CHAPTER – 1

UNDERSTANDING GENDER: A
SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE
The concept of gender, as we all know came into existence during the early 1970s. It was used as an analytical category to draw a line of demarcation between biological sex differences and the way these are used to inform behaviours and complexes which are then assigned as masculine or feminine. The purpose of affirming a sex / gender distinction was to argue about the actual physical or mental effects of biological difference which was exaggerated to maintain a patriarchal system of power as well as to create a consciousness among the woman that they were naturally better suited to domestic roles. The conception of gender varies according to different contexts and time period. A common core sediment of meaning that the gender concept carrier while engaging with how different cultures work in, through and off gendered realities. Though gender has always been a part of societal realities everywhere, its emergence as a concept and a discursive tool is a recent and modern phenomenon.

Meanwhile analyzing gender as a keyword today involves the formation of certain vocabularies surrounding culture and society and the interpretive accretions they gained over time, but also about contexts that enable or disable meanings. It is often assumed that gender is a self-evident category and that its field of reference is transparent and uncomplicated. A static meaning of gender concept has aligned itself with a range of idea clusters from time to time, making it impossible to explain it by tracking its etymological roots alone. While such alignments on the one hand extend originally or grammatically and on the other hand, they make for re-routing of meanings that stretch the very matrix on which the gender concept is based.
The concept of gender is addressed in various specialized disciplines for instance in literary studies, history, anthropology, etc. each of which retrieves and refigures the concept differently. Centrally speaking the gender has been the issue of sexual difference and its manifestations and their consequences. The debate usually is found amongst man and woman and even women themselves, which implies the combination of biological and socio-historical factors in the definitions.

In the present exercise, we try to understand the major conceptual concerns on which the gender concept has been laid out working through the related terms such as sex/gender, inequality and biology/culture, in the first part. While in the second we would analyze the notions of gender, equality, sex and how these intersect with caste, community and religion in Indian context. Though gender is a complex of individual rights, identity, and equality, this complex often intersects with positions delineated by caste, creed, community, religion, etc. Despite the flexibility of meaning of the term gender, it also appears to retain a certain core reference to the social organizations of power relations between the sexes (Scott, 1988). Accordingly, every culture as well as every contextual configuration of elements within a culture, draws on this core, yet reconfigures the meaning of gender, gender relations, or gender inequalities differently under specific political and cultural contexts.

**Gender and Inequality**

The concept of gender emerged as a reaction to the marginality of women in existing critical frameworks, and sought to initiate changes in the substantive context and philosophical theory of knowledge of these disciplines. In social sciences, it
became natural to analyze the society in terms of caste, class and race alone was not sufficient because it neglected to take into account relations of asymmetry between men and women. This term emerged to challenge the new categories and ways of understanding that could account for the nature and organization of male-female relations and the ways in which they are overlapped in a larger context of power relations. Thus, gender is inspired by a number of studies on different aspects of women's lives, but the interface of this with existing explanatory paradigms has remained a complex issue. Today, though gender has emerged as a major analytical category, it is marked by an interpretive angle wherein only certain questions can be raised in certain ways. The universal association of gender with inequality is one such rendering, where gender is read as coterminous conflict between the sexes and is issued to go beyond patriarchy.

Patriarchy term refers to male domination and female's acceptance and internalization of that dominance. 'Sylvia Walby' in her book theorizing Patriarchy describes patriarchy "a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women". Women have been socialized in such a manner that they love being dominated Feminists claim that the home and family are responsible for women's oppression. Our culture demands separately from male and female. Feminists like Carol Gilligan and Ned Noddings answers differ by arguing that women tend to stress on relationship and responsibility while men emphasize on rules and rights, which make both of them different. Here it can be referred to Dipankar Gupta's concept of 'hierarchy and difference' where he mentions that stratification can be always straddled in two forms of axes, one vertical and another
horizontal. Thus, inequality comes into question when difference is arranged hierarchically while elements like language, race and culture should be straddled on the horizontal scale (Gupta, 1991: 9).

Our male dominated society have frequently claimed that the development of the child requires the mother to denote herself completely to the welfare of the child and it is the primary duty of the mother to shower all kinds of affection and care to the child. The father does not perform any of those duties. Our patriarchal system most peculiar feature of most societies is that the child bears the surname of her this father. Moreover she is first considered the property of her father and after marriage of her husband. The feminist argue that her surname should not be changed but that is considered futile. Moreover the child should also bear her surname, in order to challenge patriarchy. But looking deeply the surname of the mother is also the surname of the mother's father which would be like reinforcing patriarchy once again.

The world of man and a woman has been divided into two halves, forming many pairs of binary opposites. It is a world of body Vs mind, nature verses culture, emotion verses reason, private verses public. These dichotomies stand in chain to each other that shape the culturally constituted roles for men and women. (Gender, Culture and History, 291: 2).

**Body Vs Mind**

A woman's existence is centrally because of her body she bears and rears children. Besides her laudation functions has made the functional abilities of her body more prominent. The society has burdened her with childcare, assigning no role to
men. Other than breastfeeding, there is no work involved in childcare and household chores that a man's anatomy prevents him from doing it. Our culture with its patriarchal ideology, has been exploiting women in the name of motherhood, which our culture has prescribed as the primary duty of a woman. The woman suffers a lot due to her body. Simon de Beauvoir said that menstruation interrupts a woman's routine, putting her in stigmatized state, involving various restrictions on her activities and her social contacts. Simon concludes that the female "is more enslaved to the species than the male, her animalist is more manifest".

