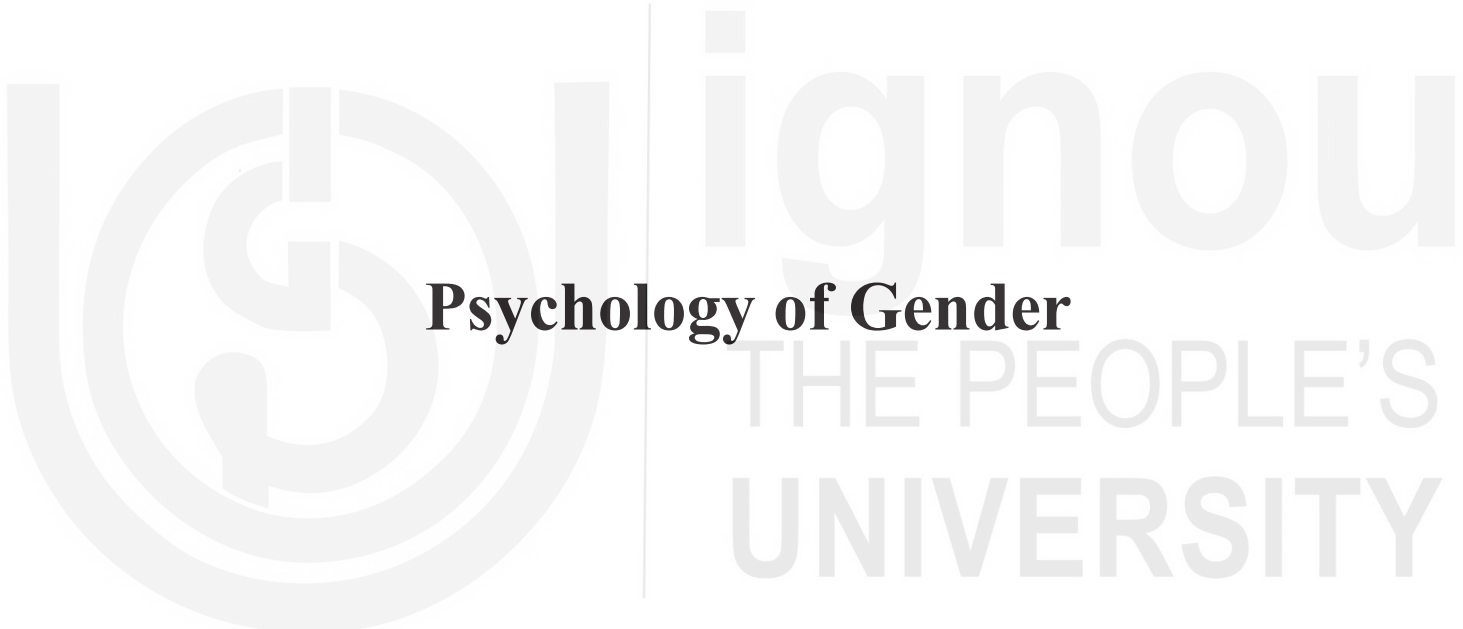






Psychology of Gender

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Indira Gandhi National Open University**

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PSYCHOLOGY OF GENDER: HOW TO PROCEED IN THE COURSE?

The course on *Psychology of Gender* (BPCG-176) is one of the Generic Elective courses offered in the Undergraduate Programme of IGNOU. The course is of 06 Credits. The course is divided into four blocks. Each of these blocks represents a specific theme which is discussed in three to four units. The units are arranged in a logical sequence so as to cover the main aspects of each theme. Each unit contains a brief introduction in the beginning and a list of references and further reading, as well as, additional online resources in the end. The list of online resources has been mentioned for additional information on various topics. You are advised to read Course Introduction carefully, in order to know about the rationale and content of the course you have offered to read.

You have in your hands, all the four blocks and fifteen units of this course. Before proceeding to read the units, you are advised to go through instructions about how to read the course material. Given below is the explanation of the organization and sequencing of the unit. We will tell you what is contained in various sections of a unit, and you should go about completing different tasks involved while reading the course material.

Organization and Sequencing of a Unit

The unit starts with,

- 1.0 Learning Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Section (Theme of the section)

- 1.2.1 Sub-section of 1

.....

Check Your Progress

- 1.3 Section (Theme of the section)

- 1.3.1 Sub-section of 2

.....

Check Your Progress

The numbering and length of each section and sub-sections may vary from one unit to the other unit, depending upon the depth of information in each unit. The last three sections in each unit with the following headings are also numbered. They are as follows:

- Review Questions
- References and Further Reading
- Additional Online Resources

As the scheme suggests, each unit is divided into sections for easy reading and better comprehension. Each section is indicated by **BOLD CAPITALS** and each sub-section by a **relatively smaller but bold typeface**. Divisions within the sub-sections are in **relatively smaller bold typeface** so as to make it easy for you to understand.

Let us now discuss the **pedagogical features of a unit** as given in the self-learning material.

We begin each unit with the section **Learning Objectives**. It tells you briefly what we expect from you once you complete working on the unit. In the section **Introduction**, we specify, the relationship of the present unit to the previous unit (if any), theme of the present unit, and the order of presentation of all the sections in the unit from Introduction to Summary. The section of each unit under the heading **Summary**, encapsulates the whole unit for the purpose of ready reference and recapitulation.

Sometimes certain topics may deal with abstract ideas and related concepts. Thus, it becomes necessary to explain these related concepts in a separate enclosure, which is called Box, in our units. This is added information which is necessary to comprehend the main text. These boxes may include (i) explanatory notes regarding concepts, (ii) information about main works of scientists/psychologists who have contributed to a particular topic, (iii) certain case-studies that are related to the concepts being discussed, (iv) reflective exercises, etc.

There are several **illustrations** in each unit in the form of pictures, figures, diagrams and images. The main purpose of these illustrations is to make the study comprehensive and interesting. We have given self-check exercises under the caption **Check Your Progress** in between or at the end of main sections. To answer the Check Your Progress questions, you should, (i) write your answers using the space given below each question; (b) label the diagrams in the space provided (if asked). You will be tempted to have a glance of the main text as soon as you come across an exercise. But we do hope that you will resist this temptation and turn to the main text only after completing the answers. You should read each unit and note the important points in the margin provided in the course material. This will help in your study. It will also help you to answer the self-check exercises and the assignment questions, as well as help in revising your course before appearing for your Term End Examination.

Each unit has **Keywords** at the end of the unit, to explain the basic ideas, technical terms and difficult words. We have given a list of **References and Further Reading** at the end of each unit. This is a list of books and articles used by the course writers to prepare the units. This reflects that your course material is based on a wide spectrum of literature available on a particular theme, related to your course. This also informs you of the wide literature available in the particular area of study. If interested in widening your knowledge, you may look for the mentioned references. Each reference mentions the name of the author, year of publication, title of the book/article, name of publisher and place of publication. The readings will help you to increase your level of understanding of a particular theme in each unit, though it is not a compulsory.

We have given a list of **Additional Online Resources** on various topics. Apart from the text material, if you are interested in learning more about the topic, then you may access the website as mentioned, for a particular topic.

Besides Check Your Progress, we have given **Review Questions** after Keywords section in each unit. You may practice these questions which will help you in answering assignments and Term End Examination Question Paper, though the pattern and style of questions asked may be different.

Some Units have been selected for the **audio and video** programmes to supplement the printed material. This will help you to understand the units with greater clarity. Apart from this, you may also access IGNOU's FM radio channel, *Gyanvani* (105.6 FM) which is available across many cities in India, for regular programmes, related to themes on Psychology. You can listen to the live discussions by faculty and experts on the topic of the day and interact with them through telephone, email, and through chat mode. You may also watch *Gyandarshan* TV channel (free to air educational channel), for programmes related to topics on Psychology. The schedule of Gyanvani and Gyandarshan is displayed on www.ignou.ac.in. The radio and TV channels may also be accessed on *Gyandhara*, webcast facility for Gyanvani and Gyandarshan, provided by the University.

There are a set of **assignments** for the whole course uploaded on www.ignou.ac.in>downloads>assignments> BA CBCS New>Generic Courses. You need to check the course code and title of the course carefully, before downloading the assignment. These are Tutor Marked Assignments, which are to be submitted to the respective Study Centre after completion. These assignments will be evaluated by academic counsellor from your Study Centre. Ensure that you complete all your assignments because the grades that you get in each of these assignments are included in the final evaluation of your degree (30%). Before answering the assignments, read all the units carefully. While working on the assignments, kindly ensure the following points:

- 1) Clearly write your enrollment number
- 2) Answer them in your handwriting and in your own words
- 3) Write clearly and neatly so that it is easy to read your answers
- 4) Leave margins on one side of your answer-sheets so that evaluator may write his/ her comments on your performance
- 5) You will submit the assignments at your Study Centre on or before the date mentioned as per the admission cycle. Kindly check the dates from www.ignou.ac.in or your Regional Centre website.

After reading and understanding the course material, as well as referring to the audio and video programmes, you will be writing the Term End Examination (TEE) for the course. TEE carries 70% weightage in the evaluation scheme. Consider the following points while answering for TEE.

- 1) Questions should be replied in one's own words and should be focused.
- 2) Answer questions keeping in mind the word limit.

The syllabus of course material BPCG 176 is designed by an Expert Committee (see page 2 of this course) and prepared by **Course Preparation Team** which comprises the author(s) of units, content editor(s), language editor, and the course coordinator. The expert committee selected the themes and sub-themes of the

blocks and units, keeping in view the prescribed syllabi of UGC (CBCS model). The authors of units have provided their expertise in elaborating them in the form of the main text of each unit. The content editor has carefully examined the course contents and has made an attempt to make the material clear and comprehensible.

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COURSE INTRODUCTION: PSYCHOLOGY OF GENDER

The Goal 5 of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aims to *achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls by 2030*. It also rightly points out that achievement of all 17 SDGs depends on SDG 5. Division 44 of American Psychological Association is named as *Society for the Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*. Its focus is on research, education, and public policy on gender diversity. There are societies, including India that are witnessing changes in the gender roles, gender stereotypes and media portrayal of gender diversity.

Psychology of Gender, Psychology of Sex Differences, or Gender Psychology have been a part of discourse for quite some time. The terms sex and gender are used interchangeably, however have different meanings to connote. The present course will help you in distinguishing the difference between sex, and gender which also entails gender identity and sexual orientation. Do gender differences actually exist? Does culture play a role in shaping the beliefs, expectations and thereby reinforcing gender stereotypes? How do different psychological theories explain the formation of gender roles? An attempt has been made to answer and explain such questions and related themes.

BLOCK INTRODUCTION

There are four blocks and fifteen units that have been thematically arranged. The theme of **Block 1 is Introduction to Gender Issues**. There are four Units that focus on this theme. **Unit 1 Psychology of Gender: An Overview**, presents an overview of history of psychology of gender, methods employed in gender research, and difficulties faced in conducting research in the area. It will also familiarize with the importance of qualitative methods of inquiry in gender research. **Unit 2 Conceptualization and Measurement of Gender Norms; Gender Roles; and Gender Role Attitudes** will enable you to understand gender norms and socialization. Intersectionality, formation of gender attitudes, and theoretical perspectives on gender role will be explained. **Unit 3 is Development of Gender Prejudices and Gender Stereotypes**. The Unit delves into the development of gender prejudices, descriptive and prescriptive dimensions of stereotypes. It also focuses on the components and the ways to reduce stereotypes. Gender discrimination and violence against women will also be discussed. **Unit 4 is on Gender Socialization and Cultural Differences in the Construct of Gender**. The highlight of the Unit are agents of socialization, the relationship between culture and religion; and the cultural variations in the construct of gender. The Unit also gives an account of sexual scripts and heterosexual aggression.

Block 2 has four Units that looks into the **Approaches to Psychology of Gender**. **Unit 5** deals with **Evolutionary, Biological and Psychobiological Approaches to Gender**. The Unit focuses on genetics, epigenetics and the role of hormones on gender development. It will also discuss the relationship of gender with abilities, intelligence, and mental illness. **Unit 6 Psychoanalytical and Cognitive Approaches to Gender Development** will focus on the psychoanalytic perspectives of Sigmund Freud, Karen Horney, Helene Deutsch and Nancy Chodorow. Important theories like Gender Identity Development Theory, Gender Schema Theories, Social Learning Theory, Social Cognitive Learning Theory,

and Moral Development Theory will be the part of the discussion. **Unit 7 Social Learning Theory and Social Role Theory** specifically talks about the role of social learning and the agents of socialization. It also examines social role theory and development of gender role beliefs. **Unit 8** enables you to understand how people acquire gendered beliefs and behaviour with the help of **Expectation States Theory and Gender Schema Theory**.

Block 3 constitutes of four Units that give an account on **Gender, Group and Culture**. **Unit 9** covers the **Gender Differences in Relational and Collective Interdependence**. It enables you to develop an understanding on self-construal and gender, gender differences in self-construal as well as in emotions, social needs, and motivation. Gender differences in self-evaluation and regulation are discussed. **Unit 10 Psychology of Gender Differences: Comparison in Cognitive Abilities and Career Related Processes** explains the gender differences in cognitive abilities, social and emotional development. Biological, social development and social constructionist perspectives will be highlighted in the Unit. It will also delve into the dual impact model of gender and career related choices. **Unit 11** focuses on **Gender and Work Life**. The Unit will talk about the changing scenario at the workplace and the gender issues in government, corporate, military and politics in the present time. Theoretical perspectives related to gender at the workplace, like, Marxist theory, Queer theory, gender pluralism, feminism and ecofeminism will also be examined. **Unit 12** focuses on **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender: Psychosocial and Legal Status**. It will delve into the psychosocial concerns of people from the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. Legal recognition of gender and sexual identity will also be highlighted in the Unit.

Next, the theme of **Block 4** is **Psychology of Sex Differences**. **Unit 13** gives an account of **Gender and Communication**. The Unit talks about ways in which the communication styles are differ between genders. Linguistic patterns and non-verbal behaviour in context of gender will also be discussed. **Unit 14** focuses on **Gender and Health**. It will help you to analyse sex differences in mortality and morbidity. It will delve into the biological and social factors of health. Sex differences in risk taking and health seeking will also be examined. **Unit 15** discusses **Friendship and Romantic Relationships**. It emphasizes on the friendships across lifespan, conflict in friendship and cross-sex friendship. It highlight romantic relationships and negotiation of romantic relationships.

The content therefore, will help you in appreciating different perspectives and develop an understanding of a domain which is a part of the repertoire of one's daily functioning and that strongly influences human behaviour.



BLOCK I

AN INTRODUCTION TO GENDER ISSUES

UNIT 1 PSYCHOLOGY OF GENDER: AN OVERVIEW*

Structure

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 History of the Psychology of Gender
 - 1.1.1 1894-1936: Sex Differences in Intelligence
 - 1.1.2 1936-1954: Masculinity-Femininity as a Global Personality Trait
 - 1.1.3 1954-1982: Sex Typing and Androgyny
 - 1.1.4 1982-Present: Gender Role as a Social Category
- 1.2 Methods in Gender Research
 - 1.2.1 The Scientific Method
 - 1.2.2 The Experimental Method
 - 1.2.3 Correlational Study
 - 1.2.4 Cross-sectional and Longitudinal Design
 - 1.2.5 Meta-Analysis
- 1.3 Difficulties in Conducting Gender Research
 - 1.3.1 Experimenter Effect
 - 1.3.2 Participant Effect
- 1.4 Qualitative Inquiry
 - 1.4.1 Insider/Outsider Considerations in Qualitative Research
 - 1.4.2 Experiential Research
 - 1.4.3 Critical Research
 - 1.4.4 Between Experiential and Critical Research
- 1.5 Concluding Remarks
- 1.6 Summary
- 1.7 Keywords
- 1.8 Review Questions
- 1.9 References and Further Reading
- 1.10 Additional Online Resources

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain how research evolved in the area of psychology of gender;
- Elaborate upon different quantitative methods that are utilized in this area; and
- Elucidate the nature of qualitative inquiry in the field of psychology of gender.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

As a society, sex has always been considered as an important category. An infant's sex is the first thing we try to figure out about him/her and perhaps also the first thing we notice in a child or an adult. Our names and certain kind of clothes are also indicative of sex. Why are we so keen on knowing someone's sex? Why

* Vrushali Pathak, Research Scholar, Department of Psychology, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi.

do we need to know a person's sex to interact with them? These questions may sound simple at one level but carry a lot of significance and run much deeper than a simple binary distinction of a boy or girl and a male or female. A person's sex or let us say the word gender (we will distinguish between the two terms ahead in the unit) has implications for our feelings, beliefs, attitudes and also our behaviour towards the person. Gender has also been a subject of enquiry and scrutiny over the years due to its widespread implications in different areas. Over the years, scientists and researchers have debated regarding similarities and differences between men and women and the potential consequences due to it in different areas, for instance, are women more emotional than men? Are women more empathetic than men? Are men better at math than women? How are male friendships different from the female ones? Are men less willing to seek help for health problems than women? Are men more body positive than women?

In this unit, we will try to know about the history of the psychology of gender and various kinds of methods that can be employed in such researches. But, before that let us pay attention to some of the terms which would enhance our understanding of the area and would be used throughout.

Sex refers to the biological categories which are distinguished by genes, chromosomes, and hormones. It is considered to be a stable category, even across the cultures; generally, the distinction is understood as male or female, something that is assigned at birth. *Gender*, on the other hand is a more fluid concept that is socially constructed. Thus, it refers to the social categories of male and female which are distinguished by a set of psychological characteristics and roles that society assign to each biological category or sex. Understanding of gender differs with culture as each society has its own prescribed set of rules regarding behaviour that men and women should display and follow. Thus, sex is a biological categorization based on reproductive repertoire and gender is the social elaboration of the biological sex. Interestingly, there is another term that would better capture the societal influence on biological based categories rather than gender and it is gender role (Helgeson, 2020). Gender role refers to the expectations that are because of being a male or a female. It is a social position that has a prescribed set of expectations attached to it due to a particular biological category. For instance, we expect men to be strong, independent, hiding their emotions. These attributes are based on the labels of masculinity and femininity. Masculinity involves traits or behaviours that society has assigned to the male gender role, such as self-confidence, aggression, or interest in sports. Femininity includes traits or behaviours attributed to the female gender role, for instance, being emotional, helping others, interest in knitting or cooking.

In 1964, Robert Stoller coined another term, *gender identity*. It refers to an individual's perception about their own self as psychologically male or female. For an individual whose gender identity corresponds their biological sex, they are called as *cis-gender* individuals but for those whose gender identity does not match their biological sex are termed as *transgender* individuals. For instance, a person born as a female (biologically) may feel like a male psychologically, and thus may also choose to live life like a male (dressing, behaviour as expected from a man from societal viewpoint). Taking a step forward, *transsexuals* are people who have a gender identity that does not match their biological sex, but they undergo surgical or hormonal treatment to change their sex in order to correspond with their gender identity. It is important to note here that gender identity is different from sexual identity and one should also not confuse it with sexual orientation. *Sexual orientation* is about the preference of an individual to have other-sex or

same-sex people as partners for love and sex. Homosexuals prefer same-sex partners, heterosexuals prefer other-sex partners, and bisexuals are accepting of both same-sex and other-sex partners. Some people also consider themselves to be *gender fluid* as they do not agree with the binary concept of gender (males and females) that we have been discussing. Certain people call themselves as *gender hybrids*— a combination of male and female. Intersex people are those who are born with ambiguous genitalia.

1.1 HISTORY OF THE PSYCHOLOGY OF GENDER

We know that sex and gender have been used interchangeably but they are two different concepts. Now let us briefly look at the history of psychology of gender to understand how the area evolved over time, the issues that have been of concern, how different constructs have been conceptualized, measured and have made sense of over a period of time. The following division has been taken from Helgeson's (2020) work who has divided history of this field into four periods approximating those identified by Richard Ashmore (1990).

1.1.1 1894-1936: Sex Differences in Intelligence

The first period in this area focused on the differences between men and women. Ellis (1894) published his book *Man and Woman* highlighting the need and importance of studying similarities and differences between men and women. It is also important to note that till now, gender roles were not there in the picture and the basic goal was to examine if men were intellectually superior to women. Some critiques have argued that some of the researches were not finding out but were actually trying to establish male superiority. In order to accomplish this goal, the initial researches involved the anatomy of human brain. They tried understanding the human brain size and as women's heads and brains are smaller than men, it was concluded that women were intellectually inferior. But further research concluded that if we calculate the ratio of weight of the brain to the weight of the body, women's brain appeared larger than men's brain, thus, brain size could not resolve these questions effectively.

After this, scientists and researchers started investigating specific brain areas that could be responsible for intellectual functioning. Initially, frontal cortex was considered responsible for intellectual functioning, but later when it was revealed that men do not have larger frontal lobes rather parietal lobes were larger, activities associated with thinking and functioning were shifted to parietal lobe and it was considered as the seat of intellectual functioning. This period ended with the ground-breaking work of *Sex and Personality* by Terman and Miles (1936), who concluded that sex related differences do not exist in intelligence.

1.1.2 1936-1954: Masculinity-Femininity as a Global Personality Trait

By this time, the focus of research had shifted to gender related traits, sex or anatomy was not considered as the sole basis. Thus, the ideas associated with labels such as masculinity, femininity were being introduced. In 1936, Terman and Miles introduced a 456-item instrument to measure these two constructs and called it Attitude Interest Analysis Survey (AIAS). While constructing the test, it was noted that the items on which an average female scored higher than an average male were labelled feminine and vice-versa. But the scale also had certain issues, for instance, the information subscale in it was based on the assumption that men have greater knowledge in certain areas such as sports and politics in comparison to women who are more knowledgeable in some other areas such

as sewing, gardening etc. So, giving a correct response to an item which women “supposed to know” better was scored as feminine and vice-versa.

Later, Hathway and McKinley (1949) developed Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) which included Masculinity-Femininity scale with items regarding emotional sensitivity, altruism, sexual preference, preference for some occupations, and questions related to gender identity. An important point to note here is that the femininity items were validated on 13 homosexuals. Homosexual men were compared to heterosexual male soldiers, as they were considered to be the epitome of masculinity and homosexual men were considered to be feminine. Two major issues are present here, that is, the women were not even involved and only 13 homosexual men were involved (in lieu of women) which is not sufficient to validate any instrument. Several projective tests were also developed which consisted of incomplete drawings such as the one by Franck and Rosen (1949). Men and women were asked to complete 60 such drawings or stimulus and sex differences were found in the way 36 of 60 were complete. Apart from the content, differences were also noticed in how men made sharper edges, angular drawings and focused on unifying the objects than women who would leave the stimuli open and made round or blunt edges. Interestingly, Franck and Rosen concluded that their test measures the acceptance of one’s gender role and not the degree of masculinity and femininity. This is because they found that men who got a feminine score had drawings that were different and bizarre to a woman who received a feminine score and vice-versa.

1.1.3 1954-1982: Sex Typing and Androgyny

The Development of Sex Differences (Maccoby, 1966) reviewed various theories regarding sex typing- how young boys and girls develop sex-appropriate preferences, personality traits, and behaviours. Later, in 1973 another major critique about the existing masculinity/femininity instruments came (Constantinople, 1973). Use of sex differences as the basis to define masculinity and femininity was questioned. Another aspect being questioned was if masculinity-femininity was a unidimensional construct. Two important instruments were developed during this time that linked the instrumental versus expressive orientation to gender roles. These were Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) (Bem, 1974) and Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ) (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1974). They were constructed with the basis that masculinity and femininity are two independent dimensions, thus, for every individual both, a masculinity score and a femininity score are calculated. In both the instruments different items on the masculinity scale were instrumental in orientation and the ones on the femininity scale were expressive in orientation and scores on both were uncorrelated. It would be interesting to note here that with time, masculinity scores in women have increased, thus it has been concluded that people have started viewing masculine characteristics more desirable in women than they used to earlier (Auster & Ohm, 2000). But, their view of who is a desirable man has not changed much with time. Some longitudinal studies, such as one by Jones and colleagues (2011) concluded that men’s expressive orientation score increases with age and women’s agency score increases with age.

