the Regional

According to FICCI Frames and entertainment, for the first time ever in 2018, more Kannada films released than Hindi. Earlier we use to see 2-3 Gujarati films every year, now more than 50 films release per annum. Box office performance of regional films has exceeded expectations in the last few years.

The Bahubali effect: Every regional language breaks the glass ceiling

The two Bahubali films, Bahubali 1 (Telugu/Malayalam/Tamil/Hindi, 2015) grossed INR 650cr and its sequel Bahubali 2 grossed INR 1810 cr totalling INR 2460cr for the franchisee. They lay the grounds for a slate of ambitiously mounted films in various languages to stand up and be counted. Box office performance data from some of the movies released in other languages in the last 4-5 years throws up numbers that one has only seen for Hindi films.

Film (language, year) reported gross box office collection, native speakers (census 2011)

Bigil (Tamil, 2019) Rs 285cr, 6.90 cr

KGF(Kannada, 2018) Rs 243cr, 4.50 cr

Rangasthalam (Telugu, 2018) Rs 235cr, 8.10cr

Puli Murugan (Malayalam, 2016) Rs 125cr, 3.50 cr

Sairat (Marathi, 2016) Rs 108 cr, 8.30 cr

Char Shahibzaade (Punjabi, 2014) Rs 78cr, 9.50 cr

Amazon Abhigyon (Bengali, 2017) Rs 42cr, 9.50 cr

Chal jeevi Laye (Gujarati, 2019) Rs 35cr, 5.50 cr

None of the above was dubbed in Hindi for a nationwide release like Bahubali was, but each of them managed to draw audiences and rake in big monies at the box office. Some of them were eventually remade in other languages.

Since independence, when India began sending film nominations to the Oscars, only 12 of the 42 films submitted were regional until 2009. But we have recently seen that the audience for regional films has risen. Films in Marathi (Harishchandra chi factory, Court) and 1 in each of the films in Malayalam (Abu, son of Adam), Gujarati (Good Road), Bengali (Rakthkarobi), Tamil (Vetrimaaran) and Assamese (Village Rockstars) have been very popular recently.

Online ticketing platform BookMyShow reported an average occupancy of 45%-46% for regional films in 2019, an 18% increase over 2016. Of all tickets sold on its platform in 2019, Malayalam reported a 76% annual growth over 2018, followed by Tamil at 35%, Kannada at 25%, Bengali at 24% and Bhojpuri at 14%. Gujarati films registered a 44% increase over 2016 in terms of transactions on the site. The strong movie-going habit in the south ensures that there is an appetite for good content. Annual language theatrical footfalls in the 200 million and 300 million range are now common. Interestingly, there were 9% lesser movies made in Tamil in 2019 (327 vs 361 in 2018), but they had a 35% growth in tickets sold and a 26% growth in Box office collections over 2018.

19.4 Feminist Perspectives in Bengali Cinema

Feminism in Bengali Cinemas

From the beginning, when this world has seen cultured society the patriarchs

have dominated. Except for a few cultures, almost all the societies were dominated by men. This gradually reduced the other genders' (especially women's) rights, freedom, and more. The dominance is not only seen through the societal and cultural structure but a majority of the ways using which the other genders have been dominated is through religion! But as is the way of nature, there is always a limit! Women started protesting and speaking for their rights, freedom, and more when the time came.

In India, Feminism grew gradually - mainly in three phases. However, there are several misconceptions about the term 'Feminism'. It is a range of movements and ideologies which call for equality of sexes. However, most of the people in today's time think and believe that Feminism has to do only with females! That's wrong. The base idea of Feminism is equality between all types of genders.

Tools for the spread of Feminist Movements

In India, the Feminist movements went through three phases starting from the mid-19th century. The methods of spreading the ideology have also gone through several changes. Right in the beginning, it was done by a few reformers who understood the necessity of gender equality. So, they started with the existing media such as print, books, newspapers, poems, speech, folk songs, and more. However, its impact took a bigger form when it became connected with the Independence movement of India.

With the help of Gandhiji, a large section of the people understood that other genders including women are also eligible enough to do things meant for the men. Several women organizations sprouted which helped a lot in spreading the ideology! Post Independence, as India went through development, many new tools were used by the reformists, feminists, and political leaders to spread the ideas of feminism among the Indians.

With the advent of media such as radio, microphone, speakers, televisions, cinemas, and more the feminist movement in India got the necessary wings to fly high! Especially, in the world of cinemas, a lot of women empowering movies were created that taught people about gender equality.