**Nature Vs Culture**

The male dominated society clearly depicts the dominance of male and subordination of the women. Women were allocated domestic service and attending upon children while men did the rest. When a child is born, the mother is usually in most cultures in charge of breast-feeding the baby taking care and socializing it (Ortner, 1997: 16). As we all know infant and children are considered a part of nature and are unsocialized like animals. Moreover, women with their association with infants and children are tagged together with 'nature'. Since men lack a natural basis meant for family orientation i.e., series they do not reproduce, the cultural reasoning seems to go that men are the natural proprietors of religion, ritual, politics and other realms of cultural thought. Thus men are associated with culture i.e., the higher form of human thoughts involving art, religion and law (Human Rights, Gender and Environment, 242).
Private Vs Public

These physical and social roles of women and men have extended their association with private/public dichotomy. The private sphere popularly known as the domestic sphere has no economic political or historical significance. The private realm stands in opposition to the public sphere. 'The private sphere needs to be nourished with understanding, co-operation, care, selflessness and of course bundles of emotions. However, the public sphere is a competitive would, which requires being aggressive, reasonable and ambitious with no trace of emotions. This we can say, as emotions are the greatest hindrance to the profit-making motive of the public sphere.

Socialist feminist have pointed out that the private and public have different modes of production. Even though toil hard all through the day; they have been branded as useless, worthless, entities, whereas the man in the public sphere is given more importance. Things even worsen with working women as they shuttle between the two worlds, which has different kinds of expectations systems altogether. At one point they need to be competitive and at other point they need to shower their blessings, love and affections.

The exaggeration showing in early feminist writings is to cast the analysis in terms of gender exploitation is nothing but only a reflection of its overlapping in a series of groups such as equality/inequality, which set up male dominance or superiority and female sub-ordination (inferiority) as opposite poles of relation under one system of power. There have been two lines, however, along which the analysis has sought to be extended in the later writings i.e. the first is to work with a more variation understanding of patriarchal relations as neither homogenous nor unitary in
nature, which varies across time, space, and economic position within the same society. The second is to focus on the potentialities of women engaged with patriarchal patterns. Both are recognized as various agents and the agendas of power exercise, but it cannot be determined without the operated knowledge fields. This clearly stressed that patriarchy relations took historical specific forms, as the diversity of forms and cultures led to differences in the way of gender are issued.

Be that as it may the conjoining of gender with inequality has been the most significant moves which predefine the field of gender studies. This difference of social inequality could be broadly presented as stratificational. Such a framework has tended to present a range of social differences such as class / gender in terms of common underlying principles of equality, which means that many layers of difference are all understood as manifestations of inequality. Socio anthropological debates on the nature of Indian society, suggest that the hierarchal logic with social differences which is quite varied with the egalitarian principles defining the western social ethos. A non-western cultural context forces one to look into a range of similar questions of gender, particularly as to whether the joining of gender identity and gender inequality is the understanding of an individual, which itself is inseparable from an ideology of rights, liberty and equality. Since identity is seen, much more in terms of a person's location within a group for e.g. it has been pointed out that concepts of person in India do not derive from an epicenter of an individual with a sovereign unitary identity, but are revealed as an identity that is other-directed (Marriott, 1990).

The perception of the self as a fluid entity, where there are no individuals, but individual selves places the burden of self-definition on interpersonal relations with the
other. Such twofold dimension is symbiotically linked to sociality and than referring to the ways in which social relation between persons and very nature of social action is constituted. It is very necessary to understand the concept of gender where persons are seen as composite beings, which are composed of many layers of social relations. We find hierarchical principle clearly within the caste society and social junctures also. Social relations are considered hierarchal whole and while disadvantage is expressed within these space are always to be key questions of gender. More often than not in India, the concept of gender is adopted, as a framework of equality vs. inequality and in this context, the structure of hierarchy needs to be investigated. Then only analyse gender relations rather than as a purely oppositional category where one is defined against another.

**Inequality and Gender**

Sex role theory proved inadequate to explore the variations in gender definitions, which requires deeper examination of the variations within the category of men or women. Such theorizing enables to see the relationships between and among men women as structured relationships not as abstract set of relations. A movement, which relates to social change, for e.g. feminism or gay liberation, ultimately becomes movements that expand role definitions and even change role expectations. These movements lead to options of opportunities for individual men and women whose lives are constrained by stereotypes. However, whenever we see we find that social and political movements are not only about expanding the options of availability for individuals of inhibiting sex roles but also permit themselves to emerge or evoke. This would result in reallocations of resources, and reducing forms of inequality that are
studded in social institutions and sex role stereotypes. The social constructionist approach emphasizes conflicting relations between and among groups of people within social institutions.

In this connection (Hacker, 1993) argued that largely the position of women and blacks have much in common as systematic structural inequality produces a "culture of self-hatred among the target group. And yet we do not speak of race-roles". This is illogical because the difference within each race are for greater than the differences between races and needs to be analyzed in the context of the socially based power relations between white and non-white people movements for social equality are much more than expanding role options. Role theory cannot explain race of gender relations in isolation of the wider socio-cultural and political framework.

We may argue that gender is about difference as well as inequality and power. At gender relations level, gender is about the power that men as a group have over women as a group, and it is related to certain men over other men or some women over other women. Gender and power collide and exist together – not because power is the consequence of gender difference – but because power is what produces those gender differences in the first place. However, we hold that gender is an unequal power relation between men and women. Thus, theories of gender need to explain both difference and domination. While other theories explain male dominance as the result of sex differences.