With the idea of masculinity and femininity as independent dimensions, another area emerged, androgyny. An androgynous person would display both the traits, masculine and feminine. The results of tests such as BSRI and PAQ are usually interpreted in the following ways:

- High number of masculine features and low number of feminine features: Masculine.

- Low number of masculine features and high number of feminine features: Feminine.
- High number of both masculine and feminine features: Androgynous.
- Few masculine and feminine features: Undifferentiated.

Those, whose sex corresponded to their gender role group, were called as sex-typed but those whose sex and gender roles did not correspond were called as cross-sex typed. Researches have demonstrated that most psychologically healthy people are those who possess both attributes as they have greatest behavioural flexibility and best psychological adjustment. But, subsequent researches (Woo & Oei, 2006) revealed that masculinity scale predicts better behavioural flexibility and psychological adjustment than androgyny score. Perhaps that is because of the fact these traits are valued better in American and other patriarchal societies. Both BSRI and PAQ were criticized for involving attributes that are socially desirable, thus the most recent advances in this period were focussed on considering and measuring the socially undesirable aspects of gender roles. This led to two other important concepts– unmitigated agency and unmitigated communion (Spence et al., 1979).

1.1.4 1982-Present: Gender Role as a Social Category

Research on sex and gender has flourished over the years and three major trends have been seen then. They are as follows:

- Gender as a multifaceted or multidimensional construct: This view believes that a two-dimensional view of masculinity and femininity is not enough to understand gender roles in totality. Thus, it started including diverse content, such as physical characteristics, role behaviours, and personality traits.
- Emphasizing the social context in which gender occurs: social constructionists argued that gender does not reside in us but instead it gets constructed with our interactions with people around us. So, we create gender with our expectations, behaviour and what we decide to include in this category.
- Shift from focus on sex of target effects to sex of perceiver effects: in understanding sex as a social category, an attempt has been made to examine the implications of this category for men and women themselves and how others treat them.

Researchers have been trying to understand the influence of society's conceptualization of gender roles for both men and women. When these gender-role expectations have negative consequences for people, it is called as *gender-role strain*. It occurs when gender-role expectations conflict with naturally occurring tendencies of people. For instance, a man who takes interest in cooking or knitting may suffer from gender-role strain.

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Differentiate between sex and gender.

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- 2) Define the following terms: (a) gender roles, (b) gender identity, (c) cis-gender, (d) transgender, and (e) sexual orientation.

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- 3) How did the early researches explain sex differences in intelligence?

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- 4) What is androgyny?

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1.2 METHODS IN GENDER RESEARCH

Various quantitative and qualitative methods have been used to explore and make sense of areas pertaining to sexuality and gender. In this section, we will try to understand some of the quantitative ways in which research can be conducted in this area.

1.2.1 The Scientific Method

Scientific method rests on internally consistent models which can reliably predict future observations. It rests on theories which are a collection of facts or an abstract generalization providing explanation for the set of facts. It is important to note here that for a theory to be scientific it must be falsifiable— a possibility that the theory can be disproved. Generally, a theory (as seen in Figure 1.1) is used to generate hypothesis- proposed explanation for a phenomenon or a prediction that an outcome can occur under a specific condition, which is tested by collecting data. The data, thus collected may support the formulated hypothesis, hence maintaining the theory or refute it and suggesting modification in the theory.

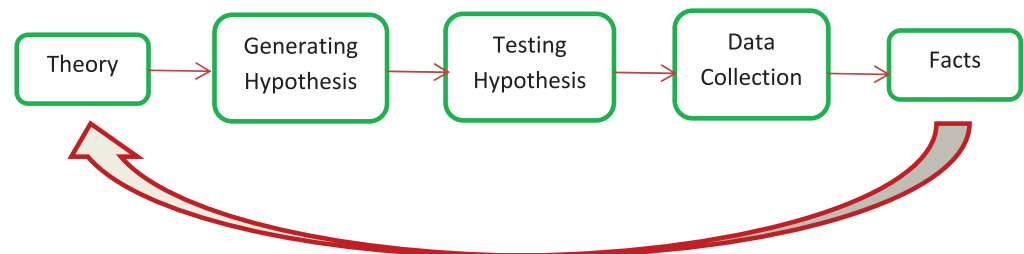


Figure 1.1 Steps in research process
(Source: Helgeson, 2020)

1.2.2 The Experimental Method

An experimental study involves manipulation of one variable, while keeping all other variables constant, thus, it tries to establish a cause-and-effect relationship through careful measurement. The variable that is being manipulated is the independent variable (IV) and its effect is being observed on another variable, which is called as the dependent variable (DV). Let us try and understand this with

an example. If our research question is, *Does testosterone increase aggression?* Here our IV would be testosterone and DV would be aggression as we would be trying to understand the impact of testosterone level on aggression. To understand the steps involved in an experimental study, see Figure 1.2.

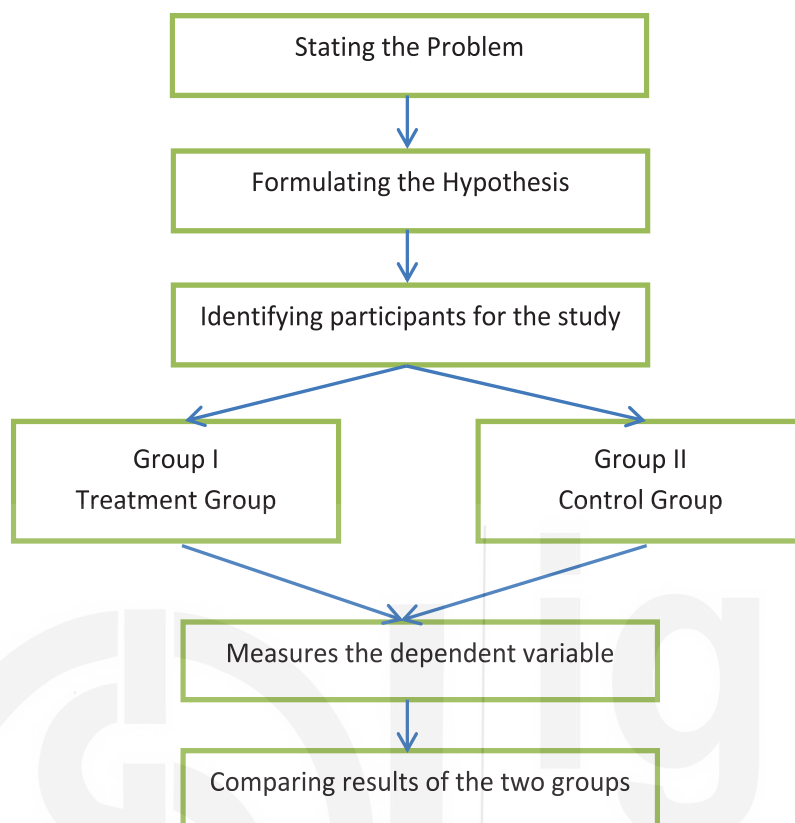


Figure 1.2 Steps in conducting an experiment

An experimental method uses two groups– an experimental group and a control group. An experimental group is the one where the participants are exposed to the manipulation of IV, it is a treatment condition. This data is compared to the data from another group which does not receive the manipulation of IV or which is not exposed to the experimental treatment and is called as the control group. Comparing the two groups gives us an opportunity to see the impact, variables had on the participants.

Let us take another example to understand an experimental design better. According to social role theory, differences and similarities that we observe in men and women reflect gender role beliefs that represent people's perceptions of social role of a man or a woman in the society they live in (Eagly & Wood, 1999, 2011). This theory has been applied to all kinds of human behaviour, for instance, nurturance. Let us try and understand if men and women are in the same social role, will they show similar levels of nurturance, that is, the difference in the nurturance could be due to social roles that are assigned to them. Thus, women seem to be more nurturant in nature (in general) due to their social role as mothers. Now, to test this using an experimental design we can assign males and females to one of the two social roles. For instance, some men and women can be assigned to the caretaker condition and others to the non-caretaker condition and their nurturant behaviour can be observed. In the caretaker condition, the participants might be instructed to take care of and play with the puppy. In the non-caretaker condition, the participants would be asked to teach some tricks to the puppy (Hegelson, 2020). If both men and women show same high levels of

nurturant behaviour in the caretaker condition and similar lower levels in the non-caretaker condition, then the hypothesis that social roles lead to differences in nurturance rather than sex, would be confirmed, thus, supporting the social roles theory. But, if we see women being more nurturant in both the conditions in comparison to men, the theory would need some revision.

Now, let us dive a bit further in this example. We need to ensure here that other variables besides the caretaker instructions do not have a role to play on nurturance. There might be a possibility that participants in the caretaker condition seem more nurturant due to their love for animals or their engagement with their own pets at home in comparison to those who are a part of the non-caretaker group. In order to avoid this, we would randomly assign the participants to each condition. Random assignment would give each participant an equal chance of being assigned to each condition in the experiment. This means there is no systematic way of assigning people to conditions and thus avoiding any sort of possible bias. Random assignment could be made by flipping a coin, drawing a chit out of a bowl, using random numbers table, or using a computer to randomly generate a sequence of numbers. A true experiment is the one that is carefully planned, tightly controlled, objective (free of bias), and easy to replicate. It is difficult to achieve such a feat in social sciences, thus making it difficult to conduct true experiments at times.

Box 1.1 Advantages and Disadvantages of Experimental Design

Advantages

- It allows determining a cause-and-effect relationship between the variables, because all the other variables except IV are held constant; any difference in DV is attributed to the IV.
- Provides with a high level of control: as some specific variables are isolated, it becomes possible to determine the viability of a potential outcome, thus, moving towards better and accurate results.
- It is not limited to certain areas, fields or topics and therefore has a wider usage.
- The results of an experimental study can be replicated. This also helps in promoting validity of a concept or theory. Thus, the results can be checked, re-checked and verified.
- It can be combined with other research methods, such as the qualitative ones. This provides the study with a scientific rigor that comes with the experimental method and also opens up other possibilities of determining what suits best for a specific population or research question.

Disadvantages

- Artificiality: experiments are conducted in non-natural or made-up conditions, such as laboratories. The artificiality of a lab along with the ‘unnatural’ task that the participants are asked to perform may make generalization of the behavior difficult. Thus, experiments lack ecological validity.
- Lab setting makes the behavior narrow in range, especially when we control the situation to maintain precision, it may limit the behavior.
- One of the major issues could be of confounding variables– the ones that affect both IV and DV producing distorted associations. They confound the “true” relationship between two variables impacting the internal validity. A major reason for this could be the social situation of the experiments in psychology or gender psychology. The participants here are not passive or inanimate objects but active, thinking beings.
- Experimenter effect: it is quite obvious for a participant to work out what the experimenter is expecting out of the study. Experimenter may also drop certain cues (unknowingly or deliberately) conveying the purpose of the experiment to the participants.
- An important issue with the experimental method may concern ethics. There are certain areas of human life which cannot be ideally studied using experimental method as it could be unethical to do so.

Types of experiments

- Lab experiments: conducted in a laboratory under highly controlled conditions or in a place where accurate measurement is possible using a standardized procedure. The decision regarding the place, time and participants lies with the researcher solely.
- Field experiments: they are done in everyday environment of the participants or the field. The experimenter manipulates the IV like lab experiments but it has an advantage of less artificiality than a lab setting. In a field experiment, the behaviour under investigation seems to occur naturally. It would be important to note here that in a real-life setting, it is difficult to control extraneous variables.
- Natural experiments: these are also conducted in the everyday life of the participants but here the experimenter has no control over the IV as it occurs naturally in the real life. For instance, the attachment research by Hodges and Tizard's (1989) compared the long-term development of children who were adopted, fostered, or returned to their mothers with a control group that included children who had spent their lives with their biological mothers.

1.2.3 Correlational Study

It is a non-experimental research method that involves measurement of two variables to see if a relationship exists between the two, usually at a single point on time. For instance, we could draw a correlation between job characteristics and nurturant behaviour. Thus, we may observe people in service sector (individuals holding people-oriented jobs) and measure their level of nurturance. The issue here would be that we cannot identify whether the trait of nurturance led to the choice of such a job or if such a job caused nurturance in the individual. Therefore, correlation studies do not study cause and effect relationships. Attempts have been made to correlate sex with job characteristics. Literature is replete with studies stating that women are found holding people-oriented jobs more than men. Here also, it would be difficult to gauge if sex led to the choice of a certain kind of job or if a third variable is responsible for the relationship that exists between the two, which could be no. of working hours, salary etc.

The value of correlation ranges from -1 to +1. Both -1 and +1 are called as perfect correlations, that is one can perfectly predict one variable from the occurrence of the other. A positive correlation indicates that both the variables move in the same direction (increase in one, leads to increase in another or decrease in one leads to decrease in other), while a negative correlation indicates that the variables move in opposite direction (with increase in one there is a decrease in another). So, a correlation reflects the strength and/or direction of the relationship between two (or more) variables. For the purpose of understanding, let us take the examples used above. A perfect, +1 correlation would mean that all nurturant people are in people-oriented jobs; however, this is not the case in real life. It is important to note here that a negative correlation does not mean a weaker correlation than a positive one; it simply reflects a difference in the direction of the relationship between the variables. In a psychological research, we cannot perfectly predict one variable from another and thus perfect correlation may not exist here.

Table 1.1 Types of Correlation

Positive Correlation	Both variables change in the same direction	As height increases weight also increases.
Negative Correlation	Variables change in the opposite direction	As time of social media increases, time spent studying decreases
Zero Correlation	There is no relationship between the variables	Tea consumption is not correlated with intelligence.

Correlation studies are conducted by making observations, conducting surveys or even using archival researches.

- Naturalistic observation method: involves observing and recording variables (of interest) without any interference or manipulation in a natural setting (Heath, 2018). One major issue could be that the awareness of being observed may change participants' behaviour.
- Survey method: it involves collecting information through a questionnaire (can be online or offline) to gain information into a particular topic of interest. It is the fastest, easiest, and cheapest option to gather large amount of data in a short span of time.
- Archival research: some researches are done by analysing studies that were conducted long ago by other researchers, or reviewing historical records and case studies (Heath, 2018). One of the major limitations it involves is having no control over data collection at all.

Irrespective of the method used, observation or survey, it is important to ensure how the participants are chosen for a particular study. The participants must be representative of the population for whom generalizations (on the basis of the findings) would be made. As discussed in the section on the experimental method, to ensure a representative sample, the researcher should use random sampling—each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected as a participant in the study. Now, sampling using this technique is not an easy task. Let us say of our population (on whom generalizations are to be made) involves 100 million people, and then selecting a sample that is random in nature (representative) is an enormous task. For instance, if we have to take a sample of 500 people from this, we may take up a phone directory, get a computer-generated list of random numbers and select on that basis, but it would still exclude people who do not have a phone. Therefore, we should generalize our findings only to the population from which we sampled. For instance, research conducted on African American women might not be true or valid or some other ethnic group, race, or culture. Although, random selection is important for the validity of correlational research, it is difficult to achieve it and thus is rarely employed.

Table 1.2 Correlational Research vs. Experimental Research

	Correlational Research	Experimental Research
Purpose	Measures strength and direction of association between variables	Tests cause and effect relationship between variables
Variable	Researchers do not manipulate the variables	An independent variable is manipulated to observe its effect on a dependent variable
Control	Limited control is exercised, thus other variables may interfere or have a role to play	High amount of control is ensured to rule out the effect of extraneous variables

Validity	High external validity: findings can be generalized to other populations or real- life settings	High internal validity: conclusions about causation can be confidently drawn
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1.2.4 Cross- sectional and Longitudinal Design

When data is collected as a whole to study a particular population at a single point in time to examine the relationship between the variables, it is called as a cross-sectional design. It can also be used to compare different samples at a given time, for instance, understanding the relationship between jogging and level of cholesterol. Here, the researcher can take two or three groups of joggers depending upon age, gender, etc. and compare it to the non-joggers in the same category. Let us say the researcher took 2 groups depending on the age, 20-30 years, 30-40 years and further bifurcated these two groups between males and females and compared their cholesterol levels to the non-joggers in the same age categories. Now, here the researcher can create subsets on the basis of gender, income etc. but cannot consider past cholesterol levels. This method can describe the characteristics that exist in a population, but cannot determine the cause-and-effect relationship between variables. We can make inferences about possible relationships (as is the case in the example here) but cannot be sure of a definitive cause and effect relationship. Thus, a cross-sectional study offers us a snapshot of a single moment in time and does not consider what happens before or after it. Preliminary data gathered from here can also be used further to support research or experimentation.

Longitudinal study is the one in which data is gathered from the same sample repeatedly over an extended period of time. Therefore, depending on the kind of information required, it may last from a year or few years to even decades. It extends beyond a specific point or a single frame of time which helps in understanding and establishing a proper sequence of events occurred. For instance, if the researcher wishes to measure the change in cholesterol levels in women who have jogged for five years continuously, will account for a longitudinal study. This would be more likely to suggest a cause-and-effect relationship but does not ensure it. It is important to remember that the research and the research questions should drive the design. For instance, if we try to find if employment is associated with better health, then a cross-sectional study involving a survey at one point of time may tell us the relationship between the two variables. However, it does not tell us if employment leads to better health or if better health gives an indication of higher employment rates. If we use a longitudinal design here, it may help us in measuring both employment and health at one time and then again do so after a gap of 6 months or so. Along with establishing a likely cause-and-effect relationship, longitudinal studies also help in distinguishing age effects from cohort effects. *Age effects* are individual specific, often biological sources of change, whereas a cohort can be thought of as a social context affecting individuals that reside within them. The *cohort effect* is the effect due to an individual being born in a certain time, region, period, or having experienced similar life experiences (as they are born in similar time periods). In a cross-sectional design, it is difficult to separate age effect from cohort effects. For instance, if a study attempts to measure the impact of age on learning computers and finds that the older adults have a significantly decreased ability to learn computers, such that the 45-year-olds score lower than 35-year-olds, who score lower than 25-year-olds. Here it seems that age has a role to play but the difference could also be due to a cohort effect- the older participants had significantly low exposure to computers (while growing up) in comparison to the younger participants in the group.

Table 1.3 Cross-sectional vs. Longitudinal Design

Cross-sectional study	Longitudinal study
Conducted at a given point in time	Requires researcher to revisit participants at proper intervals over a period of time
Conducted with different samples	Conducted with the same sample over the years
Cannot determine cause and effect relationship	Can justify cause and effect relationship
Multiple variables can be studied at a single point in time	Only one variable is considered to conduct the study
Saves time	Time consuming (may take years or decades)
Saves money	Tends to be expensive

1.2.5 Meta-Analysis

Meta-analysis means a study about studies. Sometimes researchers want to know answers to questions that have been studied a lot previously, so they conduct a meta-analysis, pooling data from multiple studies systematically (previously published studies on the topic), analyse it and produce an integrated result. Such results help in finding a general trend across the studies. A meta-analysis synthesizes results from all the published studies on the same topic as if someone has done a single study with a larger sample size. Meta-analysis can average across different studies, producing an overall effect which can be judged in terms of its significance and magnitude as well. Sex comparison has always been of interest to the researchers, yet an extremely controversial area. Researchers continue to debate if sex based comparisons should be made or not. A vast literature exists on this topic in both cognitive and social domain and also in various other areas. Meta-analysis has been used to these studies to help researchers integrate these findings. It would be important to note here that a biased meta-analysis can produce misleading results. The bias may exist at the level of 'search', for instance, an incomplete set of keywords or the search engine in itself could unintentionally produce some bias. At a selection level, if the researchers are not clear about the criteria to choose from a long list of potential studies, it may produce biased results. Thus, one needs to exercise precaution while conducting a meta-analysis.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Differentiate between experimental and control groups.

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- 2) Define the following terms: (a) positive correlation, (b) negative correlation, (c) perfect correlation.

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- 3) The value of correlation ranges from ____ to ____.

- 4) What is meta-analysis?

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1.3 DIFFICULTIES IN CONDUCTING GENDER RESEARCH

Very much like any other field, the study of gender also has its unique set of difficulties and challenges. At each stage of the research process, the researcher may end up influencing the outcome—intentionally or unintentionally. Biases may occur in the way the study is designed, when the questions are being asked, the manner in which data is collected, the way in which data is interpreted or communicated in the form of results. Participants can also be a source of bias, especially if they try to ‘be a certain way’ to give ‘desired’ results to the researcher or if they wish to present themselves in a certain way. In this section, let us try and understand some of these probable issues.

1.3.1 Experimenter Effect

Experimenter effect refers to the ways in which the experimenter or the researcher can influence the results of the study that is being conducted. For instance, certain studies have demonstrated that the ‘sex’ of the researcher or investigator can influence the results of the study. Arendell (1997) observed how the male participants in her study, responded to her not as a researcher but to their expectation of her as a woman by disclosing personal and emotional details of their life. Experimenter effect can exist at many stages of the research. Let us pay attention to some of these issues.

- Most of the researchers are highly interested in the phenomenon they study and also have certain expectations about the results of their work. In an area such as gender, most of us (researchers) have certain beliefs and values which guide our work. This may not be intentional in nature, but the researcher cannot be completely value-free. Expectations and hypothesis based on a theory are acceptable here but hunches on the basis of our personal expectations and desires might seem problematic and may lead to biased results.
- Participants, as selected by the experimenter can also influence a study’s outcome. For instance, when researchers limit their studies to all males or just females, it gets difficult to generalize the findings on the other sex. Sometimes we compare findings to understand the difference between two groups, let us say males and females. The researcher here should be sensitive to other variables that may distinguish the groups and can impact the findings; such as if one group is employed and another one is not employed it may have an impact on the variables being studied.
- While generalizing across the studies, researchers should ensure that the different ways in which the dependent variable is measured do not influence the findings. For instance, dependent variables can be biased in favour of either males or females. If a study compares helping behaviour of men and women towards strangers by measuring how many of the participants assist the stranger in changing a flat tyre of the car, there is a higher probability of men helping out more than women due to the fact that they have more experience with such a situation than women. Thus, social roles and experience also play a role here. It is unlikely that there is a biological reason behind men choosing this role more than women.

- The manner in which data is collected can also be a factor in influencing the results of the study. In a classic study, Rosenthal (1967) found that male and female experimenters smiled more and glanced more at same-sex participants than the opposite-sex while giving the instructions. This could influence the participants and their expectations which would ultimately impact the final results. Certain beliefs of the researcher may also be a reason for his/her behaviour (although unintentional) which could influence the participants to respond in a certain way confirming the beliefs of the researcher.
- The manner in which results are communicated could be another source of bias. Sometimes due to our bias towards a particular group, we may interpret and conclude in a certain way, favouring one over the other. Another issue is that sex differences are more interesting than sex similarities and thus studies of differences are more likely to be published. Susan Faludi (1999) highlighted this in the book, *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women*. She emphasized that how the results of the studies which support the prevalent culture are more likely to be published.