However, just like the Feminist movements in the other countries of the world, in India too, they were victims of severe criticism. There were not only criticisms from the conservative sides but also from the people who felt that the movement was not going the right way. The feminist movement in India specifically worked only for the upper-caste women instead of uplifting the women as a whole. So, yes, the movements were segregated into various political and caste movements! The

feminist ideas were simply used as tools to further ulterior motives and agendas.

However, to say, that the feminist movement in India failed would be wrong! Considering the massive changes that have come in people's thinking process, we can say that it has worked. Perhaps it needs that ultimate push so it reaches places where the other genders are discriminated against.

Present-day feminist movements have also started including other genders instead of focusing on women only. And this has become possible due to the surge in the numbers of feminist cinemas. Both in regional and national language cinemas, feminist ideas were propagated through women empowering stories. The *Mother India (1957)* is one such legendary cinema that highlighted not only women's power but other problems in Indian society. Similarly, the native language movies did not lag. The themes and goals were the same and they successfully spread the ideas of Feminism among the Indians.

The Feminist movements are still on-going with shows on OTT platforms, daily soaps and short films on video uploading websites. The number of people who are spreading the ideas of feminism have tripled. The rise in number of short films on gender stereotypes, women empowerment and more are the proofs. However, the gradual rise in the followers of Feminists in Bengal started with the Bengali Cinemas from the 1960s.

Bengali Cinema and Feminism

When the film culture started in India, the Bengali cinemas influenced Bollywood massively. Most of the great directors and film artists were from the Bengali background and industry. So, when Feminist ideas were spreading in Bengal, the Bengali cinema industry had to become its vehicle! Some of the prominent cinemas which talk about feminist ideas have been discussed below.

Saheb Bibi Golam (1953)

The movie is set at a time when women could have no ambitions other than being "good wives" and were puppets at the hands of their husbands. But the protagonist Pateswari does not submit everything to her fate. She fights back and becomes an inspiration for several women living an oppressed life.

Uttar Falguni (1963)

This movie was one of the first films which talk about women's empowerment. It was produced by Uttam Kumar and directed by Asit Sen. In one word this cinema was 'impactful'! Back in those times, women's struggles were least highlighted.

Uttar Falguni which had remakes in other regional languages was about a courtesan who ends up killing her alcoholic husband to rescue her daughter! The movie comprises powerful characters! The actors and actresses did brilliant work to make the movie impactful. The story may seem boring in today's time, but it was nothing less than a revolution back in the 1960s. And it received several awards as well. The Feminist ideas here were that women have the power and the freedom to take action whenever required.

Mahanagar (1963)

Another movie with a strong message for the womenfolk was Mahanagar. This is one of the Satyajit Ray classics. The story is based on a short story by Narendranath Mitra. It speaks about a housewife who left her conservative family and culture to make a living as a saleswoman. The movie is empowering as it shows the world the struggles of the urban women who made their living in the big city, Calcutta! During the 1960s, the country and especially Bengal was not at its best place economically. Many women were forced to take up 'manly' professions to earn their bread and butter. The short drama film is a mirror to the society for those times. The film showed the harsh realities of the women who had to fight against the patriarchal rules and attitudes to break free and live a life of dignity!

Charulata (1964)

The women's home life was never something glittering for the cinema world. However, Charulata which is based on the novel '*Nastanirh*' by Rabindranath Tagore shows how women are also human and have desires and ambitions. The cinema also highlights the problems a housewife used to face back in the days! The movie focuses on the emotions of the female protagonist. The men here in this movie are in the secondary roles. The fact that women can also be unhappy in a seemingly good married life is well portrayed through this movie.

36 Chowrangee Lane (1981)

From normalising tabooed practises to portraying single women as strong and independent, Aparna Sen's 1981 movie 36 Chowrangee Lane was much ahead of its time. It didn't present women as fragile damsels in distress but clear headed and firm.

Ghare Baire (1984)

Bimla initially 'worships' her husband as that is what she is taught to do. However, her devotion falters when she is exposed to the outside world. Despite falling in love with a swadeshi leader Sandip, she returns to her husband. But this time, as a wife and not a devotee.

Parama (1985)

Parama 'is Aparna Sen's second directorial venture in the titular role with Rakhi Gulzar, this classic follows a married woman whose circumstances force her in her typical Bengali household to discover her own voice and confront the patriarchal dominance. The basic narrative expresses a complex story of an unlawful affair. Aparna Sen herself considers the movie to be her most feminist film.

Unishe April (1994)

It is an unusual film that diverted from the censored and distorted image of a mother. It attempts to free her from the taboos and constraints of patriarchal culture.