That symmetry breaks down if we try to imply to men. Men always feel themselves to be equally constrained by a system of stereotypic convections that do not allow them to live a life which they are entitled to Men as a group are powerful
than women, but visualizing single man compared to woman in it not so. The feeling of powerlessness is one reason why so many men believe that they are the victims of reverse discrimination.

**Gender, Biology and Culture**

The understanding of gender based on commonsensical perceptions of the differences between male and female vary everyday. Gender is not found as self-evident and unproblematic but also found as naturally given. Moreover, the evolution of gender as a concept has also been a consequence of the realization of the pitfalls in relying on "woman" as an analytical category. Though the large numbers of empirical and descriptive women centered studies were indeed, largely constituting women as a field for analysis counter several problems.

For instance, early studies of the status of women in India invariably obscured the cultural and contextual heterogeneity of the category of women, whose attributes and activities have varied in relation to the diverse intersections of caste, class, age, kinship, religion, region and so on (Chakravarty, 1989; Menon, 1999). The category of women was reduced to woman as a biological category. The concept thus emerged in an early distinction posited between sex and gender. Recently the cultural conditioning and experience found that going beyond the category of sex, which referred merely to the sexual or biological differences between male and female.

The cluster of meanings of gender has very close connection with the feminist movements the world over. Feminist theory during the 1970's subscribed to the equality position, denying differences between women and men and arguing that women must be equal to men in all respects, but not calling an end to inequality based
on biological difference. By the 1980's however, certain trends within this body of theory veered around to an essentialist position, affirming and celebrating women's bodies and creative capacities, arguing that these be given equal social recognition (Rhode, 1990). Though the positions differed in terms of their angle towards sexual difference, the equality principle was kept out of analysis. In the recent years the concept of difference rather in terms of equality and inequality has itself been largely critical as some indicating the need to distinguish between difference as a biological fact and equality as a socio-political one. This attempt is centralized on the notion that biological sexual difference generates power relations. A large number of heterogeneous voices from within the women's movement have tried to draw attention of difference in women's experiences and lives – like wise through caste, class, colour, sex, nation and so on. These voices prove that not only biology is the marker of gender but the various aspects of cultural context also shape gender experiences in innumerable ways. The recognition that notion of femaleness and maleness are largely social and psychological products also paved the way for a perception of gender as concept as Scott observes that gender becomes a way of denoting "cultural constructions" – the entirely social creation of ideas about appropriate roles for women and men. It is a way of referring to the exclusively social origins of the subjective identities of men and women. Gender is in this definition, a social category imposed on a sexed body (Scott, 1980: 19). Typically studies not just in literary criticism, but also anthropology and history came to focus on the different ways in which femininity and masculinity are culturally constituted, the tension between biological constitute and cultural construction has come to configure most modern debates on gender.
Reconfiguring Gender: Some Issues

In spite of the advance, gender analysis represents today over the earlier sexual difference argument, the distinction made between sex and gender has given rise to number of questions related to the relation between women and their bodies such as – What are bodies? Do they exist prior to gender? Does one belong to a gender or does one become a gender? Female body is a natural fact, and there is nothing-cultural expression or external something. The reluctance, which speaks about the female body other else than symbolic or cultural terms, has often led to over emphasis on femininity. The problems which often arouse related to sex/gender distinction have become more apparent and omnipresent.

Gatan (1992) argues that the federative dimension of gender in earlier researcher now seems to be constraining analysis, largely due to the perception of gender as attributes inscribed upon a neutral body. To delink sexual difference from gender, suggests that femininity is something that has been removed from it. In reality the body is not a receptacle but the medium through which meanings are produced.

To put this misleading issue in place it is very much essential to reestablish the co-relations among the two principal axes, that define female subjects in specific socio-historical context, namely femininity (as an acquired attribute) and its grounding in the female body respectively. The point is that we need to go beyond both biological essentialism (gender as an essential trait) as well as cultural constructivism (gender as culturally constructed). It does not just understand how gender is defined, structured and experienced within a culture but also sensitivity to the variations, in the content of gender across and within cultures. Different from the other approaches, the
sexed body is neither a mere symbol nor an inert biological foundation onto which gender ideas are written. Gradually the body becomes the very medium through which femininity is constituted. In Indian context, a great deal of significant work has been done regarding the construction of female bodies and sexuality, consisting the inter-relations of gender subjected with caste, class, colour, socio-cultural ethic, political events (John and Nair: 1998; Sangari and Vaid: 1989; Rajan: 1993). Meanwhile the superficial separations between sex and gender (or even body and mind) are impossible. By asking how women inherit and live through a female body, one can open up several issues, for scrutiny, such as how women inhabit the body, what are the socio-cultural meanings 'invested in the female body, how does' the women body occupy space and exist and so on. Such a formulation highlights the interface between the material body and representational body, and the ways in women activate these constitutive conditions.