1.3.2 Participant Effect

Participants who are a part of the study can also influence the outcome of a study; these are called as demand characteristics. Some of these are discussed below:

- Social desirability response bias: people wish to behave in socially desirable ways. It makes them likeable and 'normal'. With regard to gender studies, essentialist notions have a prescribed set for being 'masculine' and 'feminine'. On self-report measures, people may end up rating themselves in accordance to their prescribed gender roles and norms in order to fit in the society, especially if they realize the purpose of the research. Nevertheless, this would not be the true picture of how they are and thus influencing the results. For instance, it is socially desirable for a man to say they are aggressive and less masculine even if they are not so in reality. A study by Fisher (2007) showed that college men reported having more sexual partners when the researcher in front of them was a female than a male. Ensuring confidentiality, disguising the nature of research, and observing behaviour rather than taking a self-report measure may minimize the effects of demand characteristics.
- In a lab setting a lot of emphasis is paid on controlling the external conditions so that only IV is manipulated to see the effects on DV. We have already discussed that this artificiality is a threat to external validity, but another point to be noted here is that in laboratory men and women may get equal treatment and similar conditions but that is not the case in the real world.
- Variables confounded with sex: Sex of the participant is usually a subject variable rather than a true independent variable that is manipulated. For instance, when we are comparing emotions or feelings in men and women, we can never be certain if the difference found is due to sex alone or values and experiences of being men or women have a role to play in it. Thus, the question that remains is that when we observe a sex difference, is it because of the biological binary distinction of male and female, or is it due to the psychological category of gender.

Box 1.2 SOME KEY HISTORICAL QUANTITATIVE RESEARCHES IN THE AREA OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY

Before the studies described under this section, there was scant quantitative work to draw upon, especially in the area of gender and sexuality.

- The Kinsey studies are considered as the largest studies of sexual behaviour and also demonstrated the spread of same-sex behaviour in the population (Gathorne-Hardy, 2005). Rather than sexual orientation identity, Kinsey talked about experience or response.
- The Masters and Johnson studies: in late 1950s Masters and Johnson conducted a series of studies into sexual functioning and performance. They also considered the relationship between sexuality and ageing. This research had an important role to play in establishing sexuality as an important aspect of quality of life.
- The Klein Sexual orientation grid: This grid differentiates between attraction, behaviour, fantasies, emotional preferences and other variables which are social in nature, lifestyle, and self-identification (Klein, 1993).
- The Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI): It is a self-report questionnaire used to measure masculine and feminine traits on different 'dimensions' (Bem, 1974). But, over the years researchers have argued that BSRI measures traditional sex role characteristics as defined in the context of the original sample norms (on which the study was based) (Hegarty, 2003).

1.4 QUALITATIVE INQUIRY

Qualitative inquiry or research is an important tool to understand experiences of the individual and making meaning out of it. Thus, qualitative researchers are interested in how people make sense of the world and experience events. The focus is on the quality and texture of the experience, rather than the identification of a cause-effect relationship. As the researchers are interested in the 'meaning' people attribute to events or conditions, they do not start with preconceived variables which would hinder in understanding participants' experience as they experience it themselves. Thus, the researcher tries not to impose one's meaning on the phenomenon under investigation. Here the objective is to describe and possibly explain experiences and events as they exist for the participants, but never to predict. Qualitative research has been broadly classified into two camps: experiential research and critical research. It is important to note here that the classification is not strict in any sense. Experiential research aims at documenting people's experiences, views, and practices about a particular phenomenon. Critical research on the other hand, aims at understanding and interrogating dominant meanings and practices, unpackaging or deconstructing them (Clarke et al., 2010). There are various ways of conducting qualitative research; here we would be highlighting some of these methods. Some of the qualitative methods that are used are thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006), interpretative phenomenological analysis (Smith et al., 2009), discourse analysis (Wiggins & Riley, 2010), and conversation analysis (Sidnell & Stivers, 2012). It is the research area and the research question which decides the kind of approach that would be suitable. Similarly, the choice of techniques to be used for data collection involves consideration regarding how to address the phenomena at hand. The data can be collected using semi-structured interviews (to explore experiential, life-history, or narrative types of areas), focus group interviews (to explore perceptions, beliefs, attitudes), photovoice and photo elicitation (community based participatory research to document and reflect upon reality), maintaining diary

entries etc. Data can also be collected from online support groups, media (such as newspapers, radio talks, televisions, magazines etc.) and videos available on YouTube, OTT platforms could also provide an insight into how certain issues are constructed. Observation, audio/video recording phenomena (such as classroom interactions, proceedings, counselling sessions) can also be some of the ways to collect data. Even before conducting any qualitative research, one needs to pay attention to the design of the study, especially to ensure that the researcher would be able to collect and eventually analyse data enabling exploration in an open-ended manner. In the following section, let us understand the experiential and critical methods, but before that let us pay attention to the issue of researcher membership in the group being studied.

1.4.1 Insider/Outsider Considerations in Qualitative Research

The issue regarding membership of the researcher in the group that is being studied is of relevance to all the approaches involving qualitative methodology. The researcher has a crucial role in data collection and analysis; thus, it matters if the researcher is an insider or an outsider. As an insider, the researcher may share the characteristic, role, and experience of the participants under the study and as an outsider the researcher may not share the commonality with the participants. Therefore, the membership status vis-a-vis those who are participating in the research is an essential aspect of the investigation and research process.

For all purposes, an insider researcher enhances the depth and breadth of understanding a population as the researcher shares the identity, language, or some experiential base with the participant but it also raises questions regarding objectivity, reflexivity and authenticity (Kanuha, 2000). One may feel such research would lack critical depth as the researcher is too close to the topic and may be quite similar to those being studied. However, when one is representing the voices of others (outsider research) there is a risk of 'pathologizing the other' (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 1996). Perhaps that is why certain recent studies concerning LGBTQ issues have stated the 'insider advantage' in studying sexuality and related areas (Clarke et al., 2010). Although emphasis on "objective" data has been replaced with the benefits that subjective aspects could provide in the research process, being an insider comes with a set of challenges. The researchers may face a role conflict and may find it difficult to navigate between "loyalty tugs", "behavioural claims" and presenting the perception (about the issue) as is (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007). Asselin (2003) argued that role confusion may occur in any study but researcher's familiarity with the setting or participants due to their membership in the group increases the risk.

Although being an insider has advantages, especially the fact that one's membership automatically provides a certain degree of trust and openness in the participants, there are areas and topics which the researcher might be interested in studying but may not have any personal experience with it, for instance, someone trying to understand patterns of grief but has not lost any dear one. Thus, in order to overcome this, guidelines for good practices can be followed (Wheeler, 2003). It may include: familiarizing oneself with the issues around the participant and their context; outlining the motivations behind the study in detail; specifying how the findings would be used; and consulting others or people with similar experiences while designing the research. This is not an exhaustive list and one must take careful steps and considerations while conducting research as an insider or outsider especially with topics that are sensitive in nature, to yield meaningful results.

1.4.2 Experiential Research

Experiential research is about ‘giving voice to’ and validating the experiences and practices of the participants (Braun & Clarke, 2013). It is about valuing and prioritizing participants’ interpretations of their life world. Various researchers, such as Smith and colleagues (2009) consider this to be an ideal approach to study areas involving gender and sexuality, especially to make sense of an individual’s life from his/her frame of reference. Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is one such approach which is led by Jonathan Smith. It uses the theoretical traditions of phenomenology and hermeneutics (Shaw, 2010). It encourages the participants to reflect on and interpret their experiences. The analysis is grounded in the individual level and the researcher builds up over it, case-by case (Shaw, 2010). Thus, IPA is used with smaller and relatively homogenous sample wherein the experience is understood in great details. One of the illustrations has been provided by O’Mullan and colleagues (2017) who explored women’s sexual experiences and difficulties and how do they locate these experiences within the cultural and social contexts. Although it has been argued that it is possible “to move to more general claims with IPA but this should only be after the potential of the case has been realized” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 3) but more than generalizations, evaluation in IPA or qualitative research in general depends on the degree to which the findings work with the participants’ perspective (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). It focuses on credibility (how well the researcher’s portrayal of the participants, match their perceptions), dependability (rests on the quality of data collection and analysis) and transferability (degree to which the study has made it possible for the audience to apply findings in situation investigated to other similar situations).

1.4.3 Critical Research

Critical research aims at addressing societal structures and institutions which are oppressive in nature so that transformative action can be taken eventually to reduce the power gap and hierarchy. Critical analysis looks at language as a “social practice” and takes the historical and socio-political context of the text into serious consideration. Discursive approaches position language as an active agent or action, where the primary focus is on understanding how a phenomenon is constructed and displayed in social interactions. Most experiential approaches view language as a transparent medium to relay pre-existing knowledge but discourse analysis views it as a site where we constitute knowledge. Discourse analysis is an approach that investigates how everyday “texts” create and reinforce social inequalities and hierarchies, thus challenging these power structures and offering an alternative perspective to social reality.

Discursive approaches take a social constructionist stance and view identity as flexible, relational, contextual, situated and inflected by the existing power relations (Gergen, 1999). Although discursive approaches are informed by different theoretical positions and methodological practices, the key focus is discourse in the form of talk and/or text with emphasis on how the discourse is oriented and how representations are constructed (Potter & Wiggins, 2007). An interesting work that can be used as an example to illustrate the given points is about the issue of sexual consent and rape. O’Byrne and colleagues (2006) discussed the findings of miscommunication model which claimed that a dichotomy exists between how men and women carry conversations, that is, they do not understand each other fully. The model has been widely used to understand opinion about issues such as rape. It concluded that women should say a clear ‘no’ to unwanted sexual advances towards them. Kitzinger and Frith (1999) built an argument using conversation

analytic studies stating that we do not just say 'no' and refusals are put across in softer ways, like turning down an offer with some excuse. While exploring, both Kitzinger and Frith (1999) and O'Byrne and colleagues (2008) used focus group interviews but with women and men respectively to make sense of this issue, they realized that men do understand the normative ways wherein both verbal and non-verbal refusals are made. Thus, they critiqued the understanding that a clear 'no' should be verbalized to effectively refuse sex and appeals on the ground of misunderstanding of sexual refusals in rape cases should be dealt with care and precaution.

1.4.4 Between Experiential and Critical Research

Here we would discuss another approach called as narrative analysis that utilizes various interdisciplinary perspectives, ranging from experiential to critical. Mishler (1990) has suggested that human 'perform' identity through generation of narratives in which they express and display who they are and/or what would they want to be. Thus, we continuously use narratives to make sense of ourselves and others around us, along with various events that are happening. There are various ways to conduct a narrative analysis, but broadly speaking it contains six elements (Labov, 1982): an abstract, a section discussing the contextual details of the story, a complicating action, an evaluation, a resolution, and a coda (relevance of the story as pointed by the narrator by connecting it with everyday life). This model has been criticized for not highlighting the relationship between the teller and the recipient (Riessman, 1993). There are others who have argued for a more critical stance, for example, Linde (1993) discussed that the analysis of narratives should begin from the level of individual construction of sentences to the social level of beliefs system. Thus, there is a social negotiation of narratives that is being hinted at here and finally the effect of this negotiation on the construction of narratives. Individual narratives contain social, cultural, historical norms and moral standards (of that particular time frame). It has been believed that we keep revising our life story to make it coherent, as we wish to display an identity in the society that is good, stable and the one that follows the norm.

The study of gender and narrative also tries to explore the ways in which constructs such as sex, gender, and sexuality may shape narrative texts and theories through which readers approach them. It would be interesting to note here that the field known as "feminist narratology" explores implications of sex, gender, and/or sexuality to understand the "nature, form, and functioning of narrative" (Prince, 1987/2003; pg. 65).

1.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

By now we have understood that the psychology of gender comprises of a vast and rich array of topics that are pursued for research. They draw on latest theories and sophisticated methodologies which would be discussed in the subsequent units as well. It has expanded to include both biological and sociological processes. The growth has been such that psychologists across various domains have started incorporating gender related issues in their research and gender psychologists are also bringing other theories and methods to answer gender questions.

Initially the study of psychology of gender was considered as quite political in nature but with time, growth and expansion in the area, it has entered the scientific mainstream as well. The terminology used and the word choice has a role to play in understanding the tacit belief system and most importantly, gender processes operate in conjunction with other social categories such as age, race, class etc. thus, more attention should be paid to these group interactions as well.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Name some of the methods used to collect data in qualitative research designs.

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- 2) What is Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis?

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- 3) What is discourse analysis?

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- 4) What is a social constructivist stance in gender research?

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1.6 SUMMARY

To sum up what we have learnt in this unit, here is a quick recap:

- Early research in the area of gender emphasized establishing that men were intelligent than women by examining their brain size. Initially, the concept of masculinity/femininity was defined mainly by sex differences and homosexuality was thought to be equivalent to femininity. The period between 1954 and 1982 delved in the conceptualization and measurement of gender roles and gender related traits.
- BSRI and PAQ were different from previous instruments as they established masculinity and femininity as two independent dimensions rather than two opposite ends of a single continuum.
- Random assignment is an important feature of experimental method as it helps in isolating the independent variable as true cause and effect. Experiments are often high in internal validity and correlational method is high in external validity.
- Meta-analysis is a systematic statistical tool developed to summarize the results of a large number of studies in a particular area.
- The experimenter can influence a study and its outcome in various ways such as how it has been designed, how data is collected, analysed or interpreted and even by the way it is reported.
- Differences between men and women are less likely to be visible in a laboratory setting than in real life as they face similar conditions in a laboratory setting but that is not case in real life.

- Experiential qualitative research gives importance to participants' descriptions of their lived experience while giving voice to their lives and practices.
- Critical approaches pay attention to the issues such as how gender and sexuality-based phenomena, practices are constructed in a wider discourse.
- One of the issues in the area of qualitative research involves if the researcher should be an insider or an outsider or both in relation to the group that is being studied.

1.7 KEYWORDS

Androgyny Displaying both masculine and feminine traits.

Cohort Effect The influence that a person's time frame of birth has on the research area. It refers to the similarities and social influences across a particular age group and is not individual specific.

Correlational Study Observing relation between two variables at a single point in time.

Cross-sectional Study A study where data is collected at one point in time.

Dependent Variable Variable on which the influence of independent variable is studied.

Independent variable Variable that is being manipulated in the experiment.

Longitudinal Study A Study in which variables are studied over a period of time and data is collected at different time points.

Meta-analysis Statistical tool to synthesize results of different studies in the area.

Random Assignment Method of assigning participants to different groups where each participant has an equal chance of being assigned to each group.

Social Constructionist Researchers who believe that categories such as masculinity and femininity are constructed by society and thus its definition may change from society to society.

1.8 REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) How has androgyny been viewed in the area of gender research?
- 2) Explain gender as a multidimensional construct.
- 3) Elaborate upon the different steps involved in a research process.
- 4) Evaluate experimental method in research.
- 5) How are field experiments different from lab experiments?
- 6) Explain some methods used to collect data for correlational studies.
- 7) How is a cross-sectional design different from a longitudinal design?
- 8) How do longitudinal studies distinguish age effects from cohort effects?
- 9) Elaborate upon some of the difficulties involved in gender research.
- 10) Explain the basic objective of qualitative inquiry.
- 11) Why are insider/outsider considerations important in qualitative research?
- 12) How is experiential research different from critical research?

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1.10 ADDITIONAL ONLINE RESOURCES

- Why sex and gender matter in research by Dr. Shirin Heidari
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sS4_dYHrX4I
- Beyond the gender binary by Dr. Margaret Nichols
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4MUIYlaWVUk>

UNIT 2 CONCEPTUALIZATION AND MEASUREMENT OF GENDER NORMS, GENDER ROLES, AND GENDER ROLE ATTITUDES*

Structure

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Binary Categories and the Intersectional Approach toward Gender
- 2.2 Gender Norms
- 2.3 Gender Roles
- 2.4 Gender Socialization
- 2.5 Gender Role Attitudes
 - 2.5.1 Measurement of Gender Role Attitudes
- 2.6 Theories of Gender Roles
 - 2.6.1 Social Role Theory of Alice Eagly
 - 2.6.2 Gender Schema Theory of Sandra Bem
 - 2.6.3 Ambivalent Sexism Theory Glick and Fiske
- 2.7 Summary
- 2.8 Keywords
- 2.9 Review Questions
- 2.10 References and Further Reading

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After having read this Unit, you will be able to:

- Know about gender norms;
- Explain what are gender roles;
- Describe the gender socialization patterns and how they shape gender roles;
- Explain what are gender role attitudes;
- Familiarize yourself with the different psychological scales used to measure gender role attitudes; and
- Explain what are the different theoretical perspectives on gender roles.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The study of gender became an important focus of research in psychology since the 1970s/80s with the emergence of the women's movements across the world for equality. You have learnt by now from the earlier unit that gender refers to those characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. These characteristics include norms, roles, and gender role attitudes that are associated with being a man or woman. They are not natural or innate, but created by society and learnt by individuals as they grow up. Although these

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norms, roles and attitudes may change over time and may vary from society to society, an essential feature to be remembered is that gender is hierarchical and produces inequalities.

In this unit, you will be taken through three key aspects of the social psychology of gender – gender norms, gender roles, and gender role attitudes. Why are these concepts important for us to know? These concepts are important as they tell us about gender equality. Norms, roles and attitudes related to gender have been found to shape and impact education and work opportunities, distribution of power and resources, as well as health and well-being of individuals, both women and men. Research from across countries has shown that unequal gender norms, roles, attitudes and negative stereotypes are linked to adverse outcomes in child and maternal health, inadequate child nutrition, the gender gaps in literacy and work participation, and perpetration of violence against women. Hence it is important to not only know about what terms such as gender roles and gender role attitudes mean, but also to reflect on the messages, as when growing up, that we have received from our parents, teachers, media, etc about what is ‘proper’ behavior as boys and girls, and the responsibilities that we were taught to us as expected of being men or women. This unit will also introduce you to three major psychological scales that have been used to measure and assess gender role attitudes – the Attitudes towards Women Scale (AWS), The Sexist Attitudes Towards Women Scale (SATWS) and the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI) as well as some of the important psychological theories conceptualized on the topic of gender roles – the Social Role theory (Alice Eagly), the Gender Schema theory (Sandra Bem), and the Ambivalent Sexism theory (Peter Glick and Susan Fiske).

2.1 BINARY CATEGORIES AND INTERSECTIONAL APPROACH TOWARDS GENDER

Before we go on at length in this unit, two major points or disclaimers must be noted here. One, in this unit the term gender is being used to refer to only the binary categories of women and men, and not to others in the gender spectrum such as non-binary (those who identify with neither male or female identities) or genderfluid (persons who fluctuate between gender categories) such as the LGBTQI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/transsexual, Queer and Intersex). This is primarily because all societies across the world have prescribed appropriate norms and roles for men and women only so far. Individuals whose sexual orientation, identity or sexual characteristics are different from the presumed majority of the population (male and female heterosexuals) such as the LGBTQI have been considered to be beyond the conventional division of roles and have had to struggle considerably for dignity and social acceptance as they are viewed as not fitting in into this binary division of men and women.

It is also to be noted here that this is not to say that the gender norms and roles considered appropriate for the binary categories of women and men are to be endorsed and accepted by all. In fact, in the past half a century or more, the norms and roles prescribed for men and women have been contested, and change sought to be brought out in them for a more equal society to emerge. The following content is only to point out that these norms and roles are expectations and prescriptions of behavior for men and women laid down by the society in which we live. It is therefore important to know how these expectations and prescriptions shape our behavior. It is also important to know that it is not without struggle that they have been challenged although questioning of these prescribed guidelines has not been easy.

Two, although the binary categories of men and women are being used here, it must be noted that the experiences of all women, or all men are not the same. This has been pointed out by the approach of intersectionality, a term coined and first proposed by feminist legal scholar and activist Kimberle Crenshaw in 1989 to account for differences between women – differences of class, race (in the western context to which we can add caste in our context), religion, and other categories such as disability, sexual orientation that shape and impact our experiences, and experiences of oppression in particular.

Thus, the intersectionality approach to gender equality acknowledges that people have different experiences based on their social location such as caste, class, religion, sexual orientation, disabilities amongst others and that women or men cannot be seen as a homogenous identity. Speaking about women in particular, all women may face some sort of oppression, all women may not be equally oppressed and not all women face the same challenges. Certain aspects of social identity give some women increased access to resources example, upper caste/class, educated, urban women. Some others face more injustice and disadvantage because of how their identities as women intersect with caste, class etc example, poor, SC/ST rural women. For instance, the wife of a rich man in a village who owns fields has far greater power than a (male or female) labourer working on her fields on daily wages. The intersectional approach therefore recognizes that there are power imbalances and inequalities even between different categories of women and men. All men and women should not therefore be seen as the same, rather there are differences even amongst men and women and it is these differences of class, caste, religion etc. and the intersections or interlocking of gender with each of these categories that may shape and influence their behavior rather than gender alone.

This note is only to alert you to the intersectionality of gender with other social categories such as class, caste, religion etc. and to keep this recognition of intersectionality in mind as you read the following sections even as the term ‘gender’ is being used here to refer to the dominant understanding of gender as the binary categories of men and women only.

2.2 GENDER NORMS

When human beings come together and interact with each other, very often unwritten rules about how to behave with each other emerge during the course of their actions. Social norms are therefore, the (unwritten) rules of action shared by members of a given society about what is appropriate and acceptable behavior for members of the group. For instance, standing in queue to get into a bus, greeting each other when we meet with a ‘namaste’, eating with right hand or leaving footwear outside when we enter a home, are just some small examples of social norms in everyday life in India. Thus, norms are prescribed or generally accepted to be obligatory for individuals to follow in the course of their behavior.

Gender norms are those principles or rules of behavior considered to be appropriate for men and women in any society. By and large, the norms prescribed for women include qualities such as gentleness, patience, submissiveness and the like which are expected to prepare them eventually to take on the roles of ‘wife’ and ‘good mother’. Similarly, being ‘tough’, ‘bold’ and ‘dominating’, not being emotional (“boys don’t cry” is a commonly heard message given to boys) are the norms of behavior generally prescribed for boys and men. These norms are considered to prepare them to assume the roles of ‘breadwinner/provider’ and ‘protector’ later in life.

We learn these norms as we grow up – the do’s and don’ts of behaviour, usually from our parents, peers, teachers, media, books and so on – a process that is referred to as socialization – and which we then own up or accept them as our own without parents and other agents of socialization telling us constantly about what we should do or should not do – a process that is known as internalization. We will know more about the process of socialization and gender socialization in particular in a later section.

Check Your Progress 1

1) What do the terms non binary and gender fluid mean?

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2) What is meant by intersectionality?

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3) What are gender norms?

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4) Give an example of a gender norm for girls and boys in our society.

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2.3 GENDER ROLES

Gender norms are those rules of behaviour considered to be appropriate for men and women. Every society has certain expectations about typical and appropriate behaviour for girls, boys, men and women and these expectations along with the responsibilities they are supposed to take up and perform in society together make up gender roles. That is, gender norms are the prescriptive guidelines or the building blocks that form the gender roles which refer to the assignment of social responsibilities to men and women or the tasks they are expected to form.