Dahan (1997)

Based on Suchitra Bhattacharya's novel by the same name, Dahan is inspired from a true incident that took place in Kolkata. Romita and her husband are assaulted on the street. Jhinuk comes and rescues them. She tries to get the abusers punished by law. Watch this Rituporno Ghosh directorial to find out what happens.

Paromitar Ek Din (2000)

A modern woman, Paromita aka Rituparna, and her mother-in-law, Sanaka (Aparna Sen), forge a bond of friendship. The gaps in age and thoughts could not keep them from being trustworthy to each other. But one day, Paromita and Sanaka's son break off and social structures form a barrier between Paromita and Sanaka.

Alo (2003)

Alo starts living in her husband's ancestral village and becomes friends with the villagers. Not only does she educate the young girls she meets there but also tries to organise a programme to enable women to showcase their talent. It ends on a poignant note with Aalo emancipating the oppressed women but losing her own life during childbirth.

Chokher Bali (2003)

Binodini becomes a widow only a year after her marriage. She is enmeshed in a complicated web of love, forbidden passion, freedom and confinement. We get to see how Binodini tries to make sense of her identity as an educated, spirited and beautiful young woman trapped in widowhood.

Tin Ekke Tin (2004)

Three women attempt to build a start-up but the bank rejects them a loan on

the ground that women aren't fit for it. They then plan to rob a bank but ultimately save it from a terrorist attack. They reject a lumpsum amount the government offers them they and start their business with crowd funding.

The Japanese Wife (2010)

Based on Kunal Basu's novel by the same name, Aparna Sen's directorial The Japanese Wife talks of pen friends Shenamoy and Miyage falling in love through letters. It's a subtle tale of love, longing and hardships that the couple goes through during their long distance relationship.

Chitrangada (2012)

Rituparno Ghosh is one of the legendary movie directors in the Bengali film industry. The movie deals with the struggles of people who have issues with gender identity. The movie has a strong message and lets the viewers know about people who we would normally ignore. The movie story is loosely based on the drama *'Chitra'* by Rabindranath Tagore. The main protagonist is a man who struggles in his life with his gender identity. He goes against his father's wishes and selects a career he prefers. At the same time, when he falls in love with a man he breaks all boundaries but still stays faithful to his desires. The movie story is enough to make people think-think about gender issues that persist in this society. Thus, it carries on the ideas of feminism as well.

Goynar Baksho (2013)

The 'Goynar Baksho' of Aparna Sen certainly portrays the evolving role of women in society over three centuries. The horror comedy tested the patience of Bengali lovers to make them laugh with the material and appreciate the pride of being a part of the past you have forgotten. It is the screen adaptation of the famous tale of 3 generations of women and their roles and social change by Shirshendu Mukhopadhyay, attached to a box of jewels, handed over from one generation to the next.

Rajkahini (2015)

The story takes place in the backdrop of the partition of India. A group of prostitutes are asked to evacuate their home to ease the process of the division. But they refuse to do so. What follows is a story of their hardships and sacrifice.

Durga Sohay (2017)

Durga Sohay is a recent Bengali family movie produced by Avishek Ghosh and directed by Arindam Shil. Durga Puja and Devi Durga are cultural identities for

Bengalis. This women empowering movie highlights the deep meaning behind the sentence that 'Goddess lives inside every woman'. The two main female characters in this movie have different roles. However, both of them show the qualities of Devi Durga. However, the real story is about the woman Durga who goes against the social norms and prejudices to rob the Basak family on the last day of Durga Puja. The woman, however, wins every member of the family, and thus they promise to welcome her and help her make life after she comes back from her imprisonment!

Mitin Maashi (2019)

Based on Suchitra Bhattacharya's novel Hate Matro Tintey Din, Mitin Maashi is the story of Pragyaparamita Mukherjee, a private detective in her mid 30s. She prefers to use her wisdom rather than a revolver.

Sweater (2019)

Tuku's parents are bent on getting her married but she receives rejection from everyone because she is not "talented enough". The movie covers her transformation from a submissive woman into a self- confident one who learns knitting, rejects a marriage proposal and gets out of a toxic relationship.

The films were only the vehicle, the media, and the tool for the feminist movements to spread. But the question remains whether they are successful? In West Bengal and also in other states, we have seen a massive change in the thought process of the people regarding the womenfolk. In the olden days, the norm for women was to get married and engage in the household chores without any fault or complaint! They were treated as trivial and secondary. However, with the boom of the industries in the country and the spread of feminist ideas, more and more women took up jobs in the cities and towns. They broke the conservative barriers of their families and engaged in education and work just like the men!