Though the early theories of patriarchy and female subordination give little room for an active female subject, later theories of gender has raised the issue of agency. The issue of agency is central to contemporary debates found in India, and the agencies extensively are used as a means of transformation, largely in political action. These perceptions raise questions that are based and related to identify certain kinds of actions of women as agential and others as not. This helps us to understand the domains of power. The delineation of spaces as both public and private, the positing of public as a political domain (power), women's lack of entrance of this field and their consequent characterization of powerlessness aspects of this rendering. This seems to be problematic, as this does not explain the varied actions of the women. As Sangari
(1993) has noted, such a view would be not only historical but also distortive in predefining women's agency in specific ways. Another way of achieving and recording women's agency has been the documentation and examines instances of women's resistance within a larger frame of domination (O'Hanlon: 1991; Raheja and Goldi: 1996). Among these would figure women's implicit acts of resistance, unplanned, often non-confrontational in that to avoid a direct conflict with authority structures. In spite of their differences, what seems problematic in both tendencies is that we may be speaking of women as group or woman as individual, without proper and sufficient clarification of the identity. A consideration of how women's bodies are lived and imaged, how they are spoken about the perceived, and the narratives such as community, honour, morality, nation, etc. as well as how women respond to these mediations, which would enable us to better address the question of women's agency i.e., to understand women's agency and gender as to how women live (in) their bodies and how they contend with what cultures makes of these bodies. The answer to the queries related body's sexuality and its cultural mediations, or female embodiment occurrence can be identified. Precisely, the influences such as cultural beliefs and practices regarding the body, ritual prescriptions and norms of female conduct that orient speech, etc. all can be included in 'matrix of sexualization'. Such matrix specifies certain domains of moral conduct within a community and is often responsible for the emergence of conceptions of feminine and masculine. Beside it also includes ideas and concepts of shame and honour, the authority of fertility through marriage, an outline of appropriate spaces for women, codes of manliness, etc. Often women's perceptions and their bodily experiences are routed through such a
matrix. Therefore, indeed we can say gender can be implicated within socio-cultural practice regulation of sexed bodies.

The most significant neglected parameters that define this grounding matrix of sexualization are space and spatiality. It may be argued that the femininity / masculinity and the activities of women and men are negotiated within socio-spatial parameters that define physical space for e.g. the meaning of inside and outside of these spaces are elaborated in symbolic terms. In rural South India, for instance, the terms inside and outside are not just indicators of physical space, but has various dimensions of meanings depending on how they are used. For an instance sitting outside, for women denotes that she is menstruating, avoiding from inner spaces reflects ritual dimension. While similarly, delineations of inside and outside also define work opportunities for women. When used socially related in a village, "outside" could be the area inhabited by the so-called low castes reflects economic and social dimension. These socio-spatial usages define relations between persons, different castes, or even religious groups. These meanings are context circumscribed and could be differently exhibited in other localities, such as urban and semi-urban spaces. The point is to analyze the power of this matrix for understanding how gender is figured locally as socio-spatial matrix of sexualization helps to perceive women's lives and their social structures. On one side, it demonstrates how norms of space and movement are written into definitions of the female body giving detail study of their lives acts of speech. On the other hand it indicates the manner in which the woman or female body becomes central to the drawing of boundaries within the communities. In broad terms gender refers to the social organization of differences between the sexes (Cornell, 1987; Scott,
What is being emphasized here is the space and spatiality is a vital idiom through which gender (and other) differences are articulated and channeled in multicultural contexts.

It is a fact that issues related equality, female agency and body have been the main debate in the feminist movement highlighting explicitly gender concept in many ways. Since last decade or even more, we find that the discourse on gender has been the central space in women's studies. Having said so we also need to accept that some the term monolithic feminism has existed and the world are being feminist studies exclude the histories and struggles of women who do not belong to dominant group sections of society in India. In other words there is an urgent realization that the way in which we are positioned as women, and how this positioning occur with the range of other identities matters a great deal to our experience of oppression and subjugation.

In Indian context issues related to gender equality are being addressed at different levels and by various agencies both academic as well as action. Thus attempts were made to highlight asymmetries in gender relation, such as vulnerability of women workers, sexual harassment, health care and development regarding women. These concepts of women's rights were made on legal rights of system to be more concern about the gender inequality. These actions and movements of women directed in actions towards the government transforming them as state policies, in the areas of law, health and employment. Subsequently the mobilizations around issues of rape, dowry, and attributes compelled the state to take effective measures of women's issues, and also to consent women's groups while formulating policies on a wide range
of issues. Viewed thus at one level are expression of women's agency within the space of civil society; at another level are the struggles for equality within the framework of the democratic state itself, a struggle alongside other groups for better access to resources has been on engagement (Gandhi and Shah, 1992; Kumar, 1993). In addition to the women's concerns, women's movement / struggles are also addressing gender issues in the context of globalization particularly liberalization policies, rising communalism, fundamentalism, subtle casteism, etc.

Therefore, it has become necessary for Indian feminism, to redefine itself in the face of these developments, a task rendered all the more difficult due to the different kinds of identity policies in which religious, caste, and economic groups have been engaging (Tharu and Miranjana, 1999).

Gender is not simply a system of classification, by which biological males and females are sorted, separated and socialized into equivalent sex roles. Gender goes beyond these seemingly existentialist platitudes to the universal inequality between women and men. For, when we speak about gender we apparently speak about hierarchy, power and inequality, not simply difference. In order to underscore this issue, most social and behavioral scientists now use the term gender in a different way than we used the word sex. Sex refers to the biological apparatus, the male and female, our chromosomal, chemical, anatomical organization. While gender refers to the meaning that are attached to those differences within a culture. Sex is male and female whereas gender refers to the meanings that one attached to those differences within a specific culture. Sex is male and female; gender is masculinity and femininity – what it means to be a man or a woman. To cite Justice Antonin Scalia, "The word "gender"
has acquired the new and useful connotation of cultural and attitudinal characters distinctive to the sexes. That is to say, gender is to sex as feminine is to female and masculine is to male" (Kimmel, 2006).