The main distinction regarding the gender roles of men and women is related to division of labour – who is to do what kind of work. This division of labour is related to the roles ascribed to the public sphere and those to the private sphere respectively. The public sphere refers to the external world of politics and public office, economy, war and the military while the private domain includes the home and domesticity, reproduction and children. While the public sphere is associated with men, the private sphere is commonly connected to women. You may ask whether such a division exists even today when many women are increasingly associated with the external, public world and men too are taking up domestic responsibilities, earlier considered to be the domain of women only. While it is

true that the boundaries between the public and private spheres may not be as rigid as they were in the past, the societal expectations about appropriate roles for men and women have not lessened. Thus, a woman may be a top scientist or a professor or a doctor but will be judged unfavourably by society if she is seen as not very devoted to her family and domestic responsibilities owing to her professional duties. The reason for such a negative judgement is because the primary social role for women is predominantly considered to be related to the domestic responsibilities of wife and mother. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier section on intersectionality, the gender norms and roles expected of rural or tribal girls and women may be somewhat different from urban, middle class girls, but the emphasis on the private sphere for women and on the public sphere for men is by and large very similar across different social categories, with some exceptions across regions in our country.

Nancy Russo (1976), a feminist psychologist maintains that the motherhood mandate is a framework of norms and principles that governs the role considered to be appropriate for women. She says that right from early childhood, practices such as encouraging girls to play with dolls that is perceived to be an important way for little girls to learn appropriate nurture behaviors that will supposedly be necessary in their adult lives as wives and mothers. Thus, the primary role for a woman is considered to revolve around her biological capability to become a mother. Russo points out that the motherhood mandate includes the injunction that a woman should strive to be a 'good mother' – that is she should devote herself or a substantial amount of her time and energy to caring for the children, and also other members of the family such as elders and so on. In other words, it is in the private domain is where her primary role is expected to be.

Similarly, for boys too there are injunctions for appropriate gender roles, but the focus is not on domesticity and parenting as in the case of girls. For men the emphasis is on achievement, authority, dominance, aggression that are norms or principles of behavior that supposedly prepare men for taking on the roles of provider and protector and connected to the public sphere. Robert Brannon (1976) and Doyle (1995) categorize men's gender roles as having five characteristic elements:

- antifeminine that is, being opposite to typical feminine characteristics of being emotional and vulnerable in order to prove themselves as masculine;
- success element with emphasis on achievement particularly in terms of earnings and money;
- aggressive element or use of force and dominance again to prove their masculinity;
- sexual element or sexual conquest seen as one of the strongest proofs of masculinity and is seen either in rape and sexual assault being one of the most visible manifestations of violence perpetuated by men on women, or simply in the man-as-sexual initiator/controller with the woman being an object or recipient of sexual advances;
- self-reliant element wherein men are expected to be cool and in control and tough in most situations.

The foundations for gender roles for men and women are laid in early years but the sexual division of labour is seen in later life too with occupations also segregated on gender lines. Paid employment may be in the public sphere but certain occupations even in paid employment are tailored as appropriate for women and men. Thus teaching (school teaching in particular), nursing,

secretarial/reception, and such others were the first occupations opened up to women and in which women continue to be overrepresented even today. These are the occupations that are considered to be extensions of women's nurturant and caregiving gender role in the private domain and hence considered 'suitable' for women. Even in occupations such as medicine in which women's entry is very recent, specialties such as gynecology and obstetrics and pediatrics (that have to do with health and illnesses of women and children) are the ones in which women are represented more than in fields such as surgery and neurology that continue to be male-dominated even today.

Given this division of labour along the lines of homemaker and provider respectively, people disproportionately observe women and girls engaged in domestic tasks and behaviors such as childcare, cooking, cleaning and so on, and men and boys more involved in activities that are marketable in paid economy. As we shall see in Eagly's theory of social roles in a later section, people then view the different behaviors of the sexes as due to inherent differences in the natures of men and women, and as inevitable and natural.

Thus, gender roles are basically derived from the family (private domain) and employment (public domain) roles commonly held by women and men in society. In addition to this private-public distinction, gender roles are also said to differ in their emphasis on what has been termed as agency versus communion. Bakan (1966) had introduced these two terms of *agency* and *communion* to indicate to two basic dimensions or modalities in human existence. Agency refers to the strivings of the individual to expand the self and involves qualities such as dominance, ambition, competence, instrumentality, and efficiency in goal attainment. Communion indicates the tendency of the individual to integrate the self in a larger unit through caring for others and focus on others' well-being, and qualities such as emotional expressiveness, cooperativeness and harmony.

It has been said that the gender role of men – of provider and protector – is oriented towards agency with the characteristics of dominance, ambition, and instrumentality; and the gender role of women is characterized by orientation towards others' well-being and the qualities of emotional expressiveness and cooperativeness. In other words, the social behaviors that typify the breadwinner-homemaker division of labour differ in their emphasis on agency and communion. Women's accommodation to the domestic role is seen to foster a pattern of interpersonally facilitative behaviors that is termed communal while men's accommodation to the provider role leads to behaviors oriented towards individual achievement and dominance.

In sum, gender role can be said to refer to the behaviors and activities that are socially defined as appropriate for each sex and are learned through the socialization process (Lips, 2001). A crucial point to be remembered here with reference to gender roles is that these roles in many societies across the world, with some exceptions, are unequal. Inequality is seen in terms of access and control over resources such as education, employment opportunities, political representation and decision-making, health care, in short, all the indicators that are considered to be vital to human development and well-being (e.g., as in the concept of Human Development introduced and assessed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in its yearly reports). For centuries, women were denied education and the right to vote and hence equal citizenship as these resources were not considered necessary for the perceived primary role of homemaker and mother for women.

Check Your Progress 2

1) What are gender roles?

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2) How do gender roles lead to inequality between men and women?

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3) What is the motherhood mandate?

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4) Why are gender roles considered to be based on supposedly inherent and innate differences between men and women?

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2.4 GENDER SOCIALIZATION

As both norms and roles are learnt, they may change over time, and across different societies in the world. Indeed, changing gender norms and roles have been a significant feature of the 20th century and subsequently as we see more and more women getting into roles in the public sphere that were traditionally denied to them. But the point to be noted here is that gender roles are learnt that is, they are taught to us in the process of moulding us into members of any given social group. This process is known as socialization – the process by which children and even adults learn what is expected of them through their interactions with others – the ways, norms and rules of how they are expected to act. Socialization is the primary means through which a given society, group uses to teach the young what is expected of them. Gender socialization refers to the specific process through girls and boys are moulded into expected and approved ways of behavior for women and men.

Children learn about the activities and objects associated with each sex from a very young age of 2 to 3 years and by the time they reach elementary school, they acquire gender stereotypes about sports, school subjects, and personality traits.

When a mother tells her daughter to pick up the dishes on the dining table or asks her son to go out and play and not play with dolls of his sister, it is socializing agents at work. Gender socialization works when parents provide children with what are known as sex-typed clothing and toys, that is dolls for girls and boys with vehicles, sports equipment etc. Children's gender roles are also shaped through the kinds of chores they are assigned to around the house – with girls

doing basically “women’s work” (cleaning, doing the dishes, washing and taking care of younger siblings) and boys encouraged to do “men’s work” (going out to the grocer’s shop and getting some household item, helping father to clean or do some small repairs for the car or two-wheeler, etc.). Thus, the division of labour along gender lines begins from an early age. These agents, notably parents in early years and subsequently teachers, peers and the media to name a few, work as agents to shape a person’s beliefs and behaviors in order to mould them into socially approved roles.

Some of the most important lessons a child learns and that are reinforced throughout a child’s early years and even later are her or his gender roles. Gender socialization is thus, like a social mould that shapes each person to fit into what is considered to be the appropriate gender role for men and women appropriately. The content of gender role messages may vary from culture to culture but a common and generalized principle of gender norms and roles is the association of women with the private domain of domesticity, housework and caregiving while men are associated with the public domain.

Box 2.1 Activity Box
Gender Role Analysis and Restructuring Exercise

This exercise asks you to reflect on the gender-role messages that you have received and learned while growing up, and is designed to help you identify the advantages and disadvantages of these messages by which you may continue to be influenced. These messages may have come from your parents, teachers, media, school or other institutional structures and policies.

- 1) Beginning with your early childhood experiences, list all the messages that you have received about how you should and should not behave because you were male or female, or identify yourself.
- 2) Make two lists: one of “Should’s” and one of “Shouldn’ts”. You may include rules about how you should dress, what role you should play in your family, how you should interact with the other sex, and so on. These lists represent the composite of the gender role rules that you have learned.
- 3) Look over the lists you have made. Put a mark by each message that continues to influence your present behaviour.
- 4) Identify sources of the message. Think about how and where you originally learned this message (was it in your family, school, TV/films). List all the sources from which you learned this gender role rule.
- 5) Next, perform a cost-benefit analysis. What benefits do you gain by following your gender role rule? How does following this rule limit you?
- 6) Do you wish to change this message? If yes, can you restructure the gender role message that is more self-enhancing and less restricting?

Source: Adapted from Worrell, J., & Remer, P. (2003). *Feminist perspectives in therapy: Empowering diverse women*. Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley.

2.5 GENDER ROLE ATTITUDES

Beliefs or views held by people about appropriate role activities for men and women regarding division of housework, child care, and paid labour are referred to as gender role attitudes (Davis & Greenstein, 2009). Gender role attitudes can be allotted to either the traditional or egalitarian points of view. While tradition implies that the private sphere is assigned to family and domestic responsibilities and to women, the more egalitarian point of view refers to equal responsibilities for private and public spheres. Further, the traditional end of the continuum sees men being regarded as more important with women being viewed as subservient,

while the modern end of the continuum is held as egalitarian with neither sex considered to have the right to dominate the other. In other words, from the equality or egalitarian point of view, men and women would not be assigned different roles presumably based on their biological distinction but on their interest, choice and capabilities. Biological sex is therefore not the foundation for psychological traits and qualities in men and women.

When individuals agree that men should play the role of the breadwinner or provider, and that women should be the homemaker, they are considered to have traditional gender role attitudes. On the other hand, those individuals who do not agree with such a traditional division of labour and instead subscribe to the belief that there should be a more equal division of labour, they are regarded as having more egalitarian or modern gender role attitudes.

2.5.1 Measurement of Gender Role Attitudes

The Attitudes towards Women Scale (AWS) constructed by Spence and Helmreich (1972) is one of the earliest and most widely used scales of gender role attitudes. It was developed in the early 1970s to assess people's beliefs about the roles, responsibilities, and the rights of women (versus those of men). Originally a 55-item scale, a brief version of 15 items was subsequently developed and has been widely used since then (Spence, Helmreich & Stapp, 1973). The key advantage of AWS is that it allows for comparisons to be made across time, cultures, and different respondent groups. Reviews of the scale point to two significant findings that have emerged in the course of usage of the scale with university students over the past few decades – one, there has been a shifting trend toward more egalitarian gender role attitudes over the years, and two, women consistently reported more gender egalitarian attitudes than their male counterparts (McHugh & Freize, 1997).

Another early scale was The Sexist Attitudes Towards Women Scale (SATWS) by Benson and Vincent (1980) to measure what is known as sexism. The authors of this 40-item scale defined sexist attitudes towards women as “attitudes which function to place women in a position of relative inferiority to males by limiting women's social, political, economic and psychological development” (pg. 278, Benson & Vincent, 1980). The items generated addressed seven components of sexism: the attitude that women are inferior; support for men having greater rights and power; support for sex discrimination; greater hostility towards women in non-traditional roles; lack of support for the women's movement; using derogatory labels and stereotypes; and evaluating women based on physical attractiveness.

A more recent and widely used scale is the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI) of Glick and Fiske (1996). This self-report measure is based on a different conceptualization of sexism than what was believed earlier. In contrast to the typical definition of sexism as antipathy (aversion, hostility or hatred) towards women, Glick and Fiske (2001) theorized that sexism towards women is often ambivalent, involving two apparently contradictory dimensions: hostile and benevolent. The ASI contains 22 items in two sub-scales: Hostile Sexism (with items for example, such as “Women seek to gain power by getting control over men”; “Most women fail to appreciate fully that men do for them”; and Benevolent Sexism (e.g., “Women should be cherished and protected by men”; “Many women have a quality of purity that men do not possess”).

Items	Benevolent Sexism	Hostile Sexism	Error variances
4. Every man ought to have a woman whom he adores	.76		.42
5. Men are incomplete without women	.71		.50
2. Women should be cherished and protected by men	.69		.53
1. Many women have a quality of purity that few men possess	.57		.67
10. Women, compared to men, tend to have a superior moral sensibility	.52		.73
11. Men should be willing to sacrifice their own well being in order to provide financially for the women in their lives	.49		.76
8. When women lose to men in a fair competition, they typically complain about being discriminated against		.78	.39
7. Once a woman gets a man to commit to her, she usually tries to put him on a tight leash		.77	.41
6. Women exaggerate problems they have at work		.73	.47
3. Women seek to gain power by getting control over men		.72	.49
12. Feminists are making unreasonable demands of men		.64	.60
9. Many women get a kick out of teasing men by seeming sexually available and then refusing male advances		.57	.68

Figure 2.1 Psychometric properties of items on the Short Form of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996)

The sub-scales of Hostile and Benevolent Sexism are said to differ on three major dimensions: Paternalism; Gender differentiation; and Heterosexuality with each component having a hostile and a benevolent aspect to it.

Hostile sexism is said to have the dimensions of dominative paternalism (women are not viewed as fully competent necessitating and legitimizing the need for a superior male figure); competitive gender differentiation (the view that only men have the required abilities to govern social institutions, providing the social justification for male structural power); and heterosexual hostility. Benevolent Sexism has three factors: protective paternalism (chivalry towards women); complementary gender differentiation (stereotypical roles for women) and heterosexual intimacy (belief that men and women are incomplete without each other).

Check Your Progress 3

1) What does the term gender socialization mean?

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2) What are gender role attitudes?

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3) Give an example of a traditional gender role attitude and an egalitarian gender role attitude.

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4) What does the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory test?

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2.6 THEORIES OF GENDER ROLES

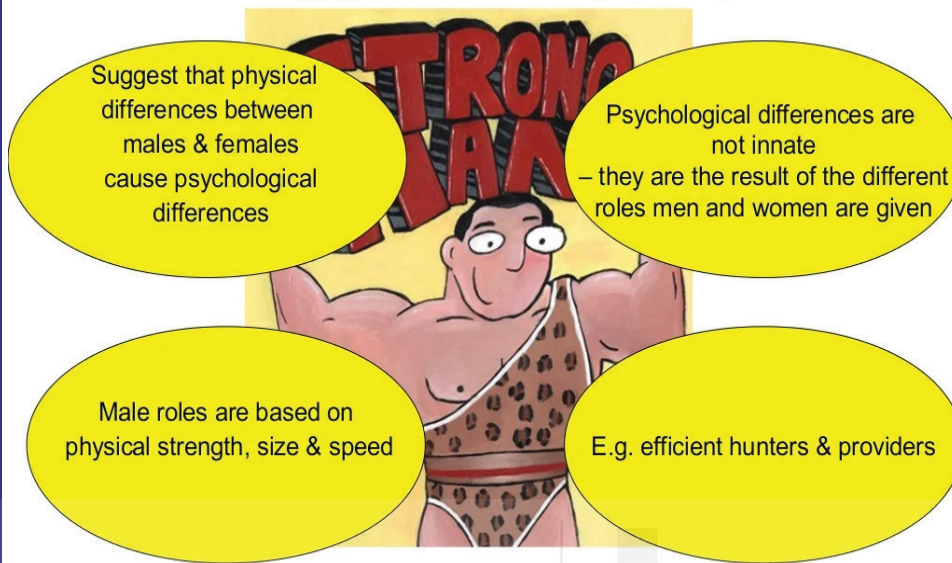
For a long time, psychologists believed that behaviours and attitudes of men and women are determined by sex (female or male). In other words, biological sex (hormonal differences) was supposed to be determining the traits and behaviour of men and women. Thus, for example, the qualities of being patient, nurturant and gentle associated with women, were supposed to be due to biological factors.

2.6.1 Social Role Theory of Alice Eagly

The social role theory, also referred to as social structural theory was proposed by Alice Eagly, a social psychologist who has extensively worked on the psychology of attitudes and the psychology of gender. The theory was subsequently developed further into a biosocial theory (Eagly & Wood, 1999; 2002). Why do men and women, boys and girls behave differently in many circumstances and similarly in several others? This question prompted Eagly to come up with the Social Role theory wherein she begins by saying there is no disputing that there are physical sex differences between men and women. Women have the capacity to gestate and nurse children while men have greater upper-body strength. These physical differences lead to different division of labour and task specialization such as women being involved in housework and caregiving and men with earning money and providing for the family. Thus, according to this theory, physical sex differences between men and women had led in the past to men assigned the social role of hunter while women were assigned the role of homemaker. It is from these social role assignments that psychological differences then emerged with women being regarded as nurturant and patient, amongst other such qualities and hence equipped to play the role of mother/caregiver. Similarly, men are thought to be tough and bold, as we had learnt in the earlier section on gender socialization, and equipped to take on the role of breadwinner/provider and protector.

Gender role beliefs then arise as people observe male and female behaviour and infer that they must be possessing corresponding nature and dispositions. That is, men and women are thought to have certain traits that equip and prepare them for playing sex-typical roles. These attributes or qualities are considered to be inherent or natural properties of men and women and are evident in consensually-shared beliefs or gender stereotypes, about which we will learn more in the next unit.

Social role theory – Eagly & Wood (2002)



Source: <https://www.slideshare.net/Jjanpsychology/a2-gender-biosocial-approach>

Eagly's theory is based on a biosocial approach because according to her formulation, biological processes such as hormonal factors are chemical agents that serve to regulate role performance. Psychological factors include internalization of gender roles by individuals as self standards that regulate their own behaviour as well as their experience of other people's expectations that serve as social regulatory mechanisms. Thus, Eagly maintains that biology works with psychology in order to facilitate role performance. This formulation is summarized and graphically depicted below.

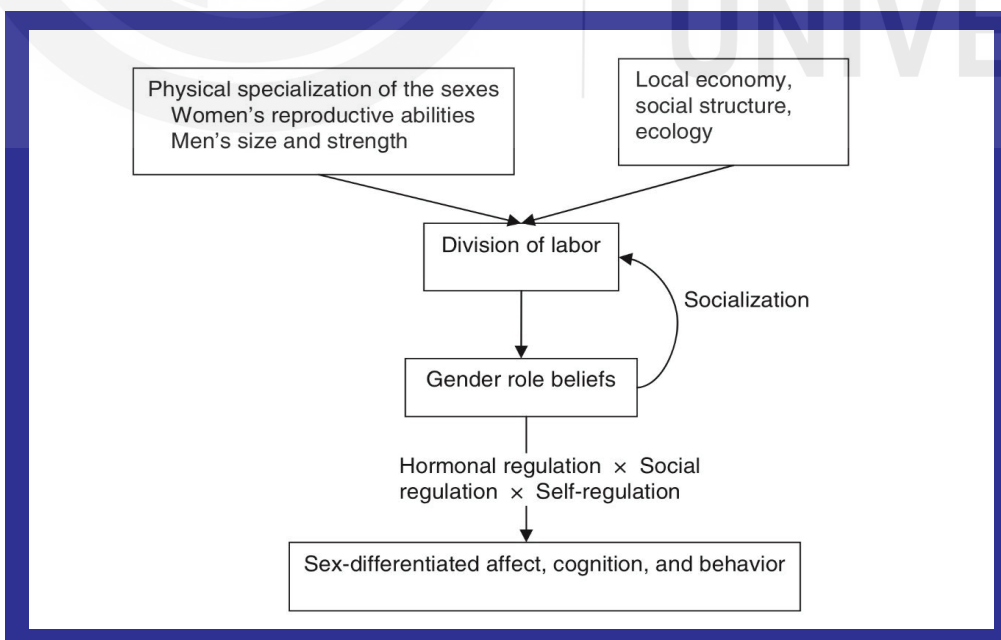
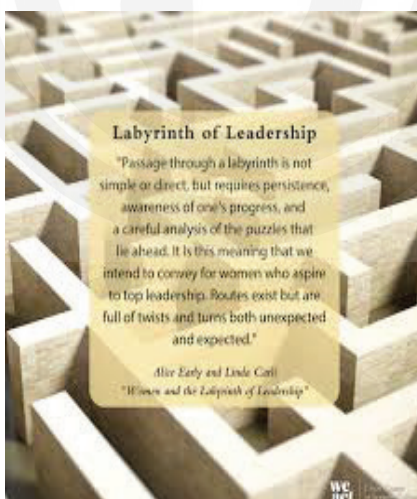


Figure 2.2 Gender roles guide sex differences and similarities through biosocial processes

Source: Eagly & Wood (2012)

In addition to the division of tasks between men and women, the theory of social roles says that societies often grant greater power and status to men. In earlier times, that is in food gathering or pastoral societies, gender relations were more egalitarian. But with the advent of modern, industrialized societies and the preponderance of wage labour in the public domain, the economic and technological developments interact with the physical attributes of men and women so as to give men greater decision-making power and authority and access to resources.

Eagly expands on her theory by saying that the attributes of nurturance and toughness in women and men respectively are social constructions that are changeable according to changing times and are not innate or natural characteristics. Thus, in recent history, the division of labour has undergone and is undergoing changes that are making the strict compartmentalization and division of tasks done by men and women weaker and blurred. This is evident by the fact that several changes have taken place in the reproductive processes of giving birth and breast-feeding that were hitherto associated with women only. For instance, babies can be bottle fed and emerging innovative methods of assistive reproductive technology (ART) methods have meant that women are getting into paid employment sectors that were earlier considered male bastions, and men can play a more active role in child care. Eagly's theory suggests that as women increasingly take on more 'male roles' their psychological attributes too are likely to change with more emphasis and value placed on leadership, power and prestige – regarded as stereotypically male. However, despite such developments leading to far-reaching social, political and economic changes leading to women taking on social roles that yield greater power and authority, the greater involvement of women in domestic work and care giving and lesser involvement in paid work still remains in many societies across the world, including India.



Alice Eagly also researched extensively on the barriers faced by women in leadership roles and introduced the concept of 'labyrinth' in the place of the earlier catchphrase 'glass ceiling' to help organizations understand and address obstacles to women's progress.

To sum up, the Social Role theory is a social psychological theory about sex differences and similarities in social behavior. It proposes that these differences and similarities arise due to the distribution of men and women into different social roles –provider and homemaker -- in the society in which they live. Through the socialization process and formation of gender roles, behaviors of men and women then support and sustain this division of labour.

2.6.2 Gender Schema Theory of Sandra Bem

The Gender Schema theory is a social-cognitive theory of gender development and describes how people process information related to gender. Proposed by

Sandra L. Bem (1981), an American psychologist, the theory combines cognitive-development and social learning approaches and is about how people in any given society become gendered from an early age. That is, children from an early age develop ideas about what it means to be masculine or feminine and use these ideas to categorize information, make decisions and regulate their behavior based on this information. Thus, individuals develop a lens or schemas through which different phenomena are categorized into sex-typed and non-sex-typed.

Bem says that from the age of two or three years, a child starts accurately labelling self as boy or girl, and begins to assign activities, toys, occupations and so on as 'male' and 'female'. By the time they are four or five years old, girls and boys begin to typically prefer activities defined by the culture in which they live as appropriate for their sex and also come to prefer same-sex peers. By the age of eight or so, the gender schema is well developed for most children, according to this theory. According to Bem (1983), "The acquisition of sex-appropriate preferences, skills, personality attributes, behaviors and self-concepts is typically referred to within psychology as the process of sex-typing" (pg. 598). Bem says that some people may grow up into being gender-schematic wherein they are more likely to divide or polarize their world into 'masculine' and 'feminine' and regulate their behaviour based on gender while gender-aschematic people may be less likely to do so.

