Gender, School and Society

UNIT – 1
Gender Roles in Society

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Definition of Gender

❑ Gender refers to the roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men, women, and other gender identities.

❑ It is a social and cultural construct that varies across different cultures and over time.

Difference Between Sex and Gender

▶ **Sex:**

- ❖ Biological characteristics such as chromosomes, hormone levels, and reproductive/sexual anatomy.

- ❖ Typically categorized as male, female, or intersex.

▶ **Gender:**

- ❖ Socially and culturally constructed roles and behaviors.

- ❖ Includes identities such as man, woman, non-binary, gender queer, etc.

Definition of Gender Roles

❑ Gender roles are societal norms dictating the behaviors considered appropriate for individuals based on their perceived or actual gender.

❑ They encompass expectations regarding attitudes, activities, and responsibilities.

Historical Context of Gender Roles

❑ Traditionally, men were often expected to be the breadwinners and women the homemakers.

❑ Gender roles have varied across cultures and historical periods.

❑ Examples of historical gender roles in different societies.

Traditional Gender Roles

▸ **Male Roles:**

❑Expected to be strong, assertive, and providers for the family.

▸ **Female Roles:**

❑Expected to be nurturing, passive, and caregivers for the family.

Influence on Personal Life

- **Family Dynamics:**
  - ❖ Division of labour in households.
  - ❖ Parenting roles and expectations.

- **Education:**
  - ❖ Subject choices and career aspirations influenced by gender expectations.
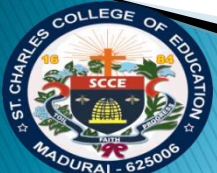
- **Personal Identity:**
  - ❖ How gender roles shape self-perception and personal goals.

- **Workplace Dynamics:** Gender roles affecting career choices and opportunities.

- Gender pay gap and leadership roles.

- **Challenges:** Stereotypes and discrimination.

- Balancing work and family life.

Changing Perspectives on Gender Roles

▸ **Modern Shifts:**

◦ Increasing acceptance of diverse gender identities and expressions.

◦ More egalitarian views on shared responsibilities in professional and personal life.

▸ **Movements and Advocacy:**

◦ Role of feminism and LGBTQ+ movements in challenging traditional roles.

◦ Impact of education and media in reshaping gender norms.

Influences of Family, Caste, Class, Religion, Culture, Media, Law, and the State

▶ **Influence of Family:**

❖ Traditional roles often assign caregiving and domestic tasks to women, and breadwinning to men.

❖ Impact of family upbringing on perceptions of gender roles.

❖ Changing dynamics in modern families with more egalitarian roles.

Caste and Gender Roles:

- In many societies, caste systems dictate strict gender roles, often reinforcing traditional roles for men and women.

- Intersection of caste and gender leading to different experiences and expectations.

Class and Gender Roles:

❖ Economic class influences gender roles, with variations in expectations and opportunities for men and women.

❖ Working-class vs. upper-class gender dynamics.

❖ Impact of socioeconomic status on access to education and career opportunities.

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Religious Influence:

❖ Many religions have specific teachings about gender roles, often prescribing distinct roles for men and women.

❖ Examples from major religions and their impact on followers' lives.

❖ Progressive vs. conservative religious interpretations and their effects on gender roles.

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Cultural Influence:

❖ Cultural norms and traditions shaping gender roles.

❖ Variations across different cultures and ethnic groups.

❖ Impact of globalization and cultural exchange on traditional gender roles.

Media and Popular Culture

▸ **Media Influence:**

❖ Representation of gender roles in television, films, advertising, and social media.

❖ Stereotypes perpetuated by media and their impact on societal perceptions.

❖ Positive and negative examples of gender role representation in popular culture.

Law and the State

▸ **Legal and Political Influence:**

❖ Laws and policies affecting gender roles, including those related to employment, family rights, and gender equality.

❖ Role of the state in enforcing or challenging traditional gender roles.

❖ Examples of legislation aimed at promoting gender equality.

Reasons for Gender Inequality

- **Definition of Gender Inequality**
  - ❖ Gender inequality refers to the unequal treatment or perceptions of individuals based on their gender.
  - ❖ It results in disparities in access to resources, opportunities, and rights.