However, yes, only a certain portion of the population of India absorbed the true values of the feminist ideology. Still, in the rural areas of the country or certain conservative areas, we see people still sticking to their traditionalist values and ideas. These have held their women back. Also, the social reformist, the social leaders, and the political leaders do not put forth the ideas of feminism with good motives. There is always a partiality in some sense, therefore, we see many lower caste female folks still stuck in their conservative patriarchal shackles. In West Bengal, although the movies did have an impact on the urban regions, things have not changed much in the extreme rural areas which are economically weaker as well. The urban cities are at par with the western world where women folks are empowered. So, there is a huge imbalance!

19.5 Femanist Bengali Soaps and Serials

During the 1960-80s televisions were not something to be found in every household. Rather there were community satellite televisions. Later, cable TVs were introduced which was also quite costly. However, community Televisions or people allowing neighbors to watch shows on their TV sets were common. It was during those times the concepts of feminist soaps were introduced. Although the main theme of the show was not about feminism, they consisted the feminist ideas.

Nowadays, we have tons of feminist Bengali serials which air almost every day. With time, the researchers found out that the Bengali serials were a staple of the housewives. At the same time, the professionals also loved spending the evenings watching soaps. Therefore to woe the female class and also to spread the feminist ideas, several women empowering daily soaps started to air. Some of the popular feminist Bengali serials are *Goyenda Ginni, Sreemoyee, Rani Rashmoni, Devi Choudharani, Kopal Kundola,* and more. These serials show the powerful sides of women.

In recent years, Bengali serials played a huge role in spreading Feminist ideas. Although the main motive was to gain higher TRPs but sticking to such women empowering topics also helped in spreading the ideas. Now more and more shows are running on OTT platforms. Not only women-specific but other gender-specific shows are also getting picked up by these OTT platforms. There are shows also highlighting the LGBTQ communities, talking about gender stereotypes, and more. For the audience, these shows are quite informative and educative. However, it is also true that most of the shows have ulterior political agendas. So, people should not follow everything they watch instead they should understand the real meaning which is fruitful for society!

19.6 Conclusion

According to FICCI Frames and entertainment, for the first time ever in 2018, more Kannada films released than Hindi. Earlier we use to see 2-3 Gujarati films every year, now more than 50 films releases per annum. Box office performance of regional films has exceeded expectations in the last few years. Feminism has become the focal point of mainstream discourse, so much so that it was chosen as the word of the year in 2017. Be it is in social media, television debates, or drawing rooms, it's the latest battlegrounds of 'war of sexes'. In the Satyajit Ray's films, women were portrayed as a character resisting dominant discourses about feminine behavior.

Satyajit Ray was well ahead of his time, too. His films, especially between 1960 and 1985 reflected contemporaryism in the sense that while society was not yet able to fathom a separate life of women other than men or the struggle inherent in such dynamic existences, Ray successfully portrayed these images in his various narratives

19.7 Summary

The unit talks about the concept of regional cinema and its significance especially in the case of Bengali Cinema the unit have tried to talk about the evolution of the regional cinema and its current position. We have tried taking into account the various dimensions of the regional cinema to understand its rich flavour and its indigenous take of the contemporary problems.

19.8 Questions

1. Cinema is a powerful means of communication that represents culture, traditions and current circumstances. Elucidate the statement

2. Discuss how women were portrayed in Satyajit Ray's films?

3. Elucidate the Impact of Feminist Bengali movies on society.

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19.10 Suggested Readings

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19.11 Glossary

1. **Cinema :** Cinema is a powerful means of communication that represents culture, traditions and current circumstances.

2. **Feminism :** Feminism in India is a series of movements that aim to define, create and defend equal political, economic and social rights and opportunities for women in India

3. **Culture :** the ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society.

4. **OTT :** An *over-the-top* (*OTT*) media service is a streaming media service offered directly to viewers via the Internet.

5. **Gender Stereotype :** A *gender stereotype* is a generalised view or preconception about attributes, or characteristics that are or ought to be possessed by women and men .

6. *Community television* is a form of mass media in which a television station is owned, operated or programmed by a community group to provide television

Unit 20 □ Gender and Advertisement Print and Electronic

Structure

20.1 Learning Objectives

In this unit, learners will be

- ✓ Acquainted with the concept of Gender and Advertisement.
- ✓ Able to comprehend the relation between Gender and Advertisement
- ✓ Explain the stereotyped models of advertisement

20.2 Introduction

With the advent of Advertisement in the world, there have been tremendous changes in every aspect. What was once considered the best way to advertise is now considered indecent or inappropriate! Generally, when we use the word 'advertisement', we attach it to marketing and selling, which is true as well! But if one looks at it from a different perspective, it will seem like a mirror to society! Just like cinemas, ads project what is happening in the current society. Therefore, gender has always played an essential role in Advertisement!