By and large if not all but some men are ubiquitous in universities and professional schools and in the public sphere in general. When we study specific books yet we do not find the word women but very often we notice the word, men. Every course, which is not "women's studies", is obviously a course of "men's studies", be it history, political science, chemistry, literature, geography and so on. But when we study men, we study and have really meant them as political leaders, military heroes, scientists, writers, poets, etc. Everywhere one turns there are courses related to men, but no information on masculinity. Until a person thinks himself generic universally generalizable, he doesn't understand that race, class and gender didn't refer only to the people who are marginalized by race, caste and gender privileges. For example, only white or upper caste people in the society have the luxury not to think about race or caste every minute of their lives. Likewise only men have the luxury to pretend that gender does not matter. Needless to mention that how power is so often invisible to those who have it – the privilege and gender.

The interplanetary theory of gender assumes, whether through biology or socialization, that women act like women wherever they are and men act like men wherever they are.

One of the most celebrated anthropologists to explore these differences was Maraget Mead, whose research in the South Seas (Samoo, Polynesia, Indonesia) remains, despite some significant criticism, an example of engaged scholarship. Mead
was clear that sex differences were "not something deeply biological", but rather was
learned and once learned, became part of the ideology that continued to perpetuate
them.

Every society reveals some differentiation between women and men and
therefore the society intends and exhibits the patterns of gendered inequality and male
domination in specific ways. We all are familiar that gender differences and gender
inequality exists more or less in the society. Economic, political and social variables
tend to produce different cultural configurations. Researcher points out those different
cultures in society who need more physical strength and highly developed motor
skills, the more will be the differences in socialization between males and females.
The studies also reveal that larger the family group the larger the differences between
women and men.

It needs no special mention that one of the main key determinants of women's
status has been the division of labour around childcare. Women's role and
responsibility of reproduction has limited their social and economic participation. No
society in the world assigns childcare to men. If the men take care and responsibility
of childcare more compared to women then the status of women will be surely higher
than men. Relationships between children and their parents have also been seen as key
to women's status. Sociologist Scoot Coltrane found that the close the relationship
between father and son, the higher the status of women is likely to be. The more
mothers and father share child rearing the less men belittle women. Magaret Mead
also emphasized the centrality of fatherhood by arguing that most cultures take
women's role in child rearing as a given, whereas men must learn to become nurturers.
There is much at stake, but nothing inevitable "every known human society rests firmly on the learned nurturing behaviour of men. Such issues are not simply incidental for women's lives either; it turns out that the more time men spend with their children, the less gender inequality is present in that culture. Controversially, the more free women are from childcare the more that childcare is parceled out elsewhere and the more that women control their fertility the higher will be the status.

Daphne Spain (1992) argues that "societies with men's hut are those in which women have the least power, if you spend your time away from your hut, off at the men's hut with the other men, you'll have precious little time, and even less inclination to spend with your family and sharing in child rearing" (95). Therefore it may be mentioned that males and females can be trained for a vast arrangement of characteristics and individual variations with overlapping order. Since we find very less difference between girls and boys, yet we take into consideration for their ineffectiveness of socialization activities such as televisions, toys, play, schools, etc., in shaping the behaviour of children in psychological experiments. It seems that boys and girls perform similar tasks without labeling the tasks as gender appropriate. The social environment is filled with gendered messages and gendered activities. Even if the child possesses no fixed and permanent gender roles, social arrangements will automatically reinforce gender differences. If so in a gender - neutral experiment, social requirements are removed, the child does not behave in accordance with a gender stereotype. Often, the first time we hear that gender is socially constructed, that means that we are not responsible for what we do. Small wonder as we hold often "society made me like this," so it's not my fault." When we say that gender identity is
socially constructed, we mean that meanings and behaviours that we construct from the values, images, and prescription we find in the world around us. Our gendered identities are both voluntary, we choose to become who we are and perused, we are pressured, forced, sanctioned and often physically beaten into submission to some rules. We neither make up the rules but gradually peruse them nor adopt them in our social life. Social constructions thus build on the other social and behavioural sciences adding specific dimensions to the exploration of gender, inequality and difference (ibid). To explain the institutional dimension, social constructionism, moves beyond socialization of gendered individuals who occupy gender – neutral sites, to the study of the interplay between gendered individuals and gendered institutions.

The famous phrase by Simon de Beauvior, One is not born woman but becomes one, a basic statement which shows distinction between sex and gender. Society takes up the task of converting a biological male into a man and a biological female into a woman by prescribing masculine and feminine qualities to them. According to Ann Dakley, "gender is a matter of culture" (Dakley, 1985: 16). She asserts that gender distinction constructed by society, based on sex differences, which are biological in nature as not only, is the division of labour by sex is not universal but also there is no reason why it should be. They own their creation to human, inventiveness rather than invisible biological forces.

Culture is a learned way of behaviour that is transmitted from generation to generation. Moreover it is shared by a group and historically accumulates over a period. Therefore, it is said to have a historical growth, which is linked with the past and the future. There are certain norms, values and beliefs in any society that are culturally determined and socially transmitted. Culture pertains to the learned aspects
of society rather than the inherited ones the way in which children and other new members of society learn the ways of life in that society is called socialization. It is a process of transmitting culture consisting of "complex processes of interaction through which the individual learns the habits, beliefs, skills and standards of judgment that are necessary for effective, participation in social groups and communities" (cited in Shankarwa, 1993: 241). Socialization is a process that not only allows the baby to know about the basic norms of society, but also helps in the gradual development of one's self. Development of the self on the ego comes with the help of role-playing where a child put himself/herself in somebody else's shoes and tries to get his/her self image through other's perception (Mead cited in Shankarwa's 1993: 252). Thus the child comes to learn about the norms, expectations and different roles to be played in the group through the process of socialization. A child learns about his/her gender identity by learning what is she/he expected to do by others for instance a male child learns to confirm to his own gender group by negating all the activities that a girl child does. Thus, a male child becomes violent and plays hazardous games and keeps way from dolls and kitchen set else he would be branded a girl. Socialization is continuous process that helps learn the normative behavior, which mostly happens to be the stereotypic behaviour. The very first thing the child is socialized about is the idea regarding his/ her gender identity, socially constituted gender role from stereotype.