Gender schema is thus a cognitive filter through which individuals sort and arrange personal qualities and traits into masculine and feminine categories and look at themselves and the world through this gender lens. This process of labelling and assigning is an internal cognitive mechanism but the content of the schema is socially and culturally learned and shaped. Thus gender, according to this theory is developed through socialization in a given culture. Children, through observation, reward and punishment acquire gender schemas that are mental patterns that allow children to categorize, sort and organize information about gender-related behaviours, traits and activities of the given culture. Hence, the theory is a combination of theoretical perspectives on cognitive development and social learning.



Sandra Lipsitz Bem
(1944-2014)

Sandra Bem was born in 1944 to middle class parents; her father was a postal clerk and mother a secretary. While growing up, their family had gone through financial hardships, and early in life she learnt from her mother that women need to work outside the home. She worked in Stanford and Cornell Universities where she was a Professor of Psychology as well as the Director of the Women's Studies Program. She married Daryl Bem, also a psychologist. In her autobiography titled *An Unconventional Life* (1998) Bem talks about equal partnership in marriage and raising her children based on feminist principles.

Bem's theory is known for introducing the concept of androgyny. She maintained that masculinity and femininity are not polar opposites nor were they inherently related to one's biological sex. Instead, she took a context-dependent view of human behaviour and said that masculine and feminine characteristics could co-exist in the same person depending on situational factors. For instance, a man (or a woman) can be aggressive in some situations and soft and gentle in another. She termed this co-existence of masculine and feminine characteristics as psychological androgyny.

Sandra Bem developed a scale called the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) that measured masculinity and femininity independently, thereby allowing for the possibility that a person could be both or androgynous. The BSRI is a 60-item Likert scale on which one can rate themselves. Twenty items (e.g., affectionate, gentle, sympathetic) were considered feminine; 20 items (e.g., independent, forceful, dominant) were regarded as masculine while another 20 items (e.g., reliable, unpredictable, conscientious) were viewed as neutral items. Four outcomes of the BSRI are possible: high masculinity, high femininity, high on both (androgyny) and low in both (undifferentiated).

According to the scale, individuals are scored on masculinity and femininity on a continuum. If they score above the mid-point on the scale that conforms to their sex, and below the mid-point on the scale that does not conform to their sex, they are categorized as sextyped. The opposite is true for cross-sex typed individuals. Androgynous individuals score above the mid-point on both scales while the undifferentiated score below the mid-point on both scales.

According to Bem, “the process by which a society transmutes male and female into masculine and feminine is known as the process of sex typing” (pg. 354, 1981). She believed that conventionally sex-typed men and women are likely to be more rigid, prefer to do gender-appropriate activities only, while androgynous individuals are more flexible and also mentally healthy. To quote her, Bem said that androgynous individuals “will someday come to define a new and more human standard of psychological health” (pg. 141, 1998).

2.6.3 Ambivalent Sexism Theory of Glick and Fiske

We have already discussed the scale that assesses ambivalent sexism constructed by Glick and Fiske. According to Glick and Fiske, while hostile sexism communicates a clear antipathy towards women, benevolent sexism takes the form of traditional beliefs that are seemingly subjective positive feelings but are in fact patronizing beliefs. Glick and Fiske describe benevolent sexism as a set of attitudes that may appear to be positive in the sense that these attitudes may denote subjectively positive feelings for women (for the perceiver) and elicits prosocial behaviors (e.g., helping) and intimacy-seeking (e.g., self-disclosure). But they are regarded as sexist too as they view women in stereotypical and traditional terms by restricting their roles.

Glick and Fiske point out that benevolent sexism results from a combination of male dominance and what they characterize as women’s dyadic power (men’s dependence on women for familial and intimate satisfaction). The roots of benevolent sexism thus lie in traditional stereotyping and masculine dominance (man as the provider and woman as dependent). Both hostile and benevolent forms however constitute sexism since they operate by assigning women an inferior position in family and in society.

Glick and Fiske held that the coexistence of subjectively hostile and benevolent attitudes may induce cognitive conflict. They found in their research that ambivalently sexist men try to avoid this inconsistency by categorizing women into “good” and “bad” sub-groups that embody the positive and negative characteristics of sexist ambivalence. They argued that such a distinction helps to maintain a consistent attitude. For example, there may be hostile sexism towards feminists or career women or lesbians, but not towards stay-at-home young mothers, towards whom there may be benevolent feelings. Thus, individuals may not have wholesale negative attitudes towards women. These subgroups of women reflect traditional power relationships and gender roles: the objects of benevolent

sexism, that is housewives and mothers obey traditional gender roles and thus do not represent a threat to the power of men, whereas the objects of hostile sexism are those who may be opposing traditional gender roles and are thus identified as a challenge to traditional patriarchy or male dominance (Glick et al, 1997).

Glick and Fiske have argued that relations between men and women are characterized by the coexistence of male dominance in society and intimate interdependence and hence elicit the seemingly contradictory ambivalent sexism. On the one hand, male predominance in economic, social, and political institutions supports hostile sexism which characterizes women as inferior and weak. On the other hand, because of sexual reproduction, men and women have to be necessarily intimate and interdependent on each other, leading to benevolent sexism which characterizes women as needing to be protected with their 'weaknesses' making it necessary for men to fulfill the provider/protector role. However, Glick and Fiske point out that benevolent sexism may not necessarily be perceived and understood as benevolent by the receiver as for example, a man who comments on a female colleague by calling her 'cute'. Even if such a comment is well-intentioned, it may undermine her feelings of being taken seriously as a professional. They note that even the use of the term 'better half' by a man to refer to his wife indicates the view that a woman completes the man, and hence it subscribes to benevolent sexism. But benevolent sexism does not very often fit in into the standard notions of sexism and prejudice against women precisely because of its benevolent cloak: the subjectively positive nature of the perceiver's feelings, the prosocial behaviors such as helping etc. and the attempts to establish intimacy in interpersonal relationships. However, Glick and Fiske observe that ultimately both hostile and benevolent sexism serve to justify unequal gender relations.

Studies that have used the ASI have identified the core of ambivalent sexism in marriage. Chen, Fiske and Lee (2009) for instance in a study using Chinese and American participants found that tying the traditional role of women to family, limiting the career development and aspirations of women, making them do disproportionate amount of housework and caregiving responsibilities, and identifying women as dependent and obedient in supporting their husbands even as they give up their own careers – were some of the identified elements of sexism that takes on an ambivalent form. As you can see, although benevolent sexism may not display strong antipathy and hatred as hostile sexism, it is still sexism as it serves to perpetuate gender inequality by limiting women to traditional gender roles.

To sum up this section on theories proposed to explain and understand gender roles, we have discussed three theories in this regard: Eagly's Social Roles theory, Bem's Gender Schema theory and Glick and Fiske's Ambivalent Sexism theory. All these theories have shaped our ways of understanding gender, gender roles, and gender development and their impact on human behavior. Eagly's theory of Social Roles explains that biological differences between men and women have historically led to the division of labour which in turn drives all other gender differences in behaviour. Thus, men's greater physical size led them to pursue activities such as warfare which gave them greater status and power and once in these roles, men's behaviour became more dominant while women's biological capacity for child bearing led them to the role of caregiver that in turn made them develop nurturance and relationship skills and become more accommodating and subordinate. Bem's Gender Schema theory provides a useful framework to understand the cognitive process through which children learn the gender norms of a given culture. The theory explains how an individual becomes gendered and

how culture maintains and transmits sex-linked characteristics. Bem's theory is also known for its contribution of the concept of psychological androgyny that refers to the combination of strong personality traits associated with both men and women, that is, qualities such as toughness and assertiveness combined with gentleness and nurturing behavior, as called for by the situation, in an individual. Glick and Fiske's theory enables us to understand sexism and proposes two apparently contradictory components of sexism: hostile and benevolent. While hostile sexism seeks to justify male power, traditional gender roles, and sexual exploitation of women, benevolent sexism projects seemingly positive attitudes of being protective, idealization of women, and desire for intimate relations. According to this theory, the existence of male dominance in society (economic, political, and social institutions) is in conflict with the intimate interdependence of sexual reproduction, thereby leading to feelings of ambivalence. Many attempt to resolve this ambivalence by resorting to categorization of women into "good" and "bad" wherein women who do not follow traditional gender roles may be disapproved with those who obey traditional roles may be endorsed and approved. In the ultimate analysis, both hostile and benevolent forms of sexism serve to perpetuate gender inequalities.

Check Your Progress 4

- 1) Which two aspects of human development does Eagly's theory combine?

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- 2) What is meant by androgyny?

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- 3) What are the features of hostile and benevolent sexism?

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- 4) What are the possible outcomes of assessment in the Bem's Sex Role Inventory?

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2.7 SUMMARY

To sum up what we have learnt in this unit, here is a quick recap:

- Gender refers to the attributes of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, roles, and gender role attitudes that are associated with being a man or woman. These norms, roles and attitudes may

change over time and may vary from society to society, but an important aspect to remember is that they produce inequalities.

- Although the term gender refers to men and women, there is a key point to be kept in mind here, that is, gender intersects or overlaps with other aspects of social location and identities such as class, caste, religion, ethnicity etc. and leads to different experiences of discrimination and oppression. Intersectionality is the term used to indicate this overlap of various social identities contributing to specific forms of systemic oppression experienced by an individual. Thus, all women may not be homogenous. The experience of an upper caste/class woman may be different from that of a so-called lower caste/class woman, despite the fact that both are women. The same applies to men too; all men cannot be considered homogenous and similar.
- Gender norms are social principles that govern the behaviour of boys and girls, men and women and restrict their identity and behaviour into what is considered to be appropriate for them.
- Gender roles consist of a set of tasks and behaviours that men and women are expected to exhibit in the private (family, domesticity, reproduction) and public (external world of economy, politics) spheres. These roles are based on the sociocultural expectations that are applied to individuals on the basis of their assignment to a sex category (male or female). Thus, women are expected to be nurturant, caregiving and emotionally expressive – qualities required to play the role of homemaker/mother and men are expected to be tough, bold and dominant or agentic with these characteristics considered essential for playing the role of provider/ breadwinner and protector. Gender roles are social constructions, that is, they are created by society and learnt by individuals in the process of socialization. They are unequal because the role women are expected to play in the private domain does not have similar access and control over resources such as education, economic opportunities, health care, political representation and so on, and thereby produces and reinforces inequality and imbalance in power relations.
- Gender role attitudes refer to the views held by people regarding the roles men and women should play in society. The term is mostly used with regard to the distinction between paid and unpaid work. When individuals agree with the traditional division of labour – that men should play the role of breadwinner/ provider and women should be homemaker – they are considered to have traditional gender role attitude. And when they do not agree with such a division of labour, and instead believe in a more equal division of labour, they are said to have egalitarian or modern gender role attitude.
- Alice Eagly's theory of Social Roles emphasizes the historical division of labour and roles between men and women – as provider and nurturer -- as responsible for the psychological differences of aggression and dominance in men and nurturance and between them.
- Sandra Bem's Gender Schema theory is a cognitive theory of gender development that focuses on the process by which children create gender schemas or cognitive filters that they derive from the norms of their culture regarding the behavior and activities of men and women.
- Glick and Fiske's theory of Ambivalent Sexism talks about the coexistence of two apparently contradictory features of sexism: hostile and benevolent that creates feelings of ambivalence, both of which serve to justify and reinforce gender inequality.

2.8 KEYWORDS

Gender Norms Rules of behaviour considered to be appropriate for men and women.

Gender Role Behaviours, tasks, and responsibilities that are socially defined as appropriate and assigned to men and women, based on their biological sex, and expected to be fulfilled by them, and are learned through the socialization process.

Gender Role Attitude Views held by people regarding the roles men and women should play in society, and especially with regard to paid and unpaid work.

Gender Schema A cognitive framework or filter that helps in sorting and organizing information relevant to gender.

Hostile Sexism Set of attitudes towards women that show clear antipathy towards women and justification of dominance of men.

Benevolent Sexism Set of interrelated attitudes towards women that perceive women in stereotypical and restricted roles despite being subjectively positive in feeling tone for the perceiver.

Ambivalent Sexism Coexistence of both hostile and benevolent forms of sexism wherein support of male dominance combines with the view that women ought to be protected.

2.9 REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) Explain what are gender norms and give examples of the gender norms that you know of in your setting and experience?
- 2) Briefly explain the concept of intersectionality.
- 3) What are the two key dimensions of gender roles? Explain what is the importance of gender roles in relation to gender equality.
- 4) Explain what are gender role attitudes and discuss the psychological scales used to assess these attitudes.
- 5) Discuss the major theoretical perspectives on gender roles and bring out the differences and similarities between these theories.

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UNIT 3 DEVELOPMENT OF GENDER PREJUDICE AND GENDER STEREOTYPES*

Structure

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After having read this Unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the affective, cognitive, and behavioural aspects of sexism;
- Describe how both antipathy and benevolent attitudes are involved in gender prejudice;
- Identify the different components of gender stereotypes;
- Distinguish between the different types or forms of violence against women; and
- Elucidate the causes of violence as explained by different disciplinary perspectives.

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3.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you learnt about what are gender norms, roles and gender role attitudes and how they play a crucial role in our perceptions and notions about how men and women should behave or are expected to behave in a given setting. You also learnt about how these gender norms and roles produce hierarchies and result in gender inequalities.

Sexism is a commonly heard term in contemporary times that is used to describe the inequality, oppression and subordination of women through a network of “everyday practices, attitudes, assumptions, behaviors, and institutional rules” (Young, 1992, p. 180). Sexism is based on the fundamental assumption that women are inferior due to their biology. Thus, according to sexism, biological differences between men and women are said to be the root cause of lesser capabilities of women. On the other hand, the feminist perspective argues that it is not biological differences, but socially constructed inequalities, that are a barrier to gender equality. In this unit, we will learn about the different forms of sexism and how they operate in our lives. In social psychological terms, sexism has three interrelated components: prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination. In this unit we will explore these three elements as well as about violence against women that is the most direct and visible manifestation of gender prejudice and discrimination. Gender prejudice refers to negative feelings of dislike and antipathy towards women and girls that serve to oppress them (and apparently positive attitudes too as seen in the concept of benevolent sexism, Glick & Fiske, 1996) that you learnt about in Unit 2. Gender stereotypes indicate the widely held and consensual beliefs about the characteristics of both men and women. Gender stereotypes are positive or negative beliefs we hold about men and women and are important because we use these beliefs to guide our actions towards them respectively. These stereotypes may be used to describe both men and women but become sexist when they serve to oppress women and girls. Discrimination occurs when there are overt negative acts directed against women and girls and that assert male dominance and authority. These three elements of prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination thus refer to the psychological framework of feelings, beliefs, and behaviors in sexism, as shown below.

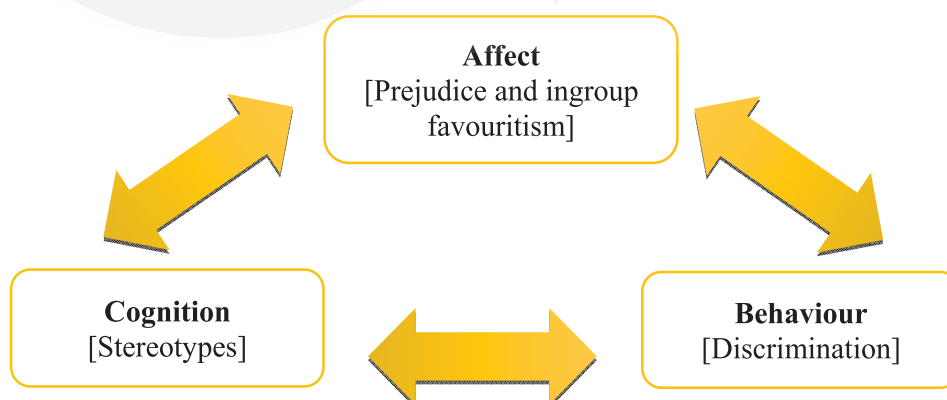


Figure 3.1 Psychological framework of feelings, beliefs, and behaviours in sexism

3.1 GENDER PREJUDICE

Deep-rooted gender prejudice, along with stereotypes and discrimination, are said to be a key barrier to gender equality across the world. Prejudice and stereotypes, at the attitudinal level, and discrimination, at the concrete and material level pose

threats to equal opportunities, well-being and development of girls and women. Gender prejudice is the affective element and that takes the form of emotions ranging from dislike and discomfort to anger and even hatred against women. Gender stereotypes are the positive or negative beliefs that we hold about men and women and is thus the cognitive element in our perceptions about social groups. Gender stereotyping and prejudice then lead to gender discrimination which is unjustifiable negative behaviour or actions towards women simply based on their group membership, that is simply because they are women. Thus, gender stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination, that is beliefs, attitudes and actions form the three major elements of unfavourable social behavior towards women. As we discussed in the earlier section, forms of prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination may not be experienced by all women in a similar way. Rather, gender intersects with other social categories such as class, caste, race, ethnicity and so on, in order to produce specific experiences of oppression for women of different categories.

One of the earliest psychologists who worked in the area of prejudice was Gordon Allport (1954) who defined prejudice as “antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization” (pg.9). Antipathy, that is, feelings of dislike, aversion, and hostility, is displayed towards individuals on the basis of their membership in social groups of gender, caste, class, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and so on, and not on their individual characteristics. Antipathy, according to this view, is commonly indexed by measures such as social distance, resistance to possession and enjoyment of civil rights of certain social groups, and negative stereotypes displayed towards them. The practice of untouchability in the past in India, for instance, is historically an example of the prejudice towards a particular caste group, that consisted of both social distance as well as negative stereotypes about the group as lacking in ability, suitable for menial jobs and so on. Such antipathy was not only faulty but generalized in a rigid fashion to apply to all individuals in the group, based on their group membership.

The distinct feature of gender prejudice, is that unlike other social groups, men and women are intimately connected with each other, and hence gender prejudice is neither the same nor can be bracketed in the same category as caste or ethnic prejudice. Indeed, according to developmental psychology, gender is the earliest and one of the strongest group identities to be formed and to be internalized. Individuals are more likely to immediately categorize others on the basis of gender, rather than on the basis of any other social group such as caste, class, age and so on. Furthermore, when gender prejudice intersects with caste, ethnic or sexual orientation prejudice about other social groups, this makes the experience of discrimination or oppression different for women of different caste or ethnic groups.

The origin of social psychological research on gender prejudice is traced to the work of two American psychologists, Janet Spence and Robert Helmreich in the 1970s. The story goes that the two had been together at a party wherein they saw a cartoon that had appeared in the New Yorker in which a man is seen to be saying to a woman, “You are really stupid. I like that in a woman”! This cartoon apparently had spurred the two psychologists to research whether competent women were liked more in comparison to those who were perceived as lacking in competence (cited in Rudman, 2004). The result was their influential study titled “Who likes competent women?” (Spence & Helmreich, 1972).

Spence and Helmreich (1972; 1978) constructed the scale Attitudes toward Women which we had discussed in Unit 2 earlier and that assessed attitudes

towards roles and rights of women. They found in their study that it was those with gender egalitarian attitudes who preferred competence in women. This study marked the beginnings of research on gender prejudice in the field of social psychology in particular.

Researchers engaged with gender prejudice focused on two broad themes: one, attitudes towards gender equality rather than attitudes towards women per se; and two, perceptions that men and women are different, leading to research on gender stereotypes, about which we will discuss more in detail in the next section. These two themes are linked by the common assumption that sexism consisted of anti-women attitudes stemming from the belief that men are superior to women in terms of physical and intellectual capabilities. Thus, the early phase of gender prejudice research focused on negative attitudes toward gender equality and beliefs about women. In this phase, gender prejudice was viewed as antipathy in the classical tradition of Allport, as mentioned, with antipathy being understood as negative attitudes towards individuals, based on their group membership.

3.1.1 ‘Benevolence’ in Gender Prejudice

In subsequent and recent years, this conceptualization of gender prejudice as antipathy only was expanded primarily to address two questions that the earlier view did not. The first was concerned with the question of accounting for people holding positive attitudes about women and the second was related to women themselves either holding such attitudes or being inclined to maintain the status quo and not strive for change (Rudman, 2004).

Researchers have proposed the concept of benevolent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996) that we discussed in Unit 2 earlier, that involves women being perceived as in need of protection. As we saw earlier, Glick and Fiske, the authors of this concept point out, benevolent sexism consists of positive feelings based on paternal prejudice or the assumption that women are child-like and weak and hence, in need of protection. Thus, despite being seen as benevolent, such attitudes too are characterized as prejudice, as they act as a barrier to gender equality.

Glick & Rudman (2001) expand the concept of benevolent sexism further by suggesting the presence of automatic perceiver bias to explain how people who associate women with communality or emotional expressiveness and men with agency or instrumentality and competence are more likely to discriminate against strong, confident and capable women (seen as ‘agentic’) in job hiring and in the workplace. Further, although agency is essential for one to be regarded as capable in the workplace, female agency is paradoxically unwelcome, as it is seen as violating the prescriptive gender norms of softness and dependence for women.

Glick and Rudman say that the automatic perceiver bias may lead people to discount strong women candidates for leadership positions thereby impeding their achievement of social and economic parity. The automatic perceiver bias is thus regarded as a benevolent barrier to gender equality and gender equity, as it is not explicitly hostile but nevertheless serves the same purpose of hindering career progress of women. The ‘backlash effect’ is a term used to refer to the social consequences of strong and agentic women being thwarted or denied advancement in their workplace.

Furthermore, social psychological research has shown how such benevolent beliefs by women themselves play a role in maintaining the status quo. Rudman and Heppen (2003) in a study titled Attitudes towards Relationships used the Implicit Association Test (IAT) and examined romantic socialization and its role in women’s career choices. They focused on romance in view of the fact that

romance idealizes femininity, places women on a pedestal and portrays men as chivalrous. Their findings indicated that those women who implicitly idealized men as romantic partners and depended on them as a means of attaining social status reported less interest in high status occupations and tended to prefer those occupations characterized by low financial rewards and educational qualifications. Women's perceived dependence on men for their aspirations for the future is an example of pursuing social power and advancement through indirect means instead of doing so agentically themselves. Such attitudes, Rudman and Heppen (2003) conclude, are regarded as benevolent as romantic ideologies are positive with regard to women by placing them on a pedestal and to men too by characterizing them as chivalrous and protective. However, the romantic idealization of men and the consequent preference of women for low status occupations is an example of women themselves perpetuating the status quo, thereby providing further support for the hypothesis that benevolent attitudes can be damaging to gender equality.

It is thus not antipathy alone but the presence of benevolent sexism too that is now regarded as being part of prejudice. This has broadened the concept of prejudice and made it more heterogenous from the earlier notion of hostility and negative attitudes to include paternalistic and benevolent attitudes viewing women as those who needed to be protected. Gender prejudice is thus, a set of unfavourable and negative attitudes directed against women, solely because they are women, is marked by dislike and hostility, and/or by paternalism or benevolence that views women as in need of protection.

3.1.2 Measurement of Gender Prejudice

The most widely used measure of gender prejudice is the Attitudes toward Women Scale (AWS) by Spence and Helmreich (1972; 1978). It was included earlier in Unit 2 on gender roles as it is also a measure of attitudes toward the rights, roles and privileges of women. The AWS, despite its widespread use, has been criticised for its transparency as it is easy for the respondent to give socially desirable and politically correct responses and thus avoid the label of being 'sexist'. Furthermore, blatant and direct sexist prejudice may have been replaced by more indirect and subtle forms of prejudice in current times.