Men and women have always been seen differently. Although, there is an on-going struggle to make them equals, even to this day there is no equality!

20.3 Impact of Gender roles in Advertisement on the Society

Ads portray society but at the same time, a strong message in ads can also change what society thinks. Most brands in the world strive to become a 'trend' through something different and quirky. But back in the days, advertisers cared less about how the ads impacted society. It was later during the research works, the experts found out that the messages spread through the famous ads impact people largely.

In the 1950s, when almost every native American had a television set in their household, ads became a part of life! It was the years when people had enough money to spend on things they wish to buy rather than need to buy. It was about the American Dream!

The 1950s are called the golden era of advertising. But it was during these years when sexism was rampant. Hardly even society cared much about it. Any person of this age will call those ads purely controversial and offensive.

It was the time when society had its 'unchangeable' thought about what women can and cannot do! The ads of the 1950s were full of misogyny, but it was ALL RIGHT, as it what society accepted during those times. Are the advertisers really at fault? Not quite so. They were humans as well and parts of society. What society demanded, was what ads tried to project. But it further spread the message that women are meant to be in the kitchens and be good wives to the men. The ads were pretty much the same for both the print and electronic ads. However, the ads in the newspaper were much more impactful as they were read more.

Although women started to wield the buying power from the 1940s, the scenes did not alter much. Still, through the 1950s, men had most of the buying powers as in most homes working women were looked down upon. So, the ads were created to make an impact on men rather than women. However, they were watched, read, and viewed by all genders. So, the messages were the same for all! The ads had a strong message not exactly from the advertisers but from the societies that women must stick to 'womanly works'.

However, later in the 1960s, things started to change considerably. More women were joining the workforce. Make women have the buying power. So, many brands started to grab this new group of customers. New products were launched that would suit the lifestyle of working-class women. The ads were crafted to attract women! Also at the same time, during the 1960s, it was all about revolutions! The fact that

the women workforce doubled was also a part of the changing world. But the ad world never did a complete 180-degree shift. Yes, there were a couple of women empowering ads but most of it was an extension of the styles and theme of the 1950s. So, society's thoughts about gender roles remained quite the same even though revolutions started around these years.

It was not until the 1970s, the advertising world recognized the impact of feminism. However, for the ad world to completely change its mindset, it took a few more years. It was in the latter half of the 1980s when ad creators had to acknowledge the women's side of the experience. The ad industry understood women's changing role in society! And as the ads do, they portrayed what was going on the society.

When cinemas or ad films or ad prints started portraying the changed role of women, more and more people started accepting this new world. Although most of us never focus much on what is going on in the ads unless it has something quirky, our brain still retains information. The change of gender roles in ads thus impacts a lot on society. Remember times when we hum some tunes from an ad? That's the power of ads on society.

The People behind the scenes

Advertising is mostly about creativity with marketing motives behind it. Although the ads during the 1940s-90s were mostly about women or had stories and themes about women, they were created by men. So, the ad world was too late to grasp the concepts of feminism! Till recent years, the ad world was powered by men for both female and male products. Just like other industries, even in the advertisement industry, women had to work through a lot of difficulties to make their name and fame. Cases of harassment were frequent in this industry. Women not only had to work hard but had to fight through such problems. Even in the film industry, these problems were quite common. To this day, both men and women have to face sexual harassment in these glam industries.

20.3.1 Controversy and Trends

In the internet age, presently now, controversial ads make the most! Gone are the days when quirky music, dance, and innovative message made an ad popular. People love gossips and controversies, and the ad industry now uses this tactic to make trends easily! Although, yes, it can be risky as legal problems may arise. However, if a proper plan is prepared, the ad will bring more customers! However, it is better to avoid such ads as people are more knowledgeable these days. Unlike

the past decades, people are quick to point out what is right and what is wrong, thanks to social media networking websites. Twitter, Linkedin, Facebook, and more are all such forums where people share their thoughts which results in hashtag trends! These trends are strong enough to take down brands. So, brands should be careful to not drag themselves into any kind of controversy for any kind of marketing goals.