**Gender Construction**

At a very early age, the title boy develops an object-cathexis of his mother, which is originally related to the mother's breast... his father the boy deals with by
identifying himself with him. For a time these two relationships exist side by side, until the sexual wishes in regards to the mother become intense and the father is perceived as an obstacle to them. This gives rise to the Oedipus complex (Freud, 1957: 219). So in repressing the erotic feelings towards the mother and accepting the father as a superior being, the boy identifies with the father and become aware of his male identity. (Freud cited in Giddens, 2000: 110). The child suffers from worthlessness and shame and through the process of identification; he tends to internalize the voice of the torturer. It is similar to what the Indian felt about their oppressors during the British rule. This is the form where identification is established with the oppressor (Nandy, 1983: 7). In this case, the farther acts as the 'other for the boy child'. (Mellody cited in Baker and Galanski, 2001: 90) But this 'others' adds to the masculine identity (the self) construction of the boy child. The girl slowly realizes that she is not like her father because of certain anatomical differences. Therefore, she should be like her mother – then she starts identifying with the mother and when she grows up, she seeks her father in her lover. She loves being dominated by men, which represents the dominance of the father (Storey, 1993: 132-133).

But Nancy Chodrow has something else to say. She reverses Trend's statement by saying that masculinity rather than femininity is defined by a loss the forfeiting of close attachment to mother. She emphasizes more on the role of mother in the development of a child's identity rather than the role of father as Trend did (cited in Giddens, 2002: 111). Accordingly Chodrow argues that attachment with the mother is broken at some point of time in order to achieve a separate sense of self. And this process takes place in different ways for boys and girls. Girls remain closer to their
mother and imitate her. In Chodrow's view this tends to produce characteristics of sensitivity and emotional compassion in women. Boys on the other hand reject the closeness to the mother in order to forge their understandings of masculinity from what is not feminine. They learn not to be sissies or mummy boy. So, they remain unskilled in relating closely to others they develop more analytical ways of looking at the world emphasizing on achievement and repressing their ability to understand their own and other feelings (Giddens, 2002: 111). Thus, male identity is constructed through separation. So men fear close associations while women feel endangered in the absence of one as their self-esteem and identity gets damaged.

The recent news item reported women in European countries suffering from domestic violence. Domestic violence is a common feature, but it had a strange link with love. 18% of the mistreated women in trance told that they were still in love with their violent partners. Many among them were guilty that they failed to become good wives and lovers, as they were unable to sympathize with their violent partners. So, these women felt they deserved thrashing. (Gyanarajan Swain, The Hindu, 2004).

Economic development is thus no longer considered synonymous with economic growth, it is a wider concept, which includes growth plus many other objectives necessary for the upliftment of an economy. To quote Michael Jodaro, "Economic Development must therefore be conceived as a multi-dimensional process involving major changes in social structure, popular attitudes, and national institutions as well as acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and eradication of absolute poverty. Development in its essence must represent the whole gamut of changes by which an entire social system, tuned to the diverse basic needs and desires
of individuals and social groups within that system, moves away from conditions of life widely perceived as unsatisfactory, towards a situation or condition of life regarded as materially and spiritually better.

**Sex Discrimination**

With the release of the Census 2001, UNFPA began a journey to address the growing sex-ratio imbalance. Calculated based on the number of girls per 1000 boys in the 0-6 year age group, the child sex ratio showed a sharp decline from 976 girls to 1000 boys in 1961 to 927 as per the 2001 census. What becomes newly apparent is how far the urban, educated middle class has gone to ensure birth of sons and not daughters. In addition, with this it became clear that the problem is not one deficiency as is seen in the case of malnutrition or poverty but a new expression of choice by largely urban families. The use of ultrasound to determine the sex of the focus was to contribute to the rapid decline in the child sex ratio. Adversely, a greater dip is seen in the ratios of urban cities and districts, educated and those access to resources and technology. In India, small families are becoming the preferred option, and de-selecting daughters are achieving this. Couples want small families but not without son(s). Possibly, the employment of women outside the home and inherent recognition of the value of the girls within the culture can contribute to the survival of daughters.

In conjunction with the patriarchal influences on women's status, an analysis of patterns seen in the countries across Asia reveals three key factors that influence the sex selection. Sociologists and demographers conclude that sex selection will take place wherever there is a rapid fertility decline, with continued son preference, and access to technology and illegal abortion services. A distinct feature of sex ratio
imbalance is that it is conditional in nature. Emerging data shows that it is often families without sons who are most likely to indulge in sex selection for their next child. Even in India, the Census office's Special Fertility and Mortality Survey (1998) shows that the sex ratio at birth is adverse for girls at higher birth orders. The ratio is as high as 139 boys to 100 girls for the third child when the two previous children are girls. If cultural conditions favour boys, then technology is already catching up to meet a latent demand. This is making the practice of sex selection almost irreversible and widespread.

Psychologist Warren Farrell called mate power a "myth" since men and women have complementary roles, and equally defamatory stereotypes of "Sex objects" and "success objects" (Farrell, 1993: 100). Farrell often uses the analogy of the driver to illustrate his case. The driver is in the driver's seat. He knows where he is going wearing a uniform. We think that he is in power but from his perspective someone else is giving the orders, so he is not powerful at all. From this analogy we can say that individual men are not powerful, the group of men is powerful and dominates. The relations between and among men emerge also as relations of power – power based on class, castes, race, ethnicity, sexuality, age and the like. It is groups of men, not men in general, who are oppressed within patriarchal sexual relations give rise to situations in different ways to overall subordination of women to men.