The Modern Sexism Scale constructed by Swim, Aikin, Hall and Hunter (1995) is an example of more recent scales that attempts to be more subtle than earlier scales in assessing gender prejudice. The scale consists of eight items and each item is rated on a 5-point scale wherein 5 indicates disagreement. In this scale, three distinct aspects of subtle sexism are assessed:

- a) denial of continuing discrimination (example, Society has reached the point where women and men have equal opportunities for achievement);
- b) antagonism toward women's demands (example, It is easy to understand why women's groups are still concerned about societal limitations on women's opportunities); and
- c) resentment about special favours for women (example, Over the past few years the government and news media have been showing more concern about the treatment of women than is warranted by women's actual experiences).

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) What are the key components of sexism?

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.....

2) What is the distinctive feature of gender prejudice?

3) What is the automatic perceiver bias? How is it a barrier to gender equality and progress?

3.2 GENDER STEREOTYPES

Stereotypes are a cognitive mechanism whereby people organize, sort, and classify information about other individuals and other social groups. As such, they serve an adaptive function since they facilitate people to categorize and simplify what they observe about others, and on that basis make predictions about

The danger of a single story is that it creates stereotypes...and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

how others will behave. Stereotypes are generalized and oversimplified but the reason why they are strong and in-grained is that they are consensual notions about the traits and behaviour patterns of

men and women. However, stereotypes are also problematic as they may lead to faulty assessments and generalizations derived from beliefs about the group that may not always correspond to an individual's qualities. Such faulty and incorrect assessments in the workplace for instance, may then either negatively or positively affect expectations about performance and bias consequent decisions that impact opportunities and outcomes in the workplace (e.g., Hentschel et al, 2018).

Gender stereotypes are especially influential since gender is an aspect that is immediately observed and noticed by people the beliefs widely held by people about the psychological traits, abilities and occupations deemed to be appropriate for men and women.

Box 3.1

A boy and his father were in a major car accident. The father was pronounced dead at the scene; meanwhile, the boy was rushed to the nearest hospital. A well-reputed surgeon was called to perform the surgery. As the boy was being prepared for the operation, the surgeon saw him and said, "I can't operate. He is my son".

How can this be? Who was the surgeon?

Read the brain-teaser in Box 3.1 and think about your response.

Many would say the surgeon perhaps was the boy's stepfather, an unknown biological father while the man who died was an adoptive one, or that the surgeon was mistaken about the identity of the boy. We are engaging in gender stereotyping when we mistakenly assume that the surgeon is a man, when in reality the surgeon is the boy's mother!

3.2.1 Descriptive and Prescriptive Dimensions of Gender Stereotypes

According to the social role theory of Alice Eagly that was discussed in the earlier Unit, gender stereotypes are derived from the discrepant distribution of men and women into social roles both in the home and in the workplace. The difference between gender stereotypes and gender roles is that gender roles are the reflections of these stereotypical beliefs in everyday behaviours.

Gender stereotypes can have both descriptive and prescriptive dimensions. The descriptive component refers to beliefs about how men and women typically act or do while the prescriptive aspect refers to beliefs about how they should act. The fact that gender stereotypes are prescriptive is important to our perceptions of men and women as they indicate approval or disapproval of behaviour and violations of these prescriptions invite strong reactions. For example, the prescriptive aspect of a gender stereotype about a daughter-in-law in our society is that she should be obedient, be deferential and follow the instructions or commands of her husband and his family. If a woman's behaviour is found to be not in accordance with such a stereotype, it may lead to disapproval and at times even to violent treatment of the woman in the hands of her husband's family. Indeed, there is research evidence from India to indicate that not fulfilling the expectations and obligations of a 'dutiful' wife has indeed led to several women being subjected to both physical and emotional violence, and at times resulting in their death too (Agnes, 2013; Vindhya, 2000; 2002).

3.2.2 Components of Gender Stereotypes

Gender stereotypes are said to have four distinct components: traits; role behaviours; occupations; and physical characteristics (Deaux & Kite, 1993; Deaux & Lewis, 1984). These components are elaborated below with special reference to the present scenario in India.

3.2.2.1 Traits

We learned in the earlier Unit on gender roles about the concept of agency and communality, introduced by Bakan (1966), regarded as the two fundamental motivators of human behaviour. The concepts of agency, also referred to as "masculinity", "instrumentality" or "competence", and communality, also denoted as "femininity", "expressiveness" or "warmth" have been the subject of considerable research in the past few decades and considered by social psychologists as basic to gender stereotypes with men being characterized as more agentic, and women as more communal (Abele & Wojciszki, 2014).

In a study by Williams and Best (1990) university students in 27 countries were given the Adjective Checklist which is a personality measure consisting of 300 person-descriptive adjectives. The students were asked to indicate whether in their culture, each adjective was more characteristic of women, or men, or not associated with either sex. Their findings showed that across all the cultures, male stereotype items were characteristics such as dominance, autonomy, aggression, exhibition, and achievement while for women the stereotypical characteristics chosen to describe them were nurturant, sentimental, and submissive.

3.2.2.2 Role Behaviours

In our discussion on gender roles in the earlier Unit, we saw how these roles are associated with the division of labour, that is, what women and men do, at home and in the outside world. In studies conducted by Deaux et al., (1985) and

Edwards (1992) for instance, distinct role clusters were obtained for women and men. When research participants were asked to name as many different types of men as they could and to spell out the defining characteristics of each role, findings indicated the following clusters for men:

- Businessman (educated, busy, achievement-oriented, aggressive)
- Blue-collar worker (hardworking, high school educated, union member, family-caring)
- Athlete (physically fit, health conscious)
- Family man (dedicated, responsible, employed father, husband, breadwinner)
- Womanizer (attractive, confident, self-centered)
- Loser (underachieving, pessimistic, quitter).

Similarly, for women the stereotypical role clusters were the following:

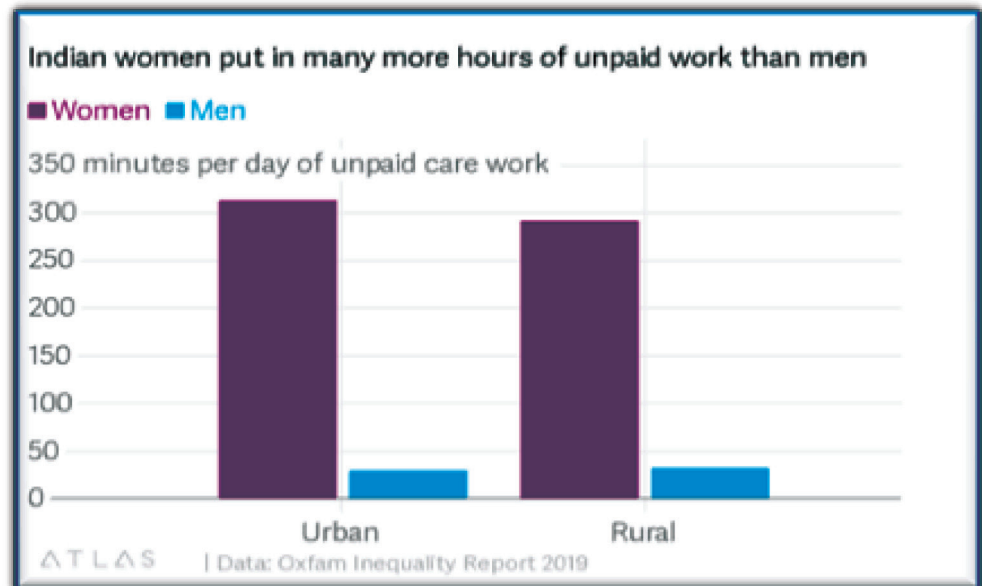
- Housewife/mother (nondemanding, selfless, focused on family, looks for security)
- Sexy woman (well-dressed, attractive)
- Athlete (muscular, strong)
- Career woman (independent, educated, confident)
- Feminist (rebellious-aggressive, critical of society, ideologically minded).

Several studies found two separate and different clusters of characteristics for career women and for homemakers/mothers. Furthermore, a considerable degree of overlap was found between the homemaker/mother stereotype, characterized as non-demanding, selfless, and caring, and the “typical” woman stereotype, suggesting that the presumably global stereotypes of women narrowly assume the subtype of homemaker/mother. In other words, the “typical” woman fits into the stereotype of the homemaker/mother and is not like the career woman. The features of the career woman stereotype have been found to be similar to the feminist stereotype, who as mentioned earlier is said to possess characteristics such as being rebellious-aggressive, politically committed and ideologically minded (Eckes, 1994). Both career women and feminists were found to score high on the competence or potency dimension, being regarded as independent, dominant, ambitious and self-confident.

A final point to consider is that regardless of the sub-type of the stereotype, the “typical” woman represents the amount of unpaid work that women have to put in for household and caregiving responsibilities and disproportionately more than men, both in rural and urban settings as the graph below indicates for the situation in India.

3.2.2.3 Occupations

Several research studies in psychology have found that the majority of barriers for women’s progress and advancement in the workplace identified are consequences of gender stereotypes (Hentschel et al, 2019; Peus et al, 2015). These studies have shown that gender stereotypes can be impediments to women’s career advancement, and are manifested in promoting gender bias in employment decisions as well as in women’s own self-restricting behaviours. That is, women



Source: Oxfam Inequality Report, 2019

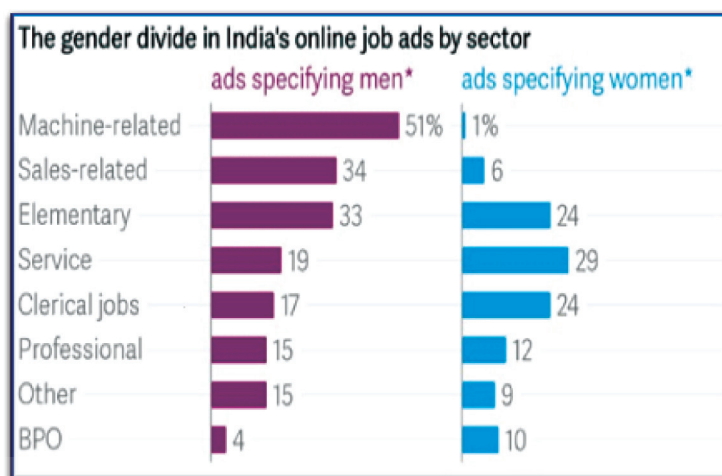
themselves internalize these self-limiting behaviours such as not showing ambition, or not negotiating for salary or pay hike. This is due to striving to maintain work-family balance that is in turn due to the stereotype of the family role being perceived as the primary one for women.

Gender stereotypes and role obligations influence career choice. As a result, there is a high gender segregation of the workforce. As mentioned earlier, the proportion of women is overrepresented in some occupations such as secretary, nursery school teacher, receptionist and similar occupations and underrepresented in occupations such as airplane pilot, mechanic and such others, although there is some evidence of more women entering these occupations in current times. Occupations that are believed to be 'women's jobs' offer fewer opportunities for advancement, generally have less social prestige, and lower pay than jobs primarily occupied by men. Despite the entry of more women into paid employment across the world, the gender gap in average wage continues to be 30 to 40 per cent (World Economic Forum, 2021).

In a study on gender stereotypes as seen in job recruitment advertisements using content analysis of job advertisements, Anand (2013) found evidence of greater gender bias in jobs such as secretary, receptionist, tele-callers, managerial jobs, teaching and clerical positions with women being preferred for such jobs. Although the demand for women in such jobs is higher, yet lower salary is specified in those ads targeting women. The author therefore argues that gender stereotyping of women and the segregation of women in specific jobs results in lesser leverage in terms of income and decision-making. However, gender bias was found to be less pronounced in professional jobs such as engineering, medical and other such categories.

Similarly, as indicated by above figure, a marked gender bias in occupational preferences can be seen in a recent study involving an analysis of more than 800,000 job recruitment advertisements posted on an online portal between 2007 and 2017. The researchers found an explicit gender bias and salary gap in both formal and informal sectors of the Indian job market (Chowdhury et al, 2018). The findings of this study indicated that women are preferred in low-quality, low-status, and typically low-paid informal jobs such as the service sector. The preference for candidates was found to be significantly more common for machine-related, sales and high-intensive outdoor work such as elementary jobs

like delivery collectors, watchmen etc. while women were found to be preferred for household elementary jobs and caregiving jobs such as beautician, receptionist, thereby reinforcing the skewed gender norms and occupational segregation based on gender stereotyping, that in turn contributes to lower earnings and lower social status for women (Chowdhury et al, 2018).



Source: World Bank Policy Research Working Paper (Chowdhury et al., 2018)

Gender stereotypes can thus act as a barrier to women's career advancement by promoting gender bias in employment decisions and leading to self-limiting behaviour by women themselves due to internalization of these stereotypes.

3.2.2.4 Physical Characteristics

Matrimonial advertisements with spousal preferences for attributes are a fertile ground for study of gender stereotypes, and of preferred physical characteristics in female partner expressed by men. In a study on gender role expectations in marital relations as expressed in matrimonial advertisements in daily newspapers in India, Ramasubramanian and Jain (2009) found evidence of strong preference for fair and slim women. Further, the study found a large majority of men placing significantly more emphasis on physical attributes of beauty and slimness in their potential spouses. Thus, one of the dominant stereotypes for women focuses on physical attractiveness, and on fairness and slimness in particular as the desirable traits in a potential partner. Research has also shown that objectification of women's bodies and repeated emphasis on these ideal physical attributes leads to body dissatisfaction and the drive to be thinner, prettier, fairer has several negative implications such as extreme dieting, cosmetic surgery, and so on that often result in health concerns.

Further, research on women's body image has highlighted objectified body consciousness, that is, the tendency to treat women's bodies as objects leads women themselves to view their bodies as if they are outside observers. This also leads to women taking up the responsibility for reaching up to the body ideal, to engage in constant self-surveillance in order to adhere to cultural standards and to avoid negative judgements from others (McKinley & Hyde, 1996).

3.2.3 Competence and Likeability Dimensions of Gender Stereotypes

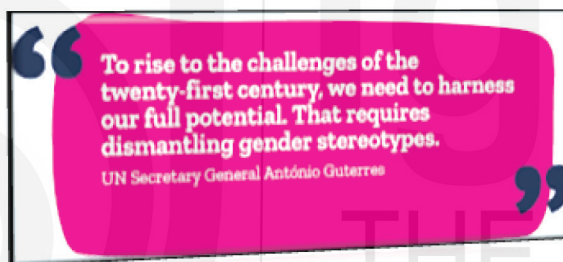
Gender stereotypes have been found to have two conceptually distinct dimensions: competence and likeability (Glick & Fiske, 1999). The competence dimension refers to characteristics such as respect, achievement, status; while the likeability dimension indicates social qualities such as warmth, and being affable or friendly.

Competence and likeability have been found to occur differently in the sub-types of gender stereotypes as listed in the earlier section. Thus the ‘housewife/mother’ and ‘sexy woman’ are liked, although in starkly different ways, but viewed as incompetent. Furthermore, these stereotypes are found to fit into traditional image of women as accepting a subordinate position, and fulfilling heterosexual needs. In contrast, the sub-types of ‘athlete’, ‘career woman’ and ‘feminist’ may be viewed as competent, and as achieving some level of respect and social status, but may fare unfavourably on the likeability dimension.

Thus, these two sub-types of gender stereotypes filter into the two broad categories of traditional and non-traditional. But it is significant to note that neither of the sub-types are viewed as both competent and likeable, thus both stereotypes remain fundamentally sexist.

3.2.4 Reducing Stereotypes

As discussed earlier, stereotypes serve an adaptive function by simplifying social information and grouping people into categories enables us to make quick interpretations. And the less we know about the categories in question, the more likely we are to have a uniform stereotype. For instance, we may not have much information about the category of feminists and hence may apply the stereotype of “man-hating”, “argumentative and loud-mouthed” and such other labels and regard feminists as a homogenous group with similar characteristics.



Therefore, the key step in reducing stereotypes is to be exposed to more information. The more exposure we have, we learn that there could be a variety of feminists and that all of them cannot be lumped into a homogenous group. Similar

is the widely held stereotype about men being “inclined towards violence” or about women being “soft and emotionally reactive”. Researchers point to the importance of having individuating information that is, knowledge about specific characteristics, role behaviours, occupations and so on that are unique to the person so that assessments of the individual can be made without evaluating the person solely on the basis of their group membership.

Check Your Progress 2

1) What are gender stereotypes?

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2) What are the descriptive and prescriptive aspects of gender stereotypes?

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- 3) What are the various components of gender stereotypes? Give examples of each one of them.

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3.3 SEX-RELATED COMPARISONS: SHOULD WE SEARCH FOR SIMILARITIES OR DIFFERENCES?

A key question in psychology as well as in the interdisciplinary field of gender studies has been “Are women and men similar or different”? For several decades, psychologists have studied groups of women and men by comparing them on a range of variables and have documented differences between them.

Hyde and Frost (1993) conducted meta-analyses on sex difference data from a large number of studies and classified the differences found into four major categories: a) cognitive variables; b) social variables; c) psychological well-being and d) motor behaviors. The most notable examples of sex differences were found to be related to math and spatial abilities in the cognitive domain; and aggression, helping behavior and sociability in the socio-emotional domain, with men being said to be better than women in math and spatial abilities, and women being less aggressive, showing more helping behavior and interpersonal sensitivity than men. Differences in well-being were not significant while motor behaviours showed differences in throwing velocity and for distance indicating that boys can throw a ball faster and farther than girls.

Rachel Hare-Mustin and Jeanne Marecek (1988) have labelled two opposing views that people and psychologists themselves hold regarding differences and similarities among men and women. They use the term *alpha bias* to indicate the assumption that some women and men are opposites and have mutually exclusive an nonoverlapping traits. The *alpha bias* is seen in the stereotype of women being viewed as soft and dependent, and men being regarded as hard, independent and rational – mutually opposing characteristics. On the other hand, the *beta bias* is seen in people who assume that differences should be ignored or that they are minimal and nonsignificant and instead, believe that we should look for similarities rather than differences between men and women.

Hare-Mustin and Marecek(1994) maintain that while it may be difficult to say which set of assumptions is unbiased, a more important question to ask is what are the consequences of the alpha and beta biases. Janice Yoder (1999), another feminist psychologist is of the view that the search for differences has serious practical and negative implications for women as often differences are viewed as deficiencies or inadequacies, that need to be ‘corrected’ or ‘catch up with’. Yoder observes that intrinsic to sex-related comparisons is the assumption about what is valued and held in esteem in society. For instance, interpersonal sensitivity or warmth and care of others, associated with women may not be as valued as much as dominance and power that are associated with men.

A second issue of concern is that differences between men and women may be viewed as located in internal, biological causes as the root of differences, while in actuality, the differences that are seen may be due to social contextual factors such as socialization patterns, stereotypes about what is socially valued in men and women, leading them to behave and conduct themselves in specific socially-driven ways. Thus, to say that sex (biology) is the cause of the difference ignores other possibilities. However, this is not to deny the importance of biology, rather to emphasize the importance of what is currently termed as the biopsychosocial model which holds the view that a complete understanding of human behaviour is possible only when we take into account a combination of biology, socialization, other historical experiences and the present social context (Riger, 1997). Furthermore, instead of merely locating the differences in internal (biological) factors that cannot be changed, a more pertinent and relevant question would be to ask why such differences exist, and then acting on removing the social contextual barriers to deficiencies.

3.4 GENDER DISCRIMINATION

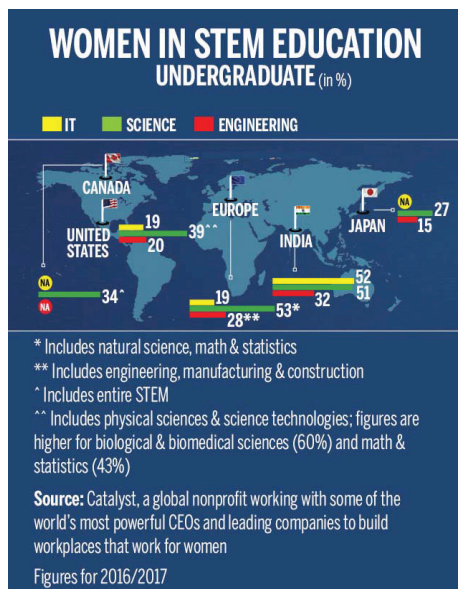
Gender-based discrimination refers to the actions taken on the basis of social norms and stereotypes that privilege men and undermine women and girls. This creates barriers to girls' education and independence, leads to unequal participation of women in social, political and economic spheres, and gender-based violence.

Gender discrimination can take many forms and varies across cultures and time. For instance, while child marriage may be an instance of gender discrimination in many regions in India, it may not be found in several other cultures. Similarly, some studies have shown gender bias and discrimination in food distribution within households, with nutritional discrimination against girls by providing them with lesser amounts of milk, meat and eggs, as compared to male children (Sen & Sengupta, 1983). However, such nutritional discrimination may not be prevalent in several other societies.

Psychological research has found that gender discrimination can be interpersonal, physical and occupational (Yoder, 1999). Interpersonal sexist discrimination refers to those actions and behaviours that result in exclusion, avoidance and physical distancing of women (Lott, 1995). Physical discrimination is evident when women's bodies that deviate from the desired ideal of thin and physically attractive. While stigmatization of obesity in men too may take place, research has found that overweight women face more discrimination in terms of negative evaluations and job hiring (Yoder, 1999). But it is in the occupational sphere that gender discrimination has been most evident. This is elaborated in the sub-section below.

3.4.1 Occupational Discrimination

Barriers in the form of gender prejudice and stereotypes are faced by women beginning with education. Despite the obvious progress women have made in enrollment in education in recent decades, gender bias is still shown when more male students are encouraged to take part in what are known as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) courses. The following figures show the underrepresentation of women in STEM education as well as in leadership positions in higher education, despite the obvious progress women have made in enrolment in education in recent decades.



Source: Catalyst, 2017

Women in Higher Education (HE) in India

- Rise in female enrolment in HE in last 5 years by 18.2% (AISHE, 2021)
- Women with doctoral degrees 42% (AISHE, 2018)
- Increasing enrolment of women not matched by growth of number of women in senior leadership positions
 - 63 of 1008 institutions have women at the helm
 - 66% stagnant in middle-level positions
 - 7% in senior leadership positions such as VC, Director or Dean
 - 16% when Principal, Professor or Associate Professor added

Source: All India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE, 2021)

Gender gap in leadership is a global phenomenon wherein women are disproportionately concentrated in lower level and lower authority leadership positions (Global Diversity Report, 2020). According to this report, 17 per cent of board positions in corporate India are held by women; and this is an increase of 8.6 per cent since 2012. But this figure too is due to the new regulations requiring public companies to have at least one female director on its board, and not due to removal of barriers to women's leadership positions.

The causes for this low representation of women in leadership positions have been attributed to a) pipeline problem wherein there is a dearth of qualified women candidates due to less education, less work experience and b) gender bias resulting from stereotyped expectations of women not being suitable enough to take on leadership positions as reflected in the saying women take care while men take charge.

The pipeline problem can be rectified with increasing enrolment of girls in education, and the eventual availability of suitable and qualified women candidates for leadership positions. But the issue of stereotyped expectations about women's capabilities is still a persistent one. The *glass ceiling* is a term used to refer to the unseen, yet difficult-to-breach barrier that keeps women (and minorities from historically disadvantaged sections) from rising to the upper rungs of the ladder, regardless of their qualifications and achievements. A recent term of usage is *labyrinth* that indicates the maze of obstacles, twists and turns that impede progress. The term also conveys the complexity involved in women's career advancement and the variety of challenges faced ranging from wage gap, work-life balance and the disproportionate caregiving responsibilities, inadequate child support, to the stereotype that women lack the 'toughness' essential for leadership positions (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

Check Your Progress 3

1) What are alpha and beta bias?