However, transformation can be seen in the ads in today's time. We find the least sexist ads now. But to say that it is completely gone would be wrong! Till to this day, we find an attractive woman's picture in the newspaper or other billboard ads which are placed strategically to attract the people. The old tactics have not become obsolete. They will still work fine, but society has changed. Now anyone can point out and drag any brand to the court if they find something that is inappropriate!

Advertisers have always used the idea that men and women are different to develop plots, create conflicts and provide persuasive imagery. It is not only the advertisers who view men and women differently, but they bring different perceptions to the advertisement. Thus, it can be said that males and females create different understandings from the ads they see.

Gender roles in our society have changed significantly from the 1950s, and the portrayal of males and females in the advertisement have been researched since nearly a similar time. Researchers have consistently attempted to estimate these roles to examine whether publications have kept up with society's shift. In this article, we shall discuss whether advertisements have changed their norms as a community did.

This unit talks about the nature of depictions of both men and women in the advertising industry: electronic and print. A lot of the questionable concepts are the result of the beautiful custom all around the world. This fashion is a practice that the advertising industry can decide to sustain or to produce change.

It is being observed that with the shift of the clock, people have changed, and so have their social norms. But the idea of stereotyping has been for ages. It is important to note that every coin has two sides, and hence does the advertisement industry.

Some lazy advertisements still use the old idea of males' and females' ideal physical representation to get their product out. Loads of other promotions also spread positive thoughts and implications on their viewers.

20.4 A brief about gender and stereotypes in the field of advertisement

The fact should not be surprising that advertisements portray men and women differently, given that men and women differ in many ways. These distinct portrayals result in intended and unintended effects, which will be discussed later in this article. When you are looking at pictures and imagery of males and females, it is essential to examine advertisements' bodies.

It is not just one or multiple particular ads that have imagery that may be stereotypical or, in other ways, problematic. The stereotypes are formed by the extended and continuous display of buyers to models of imagery. It is also critical to understand that there are legitimate purposes that advertisers use stereotypes.

Now, we shall examine the role portrayals of both men and women in the field of advertisement.

Stereotypes related to the beauty: An in-depth understanding of the shift of beauty cultures from then to now-

The worship of attraction is an old thing in the advertisement business. Girls and women lead to be portrayed either as good or bad. The good ladies tend to be fashionable and elegant.

The bad women were described as either old or ugly. Similarly, good men are benevolent monarchs, and bad men are wicked demons—both the nasty monster and the handsome prince desire the same prize, which is the princes.

These stories from our youth proceed to resonate with us as grown-up customers. Now recall a bit and ask yourself if you often think of males and females in an advertisement as excellent physical individuals. These individuals are youthful.

They have perfect skin, which is free from acne and look like the apple of the eye. The females tend to be slim, and men manage to have the perfect upper body build. These guys are fit, with a well-maintained and attractive body.

They have full heads of a lustrous, thick beard. Now, we can understand from the above-given information that these people are acknowledged figures. These models are paid well to maintain themselves.

We also comprehend that improvements in technology (via. a technique is known as photoshopping) allow any defects and faults to disappear from photographs. Loads

of people view these models as sponsoring a standard of beauty and fitness. This state is, in many cases, impossible to attain as loads of things are being fabricated.

Attempts are produced to achieve it anyhow by buying the respective merchandise. The problem is that we have instituted these delightful feelings with an overall confident approach toward grace. As a result, we have decided it as a knowledge that class is excellent and preferable to ugliness.

The ideas of attraction are culturally developed, essentially because of every day meeting experiences. People in the community control shared aesthetic models. One of these ideas is that we find a specific body and face cut to be more superior than others.

You need to understand that our society regularly experiences slick moves. The beauty norms have also changed over time. It has been seen that social expectations for grace shift with every new generation.

For example, the standard of curvy beauty of Marilyn Monroe changed to the middle of the trendy beauty of Twiggy in the 1960s. It then shifted to the supermodels such as Naomi Campbell in the 80s. Nowadays, individuals strive to attain the ideal of elegance that is common in this contemporary culture.

There is a social no-no upon healthy female figures, and many ads often present large women as having imperfect bodies. This idea limits both their apparels and their social meetings. The critics point out that women's fashion and beauty magazines are among the most influential and potentially damaging advertising channels.

They are immediately involved with the social model of elegance and give a medium where merchants can link their ideas to win the appeal. The types of females being portrayed in these kinds of magazines, in the advertising pages, are parts of that hypothetical beauty norm.

This beauty goal is an overall "look" that incorporates physical characteristics and a description of commodities or aids such as clothing and makeup. Aiming to reach the cultural standard is a crucial business message used by many types of advertisers. Some of them are concerned with trading beauty goods.