The social construction of gender relations has three main related issues present in its formation are identity, institution and interaction with regard to gender difference and inequality. Gender is less a property of the individual than is a product of our interactions with other we play in front of them. According to West and
Zimmerman gender is a "managed property" which is contrived with respect to the fact that particular ways women and men are distinctively of social groups, constituted in concrete, historically changing and generally unequal social relationships" ("Doing Gender", 1987).

Thompson observes that class applies equally to gender as gender "is a relationship, not a thing" – and like all relationships, we are active in its construction. We do not simply inherit a male or female sex role, but we actively – interactively constantly define and redefine what it means to be men or women in our daily encounters with one another." (Cited in "The Making of English Working Class": 1966). James W. Messerschmitt argues, "Gender is a situated accomplishment in which we produce forms of behaviour seen by others in the same immediate situation as masculine or feminine." (Zimmerman, 2005: 29). Gender is what we bring to these interactions and what is produced in them as well. Social world is a built on systematic, structural inequality based on gender. Social life reproduces both gender difference and gender inequality. The study of sociology reveals & understands both what is different between women and men and what is not different but only seems to be whereas gender difference is the product and not the cause of gender inequality. Therefore we can say that we are gendered people living gendered lives in a gendered society.

Taking world apart, gender starts from the family's environment where the child learns, and adapts his thoughts and actions. If one of the chief purposes of the family is to maintain both gender inequality and gender difference between the parents, then its other chief purpose is to ensure that those gendered identities are
imparted to the next generation. It is in the family that the seeds of gender difference are first planted, that we first understand that being a man or woman, a boy or a girl, has different and unequal meanings. Gender socialization begins at birth and continues throughout our lives. Throughout childhood gender difference and gender inequality are created and reinforced through play, media, and the school. At later ages the girls are encouraged to move away but never as much as boys are parents interest building independence seems to explain this difference. As a result of gender stereotypes, mothers believe that boys rather than girls should be independent and encourage them to explore their world. And parents in general are more restrictive with their daughters and create more limits on their acceptable behaviour from a very early age.

Parent's early treatment of their infant is not usually to teach the child regarding a "proper" gender role, but rather reflects the fact that the parents themselves accept the gendered roles for men and women. Even though universally sturdy and active girls are still thought to be more delicate and gentle.

Researchers have found that people interact with infants based on assumptions rather than characteristics of the child itself. For example subjects in one experiment consistently gave gender specific toys (dolls for girls – hammers for boys) to infants they were told were either boys or girls (ibid.). As they were not knowing the sexes they described boys as strong, big, and soft and pretty for girls. One experiment showed a videotape of nine months old reactions to a jack in the box, a doll, a teddy bear and a buzzer. Half the observers were told the child was boy and half were told it was a girl. The expressions of anger, fear and pleasure they found were at emotional levels different when the child cried. Those who thought that the child was a boy
found it angry and those who thought it was a girl found it afraid. When the child moves from infant to the toddler stage, boys are told, not to cling to their mothers are told that boys do not cry. Boys are expected to be independent aggressive and suppress his emotions. And whereas girls are encouraged to express emotions and control aggression. It is an established truth that the shops have different design toys especially for boys and girls. Girls are given dolls and doll houses while boys get trucks and buildings blocks. These labels originally come from the adults. Often we have noted that at the age of 2 or 2/6 years boys prefer to play with dolls but parents consider them to be girl's toys. Besides we find colour segregation among gender i.e. blue for boys and pink for girls which clearly shows our views and ideas regarding gender for example we think about the kinds of images boys and girls see in comic books and television shows. Boys are showed playing mythic heroes (cowboys, Indians, soldiers, superheroes, Ninja turtles) while girls often play mothers, nurses and teachers. Though this has changed significantly in recent years, it has changed for more for girls than for boys. Girls now play soccer but the direction of change has tended to go in only one way. For boys, the opportunities to play at girls games are rare, the label "sissy" is more negative than the label 'tomboy' while girls have more 'boy's toys' than boys have girl's toys.

Girls think they would be better off as boys and many of them declare that they would rather be boys than girls. By contrast, boys tend to see being girls as a fate worse than death. "If I were a girl", one grader said, "Everybody would be better than me because boys are better than girls."
Coming to gendered politics of housework we have noticed through a historic fundamental transformation of a family. And it reveals that the greatest single shock the family has had to absorb has been the entry of women into the workplace. That women work outside the home as a matter of economic necessity and of ambition that will dramatically alter the life of modern family. Several studies observed that working mothers report higher levels of self-esteem and are less depressed than full time housewives. However they report lower levels of marital satisfaction than do their husbands of traditional housewives. The reason is women's work multiplies increases at home and work twice more than men while the men work only outside home. Perhaps this must be the reason why women are so tired and unhappy. Arlie Hochsehild has called, "The second shift" the housework and child care that every family must do to function properly. More often than not women do housework and child care because they have to, not because they want to. To quote Mary Hallock Foote, "I am daily dropped in little pieces and passed around and devoured and expected to be whole again next day and all days and I am never alone for a single minute" (Gender and Space, 156; West and Zimmerman, 156).