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2) What are the descriptive and prescriptive aspects of gender stereotypes?

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3) What is meant by 'glass ceiling'?

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4) What is the 'labyrinth' and what kind of barriers to leadership positions does it indicate?

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3.5 VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The following section will cover what violence against women is and how it has been defined; the different types of violence and the forms violence takes in different stages of the life cycle of women from pre-birth to infancy, childhood, adolescence, reproductive and elderly age; and the causes of violence put forth by those in the field of psychology, sociology and feminism.

Violence against women is perhaps the most direct and the most visible indicator of subordination of women. There are different forms of violence such as rape, sexual assault, intimate partner violence, honour killings, acid attacks but the common theme running through all the forms is the explicit and deliberate intention to hurt, harm, debase, and inflict injury on the woman. Although various forms and acts of violence against women have existed since centuries, violence has been recognized as a crime, a social problem, and as human rights violation only since the 1980s or so. In fact, the first international definition of violence against women was given as recently as in 1993 by the United Nations (see box below).

Box 3.2

“Any act of gender-based violence that results in or likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life”

Article 1, United Nations Declaration on Elimination of All forms of Violence against Women, 1993

As you can see from the definition given above, any act of violence against women results in serious harm – physical, psychological, or sexual – to women, either in public or private spaces. Does this mean that there is no violence against men? Of course, such violence too is prevalent but the term violence against women is

used to indicate and highlight the violence that affects women disproportionately due to gender inequality. Currently, the term gender-based violence is also used to include violence against sexual minorities, and boys and men on account of their sexual orientation and preference.

3.5.1 Types of Violence Against Women

Violence includes actions that are physical, sexual, psychological or emotional, and economic as well as threats of violence that result in serious harm of women and affects women disproportionately.

- Physical violence includes physical assaults and threats to control another person such as punching, hitting, slapping, choking, throwing objects, kicking, pushing, using weapon etc. Physical violence also includes forms of culture-specific violence such as honour killings in India wherein either the bride or the groom or both are murdered based on the belief that the marriage has brought dishonour or shame to family/community. Other newer forms of physical violence in India include acid attacks, triggered by rejection of a man's overtures of love by a woman, which is now recognized as a crime.
- Economic violence refers to denying access to funds and credit; controlling access to education and/or employment; exclusion from financial decision making; discrimination in inheritance and property rights.
- Psychological or emotional violence includes threats of violence, isolation use of children constant criticism and humiliation, denying opportunities.
- Sexual violence includes gang rape/sexual assault; use of force for sexual acts, forcing her to have sex with others; insisting on unsafe sex.

Further, different forms of violence are manifested in different stages of the life cycle of women as shown in the Figure 3.2.

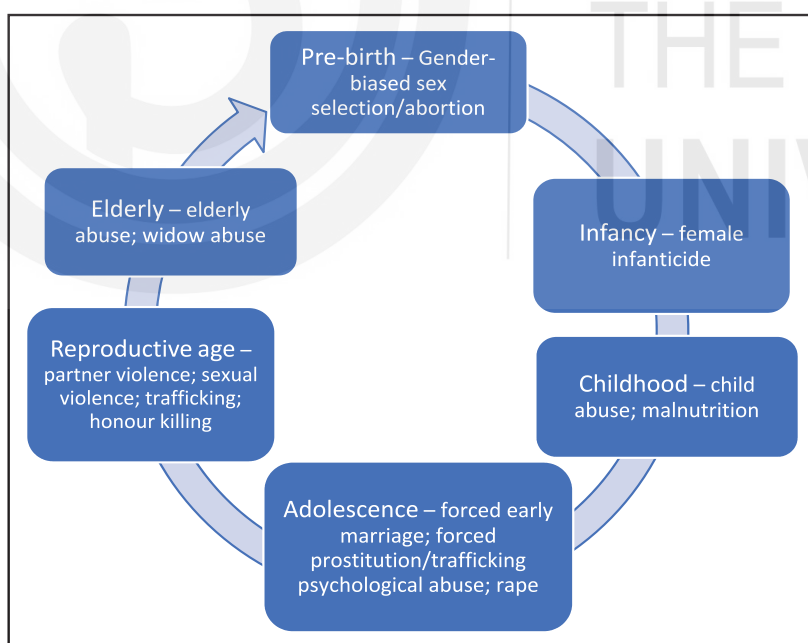


Figure 3.2 Violence in the life cycle

3.5.2 Causes of Violence against Women: Psychological, Sociological and Feminist Perspectives

Some of the earliest explanations of violence came from the field of psychology. These causative factors were primarily focused on the psychology of the individual perpetrator – personality factors and psychopathology – which are regarded as responsible for the violence, and for intimate partner violence in particular.

These intrapsychic factors that are said to cause violence are poor self-esteem, low frustration tolerance, loss of control, dependency and clinical profiles of abusers have indicated loss of control, uncontrollable rage and aggression, anxious attachment, paranoid features, and developmental trauma including rejection by one or both parents, and early life recollections of shaming. The central assumption in the psychological explanation is that the abuser loses control over his behaviour, that violence is beyond his choice, and that it occurs in brief and intermittent periods of irrationality.

Sociological explanations, also referred to as Family Systems approaches, on the other hand view abuse from an interactive perspective rather than an intrapsychic one and focus on the couple's combined communication deficits (Strauss et al, 1980). This perspective maintains that violence cannot be characterized as one partner attempting to control or dominate the other but by the couple's combined communication deficits.

In contrast to the above-mentioned perspectives, the feminist explanation views violence, not as isolated and periodic instances of anger, pent-up frustration or anger but as part of a complex and continuing pattern of behaviour designed to exercise control and dominance over the partner. This control and authority over women are socially sanctioned and approved as part of expectations of masculinity, and often internalized and accepted by women too as they too are socialized to believe in these expectations. In the case of domestic violence for instance, the National Family Health Survey-4 had found that a majority of women too accepted that it is the husband's right to slap or beat his wife (2016). The feminist explanation puts forth this view that perpetrators of violence, in order to exercise power and control, use a range of practices including intimidation, minimizing and blaming, coercion and threats, manipulation and so on which are power and control tactics legitimated by social and cultural practices and exercised within the context of the family and intimate partner relationships. Figure 3.3 shows the Power and Control wheel that depicts this range of practices and although this refers to the western context, many if not all of these practices are as much relevant to the Indian context as well.



Figure 3.3 Power and Control Wheel
(Developed by: Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, Duluth)

The feminist approach to violence against women thus emphasizes that it is women's unequal status that makes them vulnerable to different forms of violence. The key dimensions of their subordinate status are related to a) Sexual division of labour and responsibilities [what we do]; b) Expectations of qualities [how we should be]; and c) Access and control over resources [what we are entitled to]. The inequality that stems from being assigned to the primary role of caregiver; of being stereotyped as soft and submissive; and of being denied or restricted to resources such as education and paid employment render women vulnerable to violence used as a form of power and control.

More recent explanations of violence consider the interaction of socio-economic, psychological and biological factors, rather than one factor alone in causing violence. One such framework is the ecological model (Heise, 1998; 2005) wherein it is proposed that individual (personal history), situational (micro system) social structural (exo system) and cultural (macro system) factors interact and lead to use of violence against women. Personal history factors include witnessing domestic violence as a child, or being abused as a child or having an absent or rejecting father. Micro system factors include predictors of violence such as male dominance in the family, and use and impact of alcohol and marital conflict. Exo system factors refer to low socio-economic status/unemployment and having delinquent associates. The larger macro system factors include cultural values and beliefs such as male entitlement/ownership of women, masculinity linked to dominance and aggression, rigid gender roles and acceptance of chastisement and violence against women. The value of the ecological model is that it can be applied at the level of the individual to develop a profile of the perpetrator and also at the level of the community in order to understand why rates of violence vary by setting.

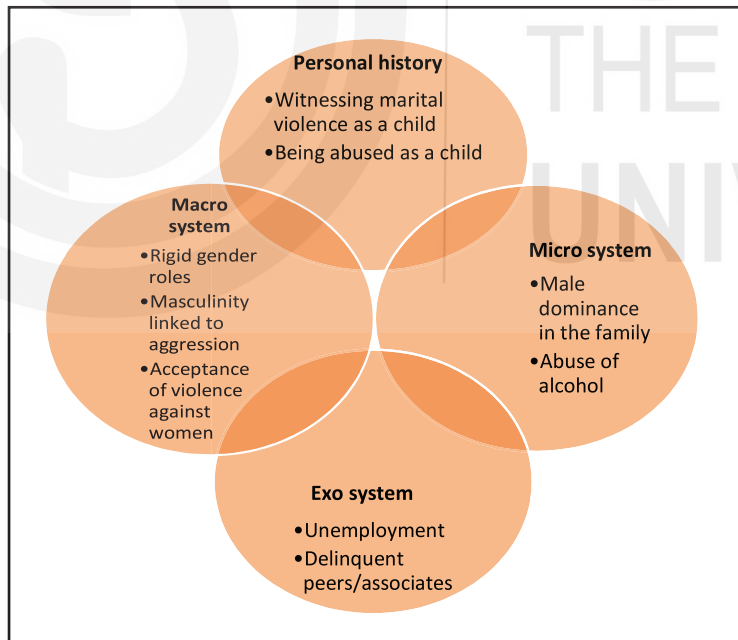


Figure 3.4 Ecological Model of Violence (Heise, 1998)

Check Your Progress 4

1) How is violence against women defined?

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2) What are the different types of violence against women?

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3) What are the different types of violence against women? Give examples.

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3.6 SUMMARY

To sum up what we have learnt in this unit, here is a quick recap:

- Sexism is a set of attitudes and actions, based on the assumption of inferiority of women due to biology, results in inequality, subordination and oppression of women. In social psychological terms, sexism has three major components: prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination. While prejudice and stereotypes refer to emotion (dislike, hostility or hatred) and cognition (negative beliefs and expectations) respectively, discrimination indicates the overt acts, based on prejudice and discrimination, that serve to oppress women.
- Prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination can be present and demonstrated towards any social group, such as caste and race, to take the most notable examples. But the key aspect of gender prejudice is that gender is the earliest and one of the strongest group identities to be formed and internalized. Hence gender prejudice is unlike prejudice towards other social groups. But gender prejudice also intersects with other forms of prejudice, and therefore the prejudice experienced may not be the same for all social groups of women.
- Gender prejudice refers to negative feelings of dislike and antipathy towards women and girls that serve to oppress them. This is known as hostile sexism but seemingly positive attitudes too can be present as seen in the concept of benevolent sexism.
- Gender stereotypes indicate the widely held and consensual beliefs about the characteristics of both men and women. Gender stereotypes are positive or negative beliefs we hold about men and women and are important because we use these beliefs to guide our actions towards them respectively. These stereotypes may be used to describe both men and women but become sexist when they serve to oppress women and girls. Gender stereotypes can be present in the domains of traits, role behaviors, occupations and physical characteristics.
- Gender discrimination occurs when there are overt negative acts directed against women and girls and that assert male dominance and authority. These actions can be interpersonal, physical, and occupational.
- Violence against women is the most visible and direct form of gender discrimination and is related to women's vulnerability and unequal status. It can take many forms such as physical, psychological, economic, and sexual.
- Several theoretical perspectives have been proposed to explain causes of violence against women. These perspectives range from psychological to sociological, and feminist. The psychological explanation focuses on

the intrapsychic or internal (personality factors, psychopathology of the perpetrator); the sociological views abuse from interactive (how violence/ conflict is managed within relationship and the couples' combined communication deficits. In contrast, the feminist explanation emphasizes the that violence is a manifestation of power and control, that stems from socialization of gender-related norms of masculine dominance and female subordination.

- A current explanatory framework is provided by the ecological model that takes into account individual (personal history), situational (micro system) social structural (exosystem) and cultural (macro system) factors and the interaction between them that leads to use of violence against women.

3.7 KEY WORDS

Sexism A set of attitudes (prejudice and stereotyping) and actions (discrimination), that are based on the assumption of biological inferiority of women, and act as barriers to social equality between men and women.

Gender Prejudice A set of unfavourable and negative attitudes directed against women, solely because they are women, is marked by hostility and/or by paternalism or benevolence that views women as in need of protection.

Gender Stereotypes Consensual, generalized and faulty beliefs about the characteristics of men and women and are sexist in that they oppress women and girls.

Gender Discrimination Actions that serve to put down, oppress women and girls and can be interpersonal, physical and occupational.

Violence Against Women Any act of gender-based violence that results in or likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.

3.8 REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) What is gender prejudice? How has the study of gender prejudice broadened in psychology?
- 2) What are the key aspects of gender stereotypes? Give examples.
- 3) Explain what is gender discrimination and how does it manifest?
- 4) How is violence against women defined and what are the different types or forms of violence?
- 5) What are the major theoretical perspectives to explain violence against women? Explain by bringing out the key differences in approach in these theories.

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UNIT 4 GENDER SOCIALIZATION AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN THE CONSTRUCT OF GENDER*

Structure

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Gender Socialization
 - 4.1.1 Family
 - 4.1.2 School
 - 4.1.3 Peers
- 4.2 Culture and Religion
- 4.3 Sexual Scripts
- 4.4 Heterosexual Aggression
- 4.5 Cultural Differences in the Construct of Gender
- 4.6 Summary
- 4.7 Keywords
- 4.8 Review Questions
- 4.9 References and Further Reading
- 4.10 Additional Online Resources

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After having read this Unit, you will be able to:

- Acquire comprehensive understanding of the construct of gender and how it is different from sex;
- Explain socialization of gender;
- Elucidate the influence of family, school and peers;
- Explain the sexual script theory in the contemporary world;
- Explore gender differences in heterosexual aggression; and
- Discuss the importance of culture and religion in shaping gender identity.

4.0 INTRODUCTION

By now it must be clear that sex and gender which are used as synonyms, have distinct meanings. Sex refers to the biological aspects of a person arising out of one's anatomy. This includes the interaction of hormones, chromosomes and body parts (sexual organs). On the other hand, gender is socially constructed and includes the labels like masculinity, femininity and other related behaviour. Thus, people who call themselves as a man or woman, that may fall on the continuum somewhere between man or woman or maybe without any gender. Thus, gender is a complex interaction between the dimensions like, body, identity and social. In this Unit, an attempt has been made to answer questions like when do we begin to label oneself as a girl or a boy? What is the role of environmental, social or

cultural factors in the process of gender socialization? Is it same across countries or cultures? Let us explore and find out the answers to such questions.

4.1 GENDER SOCIALIZATION

Defining gender has been a debatable issue in the realms of social scientific research due to the theoretical positions of the researchers in the field. Connell (2002) defines gender as the structure of social relations centered on the reproductive arena and practices that bring reproductive distinctions between bodies into social processes. Ridgeway and Corell (2004) have taken a broader definition and define it as a multilevel system of difference and inequality which involves cultural beliefs, distribution of resources, patterns of behaviour, organizational practices, and selves and identities. They also define gender beliefs as universal stereotypes about gender that serve to exacerbate the difference between men and women. An associated concept that we shall keep using is gender identity, that refers to one's sense of oneself as a male, female or transgender (American Psychological Association, 2011). Sex is the biological aspect of human existence and gender is the social and cultural aspect of that existence. Gender identity is the psychological aspect of this embodied experience. Another related concept that all of us have lived and practiced ever since we were born is gender socialization.

Sex or Gender OR Sex and Gender?

When filling up your Adhaar card application, your admission form, your driving license form, your bank account form, you must have been asked to furnish details about you name, age, sex/ gender. Have you ever been asked to fill in the details about your sex and gender? Have you ever considered that these are two distinct components of your identity that may or may not be in congruence?

As evident, gender socialization is a lifelong developmental process by which individual learn the customs and social behaviours within their societal and cultural fabric. Gender socialization is a “process by which individuals develop, refine and learn to ‘do’ gender through internalizing gender norms and roles as they interact with key agents of socialization, such as their family, social networks and other social institutions” (John et al. 2017, pg. 6).

Gender socialization pertains to acquiring social learning around gender. It is a multi-dimensional and multi-faceted process through which individual learns about gender norms and rules of their culture and eventually learn about the appropriate or inappropriateness of a behaviour and internalize the ways in which they are expected to behave in the society (Ryle, 2011). These gender norms lead to the development of an internalized sense of gender identity. It is important to understand that gender identity is an experience that may not be consistent with the assigned sex at birth but gender socialization always promotes the idea of cisgender. Cisgender is the conventional idea of being male and female that is embedded in the assigned sex at birth.

There has been a consistent growth in the scholarship in the area from contributions by feminists, queer affirmative activists, intersectional movements, sociologists, psychologists, and accumulated theoretical advancements in the field that has challenged the conventional notions around gender and its development. Thus, within the contemporary world, the questions pertaining to gender, experiences of sexuality, inequality and gaps around the gender spectrum are being raised by psychologists, activists, feminists, sociologists (not necessarily in the same order) and these questions are shifting the quantum of debate to issues that define these inequalities across the gender spectrum. These gaps may be deeply embedded in the process of socialization to start with.

Some scholars maintain that gender can be best understood in terms of looking at the actors assuming and playing roles in the society. This is a social constructionist lens of understanding gender. Tasks and roles are gender segregated and actors fulfilling these scripts are “doing gender” (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Thus, gender is not static but rather fluid and identities are shaped in social interactions at several levels (Fenstermaker & West, 2002; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Gender identity defines our felt or experienced sense of female-ness, male-ness or other gendered-ness (within the gender diversity spectrum) and is situated within a historically, socially and culturally specified context that is more often than not mediated by socially, obligatory norms defined by the society (American Psychiatric Association (APA), 2013; Butler, 2004). While children are actively participative in shaping their gender identities, their own understanding about gender identity is consolidated by various social agencies like family, peers and schools.

4.1.1 Family

From the moment that an infant arrives in the world it is besieged with codes and symbols that forms its ideations of gender roles and gender stereotypes. Family is the smallest and first and foremost unit of socialization and children primarily learn about gender roles from the other members, especially primary care givers (Blakemore & Hill 2008; Bandura & Bussey 2004). Some scholars have defined the categories of socializing agents that play a vital part for the internalization of gender specific norms.

Personal Reflection: The Colour Pink!

When the author was expecting her little one, she was visiting a private hospital in a metropolitan city. When they were looking at the birth options and room set-ups, they realized that it's a whole new commercial market. If one has a baby girl, the hospital will decorate the room pink and if it will be a boy then it would be of course blue! A lot many parents felt very pampered by these 'acts' of care, whereas to be as a gender gap warrior, it may seem as adding to unnecessary stereotyping and increasing the divide!

Some scholars profess that girls and boys mostly take on different identities as feminine and masculine because their parents treat them differently at home (Emolu 2014; Leaper & Farkas 2014; Blakemore and Hill 2008). Gender scripts and norms are fortified culturally, socially, and institutionally at several levels. These are primary groups (family), secondary groups (school and peer groups) and

reference groups (media, political parties). Based on diverse experiences from these agencies the child understands the gender socialization process and organization. The role of these agencies is as important as the process of gender socialization itself (Chattopadhyay, 2018).

Gender identities are also shaped through homophily. Homophily is the inclination to connect with same-sex rather than cross-sex and it starts as soon as the children start choosing their playmates (Ridgeway & Lynn, 1999; Block, 1979; Lever, 1978; Donna, & Hallinan 1978). Literature on homophily provides converging and informative insights as to how boys and girls self-segregate into homogenous groups and these are sustained and promoted by family environment (Carter, 2014).

Patriarchy is a social way of life where men dominate women in all sectors of power and decision-making and always end up having an upper hand. In cultures like ours, where hegemonic patriarchal social order dominates the developmental discourse, young boys learn to exercise authority over girls, whereas girls learn to submit (Ram et al., 2014). Walby (1997), an avid scholar of patriarchy defines

patriarchy as ‘a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women’. She talks about six different levels at which patriarchy operates: the patriarchal mode of production, patriarchal relations in paid work, patriarchal relations in the state, male violence, patriarchal relations in sexuality, and patriarchal relations in cultural institutions. Many a times parents intentionally or maybe even unintentionally reinforce gender stereotypes when they differentiate between the toys that they deem fit for their girls and boys or in their head run a “gender script” that describes a general pattern about gender stereotypical behaviors. For instance, girls should play with doll houses and boys with cars and footballs.

A closer look, gives us many examples of how these structures elaborated by Walby (1997), interplay at home. The first structure, talks about how women’s household labour is confiscated by their husbands or other people the women grow up with. The second structure contends that women are methodically excluded from opportunities and access to paid and skilled work. In the third structure, according to Walby (1997) ‘the state has a systematic bias towards patriarchal interests in its policies and actions’ and the fourth structure ‘male violence against women is systematically condoned and legitimated ... through the practices of rape, wife-beating, sexual harassment, etc.’ The fifth structure talks about how heterosexuality is compulsorily imposed and women’s sexuality is dictated by the men in a patriarchal society. The last structure talks about how women are objectified and represented in derogatory forms through cultural representations of religion, education and media. By the interplaying of all these structures, patriarchy denigrates the agency and position of women in societies. As evident gender socialization is the manifestation of the patriarchal modes of behaviours, thought processes and action that end up empowering the gender stereotypes that strengthen the notions and existence of such hierarchy. Given that background, gender-based socialization essentially includes acquiring behaviours that are consistent with one’s gender. Individuals are held accountable for these behaviours and deviance warrants some form of social sanction (West & Zimmerman, 2009).

India has always struggled with gender gaps due to multifaceted reasons. Households are the primary sites where children learn hegemonic practices that widen the gender gaps. Selective sex-based abortions have been banned since 1994, yet selective abortions are common and female mortality among children under age 5 years is higher than male mortality in all parts of the country (Ram, et.al., 2013). Families control all aspects of a daughter’s life. From an early age, she is trained into domestic chores and has a subservient role as compared to her male counterparts (Ram, et al., 2014). Many scholars have explored the role of early family experiences in gender development. Mc.Hale et al., (2003) reviewed the pivotal role of family in gender development during childhood and adolescence and concluded that early family life experiences including the relationship with parents and gendered marital dynamics between them have a very pertinent role in gender development. In India, gender discrimination is deeply embedded in the societal structure in and remains a threat to the well-being of families (Chowdhury, 2007) and gender inequalities are very commonly witnessed in families and gender discrimination is a challenging obstacle to the well-being of Indian families (Chowdhury, 2007). Unfortunately, the personhood is evaluated by the position in the hierarchy and is rooted in the upbringing in the early years of life (Kakar & Kakar, 2009). In a study of youths in Goa reported that frequent verbal or physical abuse by parents, low parental support from home and gender discrimination are significant predictors of mental health

problems. Gender discriminatory practices were evaluated by asking whether the youth were treated differently by virtue of their gender and whether they were restrained from certain activities (Fernandes et. al., 2013). Ram et al (2014) studies gender socialization in India by using the data from the Youth in India: Situation and Needs Study (International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) and Population Council, 2010) that utilized data from 44, 769 youths from India. One of the largest studies done in India, it provides evidence of discriminatory practices and the extent to which female youths are at a disadvantage due to their gender. They are given less freedom and independence to exercise their choices and are poorly prepared to enter adult roles and skills to manage their life better.