The social norms are to enhance the power of a person's natural beauty. The opportunity in childhood and extending through adolescence. For ladies, beauty has been regulated to the point where an entire ad industry dedicated to class has been designed.

Several other cultures are a vital part of the beauty ideal. Nowadays, it requires

a thin body type, and several studies have demonstrated how the female body is depicted in all ads. Analysis has shown that ladies in advertisements direct to be youthful and thin.

Women that do not fit into this section, such as older women, are either vague. They are sponsored as tokens and are described negatively. The males are no safe from this as they are subject to cultural ideals of attraction.

The male body's appearance has historically remained off-the-charts in the advertising industry. The past few years have shown an expansion in the application of the male figure to sell products. Beauty standards have been set for men also.

Men are required to have squared jaws and full heads of hair in terms of facial expression. Male beauty is also associated with bodily strength. As advertisement globalization frequently provides a view of westerly culture to the eastern countries.

Western ideals of beauty are becoming popular over there. These ideals are often turning into risky and costly actions. How?

- Traditionally, Chinese women are shorter than their Western counterparts, now decided to experience surgical methods to make them taller.
- In Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, ladies are enduring surgery that opens the eye by replacing the eye socket to produce a higher Caucasian look.
- In India, cosmetic businesses sell "fairness creams" to facilitate skin tone.

The Ornamental Conventions

The ornamental characters are seen as arguably factoring society's view of the suitable place for women and men in the community by taking a passive position. A modern study of magazine advertisements in Germany, Poland, the United States determined that both genders are usually represented in ornamental characters. This happens with more women than men appearing this way.

These kinds of conventions are closely associated with the concept of a pretty face and figure is the intention of decorative portrayals. When people are described in publications, they are actively associated with the merchandise or service being promoted or passively chasing the advertisement.

What is active and decorative portrayal?

A person could be seen as having merely finished drinking milk as the example of an active portrayal. The model could be holding the merchandise without communicating with it as an example of a decorative illustration. Decorative

portrayals dispense the characters in the advertisements as quiet and released.

At the same time, active depictions show the model communicating directly with the product. Many ads featuring attractive men and women tend to feature them as decorations. A study on advertising has observed that women are four times more likely to be displayed visually without a speaking role than males.

Position Descriptions

Nowadays, the advertising portrayals alter based on the statement in which they seem. It happens so for the broadcast media in terms of the day when the advertisement is appearing. For example, during work, the initial TV viewers are retired and mothers.

During the daytime programming, most of the ladies in ads are shown in traditional homemaker roles. The males are seldom seen in the advertisements as husbands or experts. When the TV viewers are more balanced during high-time television, women are often shown in administration and shadows away from home.

Thus, during peak-time television, portrayals of men and women are more equitable. Advertising still conforms to traditional gender descriptions. A meta-review of broadcasting globally found that women are much more likely to be pictured as minors in advertising and much more likely to be depicted at home than men.

Some nations have created guidelines on gender impartiality and depictions in the media. They believe that males and females should be seen as making arrangements to support the house and concerning house tasks and home management. Research done by an advertisement agency named Leo Burnett found that almost 80% of males considered men's media portrayals were wrong.

If such ideas are not compared with other pictures of men that show them as confident and capable in traditional homemaking situations, it could be problematic as an advertising trend. Nowadays, guys and ladies begin a tough life. It has gone to that extent with its multiple entertaining functions. Males and females can take up the following roles:

1. They can be parents.
2. They are entrepreneurs.
3. They can be your colleagues.
4. They can be your siblings.
5. They can be aides.

This idea differs from the typical suborn society of the 1950s. Social roles were much more specific then. The men were the workers, and women were the housewives.

Honestly, contemporary society still clings to some ideas from the 1950s. Gender roles can be categorized into a woman's femininity and a man's masculinity. Males and Females are represented in commercials according to the created sense of womanhood and manhood.

To be a woman is to be soft, and to be a man is to be sturdy. There is little room for variety or a withdrawal of roles, except within the shorter cranny selling stage. Advertising has stubbornly held on to this conventional description of women as homemakers and uses this description to serve all types of products, from home goods to workstations and machines.

Here is a fact for you, the website World Savvy Monitor (2011) indicates a UNESCO statement on the global state of women that suggests that, globally,

The media portrays women in one of these ways:

- The sainted parent.
- The insidious sorcerer.
- The stern face of corporate

In advertising, manhood is often portrayed in these ways

- Their hands in their pockets
- Intelligent and alert of surroundings
- Sights open and watching around
- Bodies are well-shaped
- The "serious attitude" guy.
- Mean appearance on the face
- Gripping stuff tightly with fingers
- Bodily energetic
- Attaining straight

The study also showed that most models and leads on television are men, and men's games are far more apparent than women's competitions. This is potentially damaging women's self-esteem. Now we are going to discuss the responsibilities that advertisement endures towards men and women.