Societal Norms and Gender Roles

- **Traditional Gender Roles:**
  - ❑ Societal expectations that prioritize certain roles and behaviors for men and women.
  - ❑ Examples: men as breadwinners, women as caregivers.

- **Impact:**
  - ❑ Limits opportunities for both men and women to pursue interests and careers outside traditional roles.

Economic Barriers

▸ **Financial Constraints:**

  ◦ Families with limited resources may prioritize boys' education and career development over girls'.

▸ **Gender Pay Gap:**

  ◦ Women often earn less than men for the same work, impacting economic independence.

▸ **Labor Market Segmentation:**

  ◦ Occupational segregation, with women often concentrated in lower-paying, less secure jobs.

Cultural Beliefs and Practices

▶ **Cultural Attitudes:**

❖ Beliefs that prioritize male authority and female subservience.

❖ Practices such as early marriage and gender-biased inheritance laws.

▶ **Examples:**

❖ Son preference in some cultures, leading to neglect of daughters' education and health.

Lack of Access to Resources

- **Educational Opportunities:**
  - Limited access to quality education for girls in many regions.

- **Healthcare:**
  - Disparities in access to healthcare services, affecting women's health and well-being.

- **Technological Gap:**
  - Unequal access to technology and digital resources.

Safety and Mobility Issues

- **Safety Concerns:**
  ◦ Risks of harassment and violence, restricting women's and girls' movement and participation in public life.

- **Mobility Constraints:**
  ◦ Cultural and societal restrictions on women's freedom to travel and participate in various activities.

Institutional Discrimination

- **Legal and Policy Barriers:**
  - ❖ Laws and policies that discriminate against women, limiting their rights and opportunities.
  - ❖ Examples: lack of legal protections against domestic violence, restrictive reproductive rights.

- **Workplace Discrimination:**
  - ❖ Biases in hiring, promotion, and workplace culture that disadvantage women.

Media Influence

▶ **Representation in Media:**

◦ Stereotypical portrayal of genders in television, films, advertisements, and social media.

▶ **Impact on Perceptions:**

◦ Reinforcement of traditional gender roles and stereotypes, influencing societal attitudes and behaviors.

Gender-Just Education Outside School Settings

▶ **Definition of Gender-Just Education**

❖ Gender-just education ensures that all individuals, regardless of their gender, have equal access to educational resources, opportunities, and outcomes.

❖ It addresses the specific needs and challenges faced by different genders in educational settings.

Importance of Education Outside School Settings

a) **Non-Formal Education:**

    a) Includes community education, vocational training, adult education programs, and informal learning.

b) **Informal Education:**

    a) Learning through life experiences, family, social interactions, media, and technology.

c) **Significance:**

    a) Complements formal education by providing lifelong learning opportunities and addressing gaps in formal education systems.

Barriers to Gender-Just Education Outside School Settings

❖ **Societal Norms and Gender Roles:**

  ❖ Traditional gender roles that prioritize men's education and professional development over women's.

❖ **Economic Barriers:**

  ❖ Financial constraints limiting access to non-formal and informal educational resources.

❖ **Cultural Beliefs and Practices:**

  ❖ Cultural attitudes that restrict educational opportunities for certain genders.

❖ **Lack of Access to Resources:**

  ❖ Limited availability of educational programs and technology for women and marginalized genders.

❖ **Safety and Mobility Issues:**

  ❖ Safety concerns and mobility restrictions impacting participation in educational activities.

Strategies for Promoting Gender-Just Education

❖ **Community-Based Programs:**

    ❖ Initiatives that provide education and training within communities, focusing on inclusivity and accessibility.

❖ **Vocational Training:**

    ❖ Programs offering skill development and career training tailored to the needs of different genders.

❖ **Adult Education:**

    ❖ Education programs targeting adults, especially women, to enhance their skills and knowledge.

❖ **Digital Learning:**

    ❖ Utilizing technology and online platforms to provide educational content accessible to all genders.

Role of NGOs and Government Initiatives

▶ **Support Programs:**
  ◦ Examples of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and government initiatives aimed at reducing gender inequality in education.

▶ **Case Studies:**
  ◦ Successful case studies of gender-just educational initiatives.

▶ **Challenges and Solutions:**
  ◦ Addressing the challenges faced by these initiatives and proposed solutions.

Thank You

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