4.1.2 School

Gender is endlessly constructed and imposed upon each of us from the time we are born. The fixation around gender has also resulted in categorization of colors, clothes, toys, games as being more female than male or vice-versa. The heteronormative cultural script is wrapped around new born children from the very start and their experiences in their social world mostly validate these norms. Schools are institutions that build an environment that provide the initial institutional glimpse to their social world after their homes. Education systems and institutions are intended to transfer the values, behaviour patterns and normative standards to children through interaction with teachers, peers, and curriculum (Wentzel 2014; Witt 2000). Teachers help they form and challenge identities when they use different toys and activities for girls and boys (Leaper & Farkas, 2004). It is interesting to note that teachers have very different behaviours and attitudes towards their students, based on their gender. These may be explained by their stereotyped expectations about the abilities and needs of boys and girls (Leaper & Farkas, 2014). Additionally, textbooks include gendered texts, symbols and characters that may strengthen the gender stereotypes elaborated in the books (Taylor 2003).

Schools facilitate the conventional gendering process and strengthen the binary (female/male) to a very large extent. Institutionalization of gender roles starts here in a formal setting, and challenging the boundaries may not be easy, given our cultural taboos and biases. Schools become a hub for heterosexualized grooming practices. For instance, in an all-girls school, to discipline the students, the teacher's comment that girls should only be seen, not heard! These practices contaminate the intellectual space and create a burden on the child to keep living the script she/he/they have been assigned to. Even in co-educational spaces, gender segregation especially in middle and high school are fairly common, emerging from concerns related to adolescents manifesting the otherwise age-appropriate behaviours (such as the ones emerging from physical attraction) with the other 'gender'!

Gender stereotypes give rise to sexism. Sexism refers to prejudiced beliefs that look at one sex over the other more favourably. Sexism varies in degree and visibility across cultures. In many cultures and parts of the world where women are strongly undervalued, young girls may receive the same opportunities or access to nutrition, health care and education as boys. They grow up believing that they deserve to be treated inferiorly than boys (Thorne, 1993; UNICEF, 2007).

Gender egalitarian practices need to be strengthened and encouraged at the level of schools to help in creating an intellectual space that is conducive to the growth and optimal development of children's potential irrespective of their gender or orientation.

4.1.3 Peers

Once the school starts, peers play an extremely influential role in socialization and helping the child understand the gender schema. Peers are very influential in forming gender identity and stereotypes through interactions, friendships and group norms (Leaper & Friedman 2007; Witt 2000). Gender segregation, the tendency for boys and girls to largely form friendships and associate with the same gender is more or less predominant in friendship formation in childhood and strengthened by societal norms. This gender-based segregation strengthens gender roles and stereotypes (Leaper & Farkas, 2014; Witt, 2000). Most of their play, games and activities are rooted in a gendered environment.

“When children are playing together, it may seem as if they are engaged in aimless, unstructured behaviour, but there is something much deeper than that going on, as indicated by these functions. The first function suggests that behaviours are “tried out” on friends, and if they are rewarded, they will continue; if not, they will cease. Thus, the little boy who enjoys having tea parties with his teddy bears and is jeered at or otherwise discouraged from this activity by friends who call it “sissy” behaviour, will probably stop engaging in this type of play”(Witt, 2000, p. 3)

Researchers have investigated and explored the relationship between gender segregation and gender identity in childhood (Martin et al., 2013). Gender appropriate behaviours are invigorated through norms that are strengthened from the household and carried forward when interacting with the social world. Playing ‘gender congruent’ games is encouraged and this leads to further widening the gender- gap. Girls who have been taught to be subservient and boys who are taught to be controlling in the hegemonic domestic framework, carry the ideas and design their interactions and play in accordance with the normative gender rules. Childhood researchers have proposed that

Maya’s plight!

Maya, an 8-year-old grew up in conventional, heteronormative, conservative family. As part of growing up she always enjoyed playing with cars, blocks and toy guns. She liked to play out in the field with her brothers but her father would scold her every time he would see her playing out! He would also yell at her mother for not having taught her the right values. Maya did not enjoy playing the conventional ‘domestic’ games that her family would encourage her to play. She would sneak out in the afternoon to the field and enjoy playing with the boys. She even liked dressing up in pants and tees and avoided wearing dresses and skirts as it restricted her movement. Maya’s best friend was Robin and they would play for hours together. Maya was heartbroken when her father put her in an all-girls school! She found herself out of place and could not adjust with her peers. Her peers made fun of her choices and she felt suffocated at school.

gender segregation is so universal that boys’ and girls’ participation in same gender groups is alike across cultures (Mehta, 2016; Baines & Blatchford 2009; Maccoby 1998; Underwood & Rosen 2009). Interestingly, within these separate groups, children learn attitudes, values, and social interaction styles that are different (Maccoby 1990, 1998; Underwood 2007) and also learn to maintain same gender friendships (Werkings, 1997b). This comfort in same gender friendships perpetuates the process of homophily.

It is also pertinent to recognize the pressures that gender non-conforming children and adolescents experience. The *minority stress model* (Levitt & Ippolito, 2014) proposes that the cumulative effects of stigma, discrimination, stress has adverse effects on the overall wellbeing of the stigmatized minority group. This discrimination has differential impact of power and oppression on the identities of gender diverse young people. There is supportive research evidence that

demonstrates that gender diverse young people experience higher levels of bullying, social ostracism and societal intolerance than their gender confirming peers (de Vries, et al, 2016; Di Ceglie, 2017; Steensma et al., 2014). With more accessible data from transgender youth, more evidence has started emerging for the role of peer relationships and social ostracism (de Graaf et al., 2018; de Vries et al., 2016). Converging research evidence shows that individuals with subordinate identities are more vulnerable to discrimination and racism and this holds particularly true for individuals with multiple subordinated identities (Balsam et al., 2011; Grollman, 2014; Khan et al., 2017; Seaton et al., 2010). Studies also demonstrate higher levels of prejudice and depression among both gay and straight individuals of marginalized racial/ethnic groups (Balsam et al., 2011; Casey et al., 2019; Shangani et al., 2020).

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) What are the differences between sex and gender?

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- 2) Explain gender socialization with an appropriate example.

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- 3) What is the influence of family in gender socialization? Explain with a relevant example.

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- 4) Elucidating with an example from your own life, expand on the role of school and peers in gender socialization.

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4.2 CULTURE AND RELIGION

The definition of culture as per APA (2007) is “the distinctive customs, values, beliefs, knowledge, art, and language of a society or a community. These values and concepts are passed on from generation to generation, and they are the basis for everyday behaviours and practices”. Culture is a socially constructed dynamic interaction of intersectionality based on gender, religion, race, ethnicity, caste, class. It results in a structural framework, primarily a system of knowledge, behaviour and beliefs that are shared by a relatively large group of people. Since its dynamic in nature, it is fluid and gets impacted by people, historical events and social agencies, politics and economic vibes of the land.

Gender is also socially constructed and is immensely shaped by the societal expectations and cultural norms. Roles and expectations socially constructed and are culturally demarcated for all members. It also is defined by the power dynamics between women and men and the prevailing norms regarding 'feminine' and 'masculine' roles. The collective expectations and beliefs about the 'typical male' and 'typical female' may many a times contribute to creation and strengthening of stereotypes that may end up limiting opportunities for women and men within the cultural framework (UNESCO, 2014). Different levels of sexism in the cultural framework creates profound gaps and inequality between men and women at several stages (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2015) as people's lives are intrinsically embedded in the cultural fabric that is designed around the asymmetrical gender roles. People can navigate these roles, though it can be a challenging process. As a scholar puts it, 'culture and tradition can enable or obstruct, and be oppressive or liberating for different people at different times. There is nothing sacred about culture, and value judgements need to be made about which aspects of culture to hold on to, and which to let go of' (Jolly, 2014). It is interesting to note that the perception of gender is likely to be conceptualized in different ways cross-culturally (Isajiw, 1993; Nanda, 2014). Cross cultural researches throw light on the fact that children are aware of normative gender roles by age two or three. At four or five, most children are firmly entrenched in culturally appropriate gender roles (Kane, 1996). The notions around gender identity may differ across Western and Eastern cultures. For instance, Western cultures tend to emphasize on self-esteem (Fernando, 2012; Wekker, 1999), thereby placing the individual in the center of the narrative plot. Alternatively, Eastern cultural perspectives tend to be more emphasizing on the 'other' and focus on balance, harmony and stability of the outer social world of relationships (Fernando, 2012).

Our gender identity and ethnicity significantly contribute to our selfhood, personhood and shape our sensibilities around our experiences in the social world. Religion adds another layer or nuance to this embodied experience. Gender is pivotal to most religious orders, as well as religions have a substantial impact on gendered relations. All religions perpetuate the existing gender schemas and strengthen the ideas related with the expected gender roles as per the religious cultural scripts. Across religions, the religious texts are embedded in tall ideals set by perfect examples of a 'model man' or a 'woman'. How decent and chivalrous men should behave, how girls should behave in order to find a perfect match, and such other notions are deeply embedded. The theological texts are full of exemplary behaviours by Gods and Goddesses that set a benchmark for its followers to adhere to. Rigid adherence to such role models and notions may create a lot of pressure and perfectionistic traits that may get difficult to follow through in the longer run. Patriarchal gendered relations are followed in most religious spaces. The heads of almost all temples, mosques, imambadas, gurudwaras, churches are traditionally men. Although patriarchal relations are fundamental across global religions, this may not be universally true. Some religious orders lay emphasis on respecting women over and above the heteronormative structural framework. This defines their agency and empowers them to practice their own agency in the given space.

4.3 SEXUAL SCRIPTS

In continuation to the idea of gender development, sexual scripts also play a very important role. Ever since its introduction in the early 1970s, the sexual script theory has gained popularity as a conceptual framework in social science research

to examine sexuality and its manifestation in the society. Scripts are indispensable for us to make sense of the experience around the world. To borrow from the originators, scripts are a metaphor for conceptualizing behavior within social life. In the social life, most of the time is under the guidance of an operating syntax, much

as language is a precondition for speech. For behaviour to occur, something resembling to scripting must occur on three distinct levels: cultural scenarios, interpersonal scripts, and intrapsychic scripts (Simon and Gagnon 1984, pg. 53).

Further, sexual scripts are commonly shared gender and culture specific guides for normative sexual behaviour (Frith & Kitzinger, 2001). The proponents of sexual script theory, proposed that sexual behaviour is influenced at three different levels: cultural scenarios, interpersonal scripts and intrapsychic scripts (Simon & Gagnon, 1984). The cultural scenarios reflect culturally shared social norms and values that influence the other scripts and are communicated through mass media, gender norms, etc. An example might be gender norms educating boys to initiate sexual activities or seeing women being objectified in popular cinema songs and indulging in similar behaviours. Sexual cultural scripts are very pertinent to manifesting of sexual behaviours, yet they are not synonymous with sexual behaviour (Wiederman, 2015). To quote Simon & Gagnon, 1984, pg. 53): the enactment of virtually all roles must either directly or indirectly reflect the contents of appropriate cultural scenarios. These cultural scenarios are rarely entirely predictive of actual behavior, and they are generally too abstract to be applied in all circumstances. In this framework individuals are not passive receptors of cultural scenarios. The originators of Sexual Script theory, Simon and Gagnon (1984) categorized people as “partial scriptwriters” who created and adapted cultural scenarios into scripts for sexual behaviour across a diverse context. Cultural scenarios create the basic structure for the enactment of the roles and the relationship among them, however, they do not provide specific direction to propel the actual behaviours in specific situation. To help here, interpersonal scripts begin to interplay between the characters (Weiderman, 2015).

Interpersonal scripts inform sexual interactions with regard to how two people interpret cultural scenarios, for instance using alcohol or drugs before initiating sexual acts. Interpersonal scripts provide “the organization of mutually shared conventions that allows two or more actors to participate in a complex act involving mutual dependence” (Gagnon and Simon 1973, pg. 18). When actors share similar script, the interactions in the social interpersonal world are harmonious. Intrapsychic scripts echo the individuals’ sexual motives, such as sexual pleasure, sexual conquest, passion, and/or emotional intimacy, for instance having sexual relationship with many partners to feel powerful (Seal et.al, 2008). Intrapsychic scripts are representative of each individual’s unique sexuality, fantasies and other aspects that may be difficult to articulate but are nevertheless underlying the sexual interactions.

Some other researchers have focused on traditional interpersonal sexual scripts for heterosexual interactions (Seal et al., 2008). Traditional cultural scenarios

Challenging your script!

Moni, an MBA student, feels hugely attracted to her classmate Surya. However, she feels immensely hesitant in starting a conversation with him. Their common friends keep teasing her when they spot her looking at Surya during class lectures. Moni wants to date Surya but keeps waiting for him to initiate the process. Surya on the other hand feels that Moni is out of league for him! He deliberately tries to stay away. Why is it that Moni finds it so difficult to approach Surya? What is stopping Moni in giving this relationship a chance? What would you have done if you were in Moni’s place?

and interpersonal heterosexual scripts encourage heterosexual gender roles like men being forever ready to initiate sex, be always willing and ready to have sex and to control all aspects of sexuality (Bowleg, 2004; Campbell, 1995; Dworkin & O'Sullivan, 2005; Ku et al, 1993; Masters et al, 2012; Seal et al., 2008). Traditional intrapsychic heterosexual scripts for cis men suggest that men are mostly motivated for sex for the intrinsic pleasure, sexual conquest and emotional intimacy (Seal & Ehrhardt, 2003).

In accordance with the traditional sexual script, men are encouraged and socialized to initiate and arrange sexual interactions, where as women are encouraged and socialized to be coy, restrictors or responders, matching their partners needs (Gagnon, 1990; O'Sullivan & Byers, 1992; Schwartz & Rutter, 1998). Interestingly, research also demonstrates the universal dual presence of norms that give men greater sexual freedom than women (Blanc, 2001; Gupta, 2001; Gupta & Weiss, 1993; Seal & Ehrhardt, 2003). Such restrictive paradigms around masculinity lead to phallocentrism, self- objectification during sex, and feeling pressure to be in the performance mode all the time for sex (Brod, 1995; Fracher & Kimmel, 1995; Seal et al., 2000). Such straight-jacketed definitions of conventional heterosexual masculinity and femininity constrains heterosexual interactions and restricts the expression of freedom. However, contemporary researchers suggest that heterosexual scripts are becoming more egalitarian in nature with women being as participative as men (Dworkin & O'Sullivan, 2005; Masters et al., 2012; Seal & Ehrhardt, 2003).

Check Your Progress 2

1) What is a sexual script?

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2) With an appropriate example explain the cultural script.

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3) What is an interpersonal script? Explain with a relevant example.

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4) With is an intrapsychic script?

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4.4 HETEROSEXUAL AGGRESSION

Of all the areas that are open to debate, the area of heterosexual aggression is difficult to conceptualize, define and report as these research findings impact the social, legal and institutional context within which individuals set their boundaries of intimacy and sexual interaction (Anderson & Savage, 2015).

Aggression is the type of behavioural action that is intended to harm the other person or target (Baron & Richardson 1994). In the context of intimate relationships, people can harm each other in several ways; psychologically and physically. The insights into the destructiveness of psychological and physical aggression in intimate relationships are moderated by gender of perpetrator and victim likewise. Aggressive acts are perceived more serious when directed to female than to male targets (Harris 1991; Harris & Knight-Bohnhoff 1996; Herzberger & Tennen 1985). Male perpetrators are judged more harshly than female perpetrators (Arias & Johnson 1989; Straus et al., 1997).

There are by and large two conflicting views when it comes to defining heterosexual aggression and violence. One viewpoint is embedded in the research of family conflict (Straus, 1990) and other is rooted in the feminist lens of violence emanating from patriarchy and largely involves male perpetrators (Dobash & Dobash, 1980; Pagelow, 1984; Walker, 1990). A study in Bangladesh, close home, reported that 19 to 38 percent of women respondents had been beaten up by their partners during the previous year (Schuler et al., 1996). In patriarchal society like ours, severe violence and homicide by male partners towards their female partners is associated with the prevalence of dowry system (Shamim, 1992). These research reports have implications for the moderating effect of culture, suggesting that men's physical aggression toward their partners may be of greater intensity, and women's agency may be compromised as traditions inhibiting men from hitting women may be non-existent and patriarchy may thus define the gender roles and permissiveness for the existence of such violence. As reported by researchers, aggression by men towards women (both physical and sexual) is more common where female alliances are weak and women do not have the support of their natal kin (Glazer, 1992; Kuschel, 1992; Schuster, 1983, 1985). Furthermore, it is accentuated by stronger male alliances where women are primarily dependent on men for resources (Glazer, 1992; Mines & Fry, 1994; Schuler et al., 1996)

However, researchers in developed countries like in North America, have studied women's role in being an actor of such violence as well. The relative rates of aggression reported in research studies vary depending on whether men or women are surveyed about women's sexual aggression, the source of the sample, the ethnicity of the respondent, the outcome of aggression, the tactics used, with physical force universally being endorsed as the least used tactic (Anderson, 1998; Anderson et al., 2002; Anderson & Sorensen, 1999; Feibert & Tucci, 1998). Like women, men who received sexual coercion do not always take it seriously or see themselves as being victimized (O'Sullivan et al., 1998; Zweig et al., 1997). Many feel embarrassed to share it publicly even when they are suffering from coercive sexual experiences (Johnson & Shrier, 1987; Sarrel & Masters, 1982; C. J. Struckman-Johnson, 1991). Sometimes, men who have received aggression, analogous to their female counterparts, report psychological and physical symptoms that range from mild low moods to long term depression (Larimer et al., 1999; O'Sullivan et al., 1998; C. J. Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1998; Zweig et al., 1997).

4.5 CULTURAL DIFFERENCE IN THE CONSTRUCT OF GENDER

Culture is defined as a set of characteristics that includes the “beliefs, practices, values, norms, and behaviors that are shared by members of a group” (Sullivan & Rumptz, 1994, p. 567). Cultural diversity has been a much talked about area in social and political psychology and other social sciences. Culture is indistinguishably related with individuals in a group, and its varied dimensionality reveals itself in the ways and manners in which people perceive and interpret their world (Taylor et al., 2001; Tuck, 1997). This development of world view is not random but is passed among generations and might include traditions and learnings about a shared heritage, language, dressing style, or food choices (Yoshihama, 2000). Culture may be looked at as a dynamic phenomenon; an interactive process between the individuals and environment where the collective narrative is challenged and redefined. Culture researcher Hofstede (2012) makes a distinction between the masculinity and femininity dimension of a culture, thus, “a society is considered a masculine one if the gender emotional roles differ clearly: men should be authoritarian, harsh and focused on material success, while women should be modest, gentle and concerned with quality of life. A society is considered a feminine one if the gender emotional roles overlap: both men and women must prove modesty, gentleness and concern for quality of life” (Hofstede et al., 2012, p. 141). The normative assignment of social roles based on gender is a result of cultural-religious interpretations and the historical and environmental factors (Hofstede et al., 2012).

Many researchers have also focused on gender-role beliefs and found that women in some cultures report less traditional and more egalitarian gender role beliefs than men (Berkel 2004; Locke and Richman 1999; Tang and Dion 1999). Research in Western and non-Western societies have revealed that education is major mechanism by which women favor gender equality. Similar results have been obtained from countries like Egypt (Yount, 2005) and in USA, researchers have reported that educated and employed women have the most egalitarian beliefs (Mason et al., 1976). Some gender researchers also draw a link between gender and heterosexual aggression and abuse and claim that battering is a result of “cultural values, rules, and practices that afford men more status and power than women” (Torres, 1991, pg. 115).

When we look at human behaviour and how we define gender in its context, it becomes evident that culture plays a major role. The gender differences that we see are visible in our communication, practices and behaviours. The gender binary thought process is encouraged by most cultures and we keep focusing on the differences to the disadvantage of women as gender gap keeps widening and equality is far from achieved. Gender socialization can be better understood if we use the framework of intersectionality as proposed by Crenshaw (1991) and many other researchers in the postmodern era. The theory of intersectionality elaborates on how an individual can navigate between privileges and discrimination. It proposes that the convergence of multiple identities can result in embodied experiences of oppression, privilege or power. Our consolidated identity such as gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, race, religion is overlapping and link our experiences of privilege, power and discrimination and influence our experiences of being a woman or a man and also determine our attitude towards other gendered people.

Check Your Progress 3

1) What is a heterosexual aggression?

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2) With an appropriate example, explain the role of cultural script in increasing heterosexual aggression.

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3) What is the role of religion in shaping gender identity, explain with a relevant example?

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4) How do gender roles differ across culture?

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4.6 SUMMARY

To sum up what we have learnt in this unit, here is a quick recap:

- Sex and gender are two different and distinct attributes and may and may not overlap for an individual.
- Gendered roles are mostly learned through the process of socialization that involves various agencies like family, school and peers that shape the sensibilities of an individual around gender roles. Children learn gender segregation and homophily as an outcome of socialization. The norms and identity help them making these choices.
- Religion and cultural factors also shape and influence the gender norms and expectations around gender roles. Culture also defines the sexual scripts for individual that are helpful in interacting with other people in the context of cultural scenarios, interpersonal scripts and intrapsychic scripts.
- Heterosexual aggression is also influenced by the cultural values and impacts all genders.

4.7 KEYWORDS

Cultural Scenarios Create the basic structure for the enactment of the roles and the relationship among them.

Gender The social and cultural aspect of 'sex', that may not necessarily be the same as the biological sex.

Gender Socialization The process of learning gender roles and expectations from societal and cultural influences and models.

Heterosexual Aggression Aggressive acts in a heterosexual relationship.

Homophily The tendency of people to seek out and be close to those who are similar to themselves.

Homophobia Fear of or dislike for LGBTQIA+ identifying people.

Interpersonal Script Interpersonal scripts provide the context for interaction for two or more actors and involves mutual dependence.

Intersectionality The theoretical orientation that recognizes that everyone has unique experiences based on the privileges, power and oppression dynamics they go through, thereby explaining the relative experiences of marginalization.

Intrapsychic Script Capture the person's uniqueness in terms of their fantasies, sexual desires and goals.

LGBTQIA Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual – All alternate identities within the gender spectrum.

Sex Binary categorization into male and female based on the biological attributes related with one's reproductive ability.

Sexism Prejudiced and discriminatory practices around members of one sex mostly women.

Sexual script Human sexual behaviour follows a social script that is embedded in the societal expectations and norms. Culture influences the adherence to the sexual script.

4.8 REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) What is gender-based socialization? Explain with relevant examples.
- 2) Explain the role of family in gender socialization with examples from your own life.
- 3) Discuss the role of school and peers in gender socialization in Indian content.
- 4) What are sexual scripts? How do they define our interaction with prospective partners?
- 5) Discuss the role of gender in heterosexual aggression.

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4.10 ADDITIONAL ONLINE RESOURCES

- To know more about gender socialization:
https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/IDP_2017_01.pdf
- To know more about LGBTQIA+ issues:
<https://lgbtqindiaresource.in/lbgtq-ngos-and-collectives/>
<https://indiaculturelab.org/lgbtq>
https://www.ted.com/talks/karissa_sanbonmatsu_the_biology_of_gender_from_dna_to_the_brain?language=en
- To know more about gender gaps:
https://www.ted.com/talks/safeena_husain_a_bold_plan_to_empower_1_6_million_out_of_school_girls_in_india
<https://en.unesco.org/themes/education-and-gender-equality/resources>
- To read more about intersectionality research:
<https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/5/20/18542843/intersectionality-conservatism-law-race-gender-discrimination>