It would be best to have a clear idea that the advertising industry is one business where a person's works and beliefs can impact the enterprise. Keeping this idea in our mind, below mentioned are some plans to keep in mind.

Work your craft out and don't run after the age-old stereotypical shortcut

Advertising represents both a reflecting and a forging role for males and females, both. It is essential to understand the ads' health in this regard and use the ability to promote to represent more lifelike images of men and women. Customs can immediately set the platform for advertising. This idea does not imply that the same types of forms must be used regularly.

History is written, so you don't let it happen again! Any practical, easy description can immediately set the scene and support the describing process. Analysis has revealed that realistic depictions can have real results for sponsors.

The specific types of representation, including men and women's objectification, cause adverse acknowledgements from buyers.

Extend the assumptions

It seldom happens that sponsors make unconscious decisions without scanning through other choices that might be more useful. One is the option of a speech for a voice-over on a television spot. You must have seen that a male voice is highlighted often.

It has become the default choice. Nevertheless, companies must take the chance to hold both men's and women's views for voice-overs. This process can continue to the attention of women as equal in our society.

You shall also rethink women's activity level publications, particularly in sections where they manage to be described as submissive. It would be best to show that both men and women in the same class of environments utilize products. You can also portray them as being experts and assisting others in discovering how to use the merchandise.

In this process, both men and women can begin to advertise with essential social roles.

Spend time in reconstructing the idea of "Beauty" for a positive impact

Advertising can do enough to change the aesthetic charm goal that is common in the community today. One way to influence the attractiveness ideal is to present advertisements highlighting ladies who do not have thin, flawless bodies. We already

see such publications as Vogue vowing to be "ambassadors for a healthy image." Vogue magazine's "Health Initiative" agrees to not cover patterns with eating disorders or below the age of sixteen in the nineteen international editions' editorial pages.

The struggle started in the year 2012, and international editions all highlighted a statement of health. They did that with U.S. Olympic players on the cover of the U.S. edition. Loads of people hope that this conclusion about the journal editorial content will lead to portrayals in commercials.

Academic research was conducted about how imagery affects a woman's possibility to buy a commodity and found that ladies related more to commercials where the models reflected their skin colour, size, and age. This study establishes earlier research that found the great bulk of buyers wanted figures in magazines to describe that typical range of body shapes. The preponderance of ladies in this research said they were ready to buy publications featuring heavier models.

Most considered that dresses look better on thin models. The advertising industry has shifted a vital role in contemporary society. Females' behavioural design is heightened further through a change message approach than a data message plan. However, a man's behavioural goal is a knowledge message approach as exposed to a chronic purpose.

Advertisements (be it on print or electronically) seldom represent characters that look like us in general or the standard. Women are delicate, slim, and often are directed to look thinner and faultless. The characters at whom ads are intended rarely appear similar to those described in the ads.

Women rule self-concept and behavioural purpose emotionally somewhat than reasonably as males do. Added gender inequality that has developed is customer effectiveness, and communication policy significantly prophesied self-worth. Those decisions show the role of gender within the advertisement and broadcasting industry.

20.5 Conclusion

Advertisements (be it on print or electronically) seldom represent characters that look like us in general or the standard. Women are delicate, slim, and often are directed to look thinner and faultless. The characters at whom ads are intended rarely appear similar to those described in the ads.

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20.6 Summary

However, transformation can be seen in the ads in today's time. We find the least sexist ads now. But to say that it is completely gone would be wrong! Till to this day, we find an attractive woman's picture in the newspaper or other billboard ads which are placed strategically to attract the people.

Advertising represents both a reflecting and a forging role for males and females, both. It is essential to understand the ads' health in this regard and use the ability to promote to represent more lifelike images of men and women. Customs can immediately set the platform for advertising. This idea does not imply that the same types of forms must be used regularly. Nowadays, the advertising portrayals alter based on the statement in which they seem. It happens so for the broadcast media in terms of the day when the advertisement is appearing. For example, during work, the initial TV viewers are retired and mothers.

20.7 Questions

1. Discuss the impact of gender roles in Advertisement on the society.
2. Elucidate how gender roles in our society have changed significantly from the 1950s.
3. What is active and decorative portrayal?
4. Discuss in brief about gender and stereotypes in the field of advertisement

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