The family as a gendered institution also depends on interpersonal relationship among family members, on the gendered division of household labor that produces male dominance in society. Gender inequality is expressed in the housework and childcare performed by men and by the different trajectories of men's and women's lives following divorce. It is maintained too often by the real or implicit threat of violence (Niranjana, 2001: 156).
A child who experiences love and nurturing from his or her father or mother will come to see that nurturing is something that adults do, not something that men and women do, so all the children, both boys and girls, will expect when they become adults. Similarly it is related with work, the child will see adults working and not men or women working. The two experiences that trend himself identified as the most crucial elements of healthy adult life are love and work.

Coming to gender difference in school the classroom setting reproduces gender inequality. There are some signs of change; this nursery school experience is reproduced in every classroom in every town and city, everyday. Boys and girls learn and teach each other – what are appropriate behaviours and experiences for boys and girls, and make sure that everyone acts according to plan. "From elementary school through higher education, female students receive less active instruction, both in the quantity and in the quality of teacher time and attention," note Myra and David Sadker, summarizing the research, failing at fairness. Many teachers perceive boys as active, capable of expressing anger, quarrelsome, while they perceive girls as affectionate, obedient responsive and tenacious. Many teachers assume that girls are likely to "love" reading and "hate" mathematics and science, and they expect the opposite of boys.

**Status of Women in India**

The constitutions of India guarantee women, as it does to all citizens, equality in all spheres besides making special provisions for them. The situation of women as it exists is one of low status, powerless, endangered by development suppressed by
poverty and oppressed by patriarchy. Traditional structures have not failed to make room for them as equal partners in the decision neither making process, nor has the system ensured that their interests and concerns are reflected in development plans and local programmes. They are ignorant, unaware and ill informed about how they could live better lives with less drudgery, morbidity and fear of violence. Even though nature has endowed them with superior biological strength, the environment stifles their development.

Policy implements consider women as demographic tool to be used in the battle against population growth. Their health-care as women are of little concern but majority of women centre round pregnant or lactating mother. They are the beasts of burden, attending to all domestic chores, fetching fuel, fodder and water, from dawn to dusk on family farms, or enterprises with no reward, no asset and no recognition in the system of National Accounts. Women constitute 48 per cent of the total population in India. Among these 72 percent live in rural areas. Even after 50 years of independence these women continue to live in a state of neglection and exploitation. They generally have lower incomes and seldom have equal opportunities to develop their capacities. Given empowerment in terms of knowledge information, the right environment and proper skills, women can lead the nation to greater heights socially, economically and culturally (Hasan and Menon, 2004).

Education is one of the most important factors promoting economic development. The empowering role of woman's education is multidimensional, affecting not only every aspect of women's lives, but also the lives of their children and others who depend on them. Many developing countries exhibit considerable
gender inequality in education, employment, welfare, health, etc. For e.g., girls and women in South Asia and China largely suffer with discrepancies in education (Klasen and Wink, 2000).

Assuming that boys and girls have a similar distribution of innate abilities and that children with more abilities are lesser abilities than girls have greater chances to be educated. The average innate ability of educated children is lower than what it would be if boys and girls had equal education opportunities. Assuming that the amount of human capital of a person is the outcome of a combination of innate abilities and education, gender inequality in education would therefore lower the average level of human capital in the economy and therefore slow the economic growth. For the same reason, such gender inequality in education would lower the impact of male education on economic growth and raise the impact of female education (Doller and Gatti, 1999; Knowle, Lorqelly and Owen, 1999).

Single – sex education for women often perpetuates detrimental attitudes and stereotypes about women that "by nature or situation girls and young women cannot become successful or learn well in co-educational institutions" (Dobbs, James).

**Gender Discrimination in the Workplace**

For many years, the chief obstacle facing women in the labour force is sex discrimination. Discrimination occurs when we treat people unequally because of personal characteristics that are not related to the job. To exclude one race, caste or gender from housing, educational opportunities, or employment would be a form of discrimination. With regard to gender discrimination in the workplace, employers have historically referred to a variety of characteristics about women to exclude them.
The basis for the discrimination may not rely on any stereotypic ideas about male and female differences, but it must be based on some occupational requirement that either only men or women could perform.

Employment is the most natural and best way to achieve the objectives of economic growth, poverty eradication, social justice, social stability and peace. The participation of women in economic activities is an important factor in the economic and social empowerment of women, as employment is not only a source of economic independence, but also gives women a sense of self-worth. Over the last decade, the participation of women in the labour market i.e., paid work has increased in most part of the world. Women's global economic activity rate in the age group between 20-54 climbed from 54% in 1950 to 67% in 1996 and is expected to reach almost 70% by the year 2010 (ILA, 1996). Besides the economic development, industrialization and demographic factors cultural and ideological factors play a role in determining the degree of feminization of the labour force.

Female heads of the households and women from poor families in particular have increasingly allocated their time to productive activities and taken up any kind of work available in their home countries to help contribute to family incomes, often at the expense of the household work, family care and their own leisure time. Their role in the labour market continues to remain invisible in many cases, and in numerous countries, the notion that the supply of female labour is easily available when needed, and dispensable when not needed, still persists. The increase in the quantity of women's employment, however, has not been matched by improvement in the quality of their employment. Majority of women go for typical forms of the wage work or
self-employment, rather than stable fulltime wage employment in the formal sectors of the economy. These forms of work are mainly associated with low earnings, lack of training opportunities or promotion, and they tend to be highly unstable.

**Women in Organized and Unorganized Sectors**

Among rural women workers, majority is employed in agriculture as labourers and cultivators. 55.6% of women workers followed manufacturing, 21.4% agriculture and allied occupations 9.8% and finance, insurance, real estates and business 4.9%. In 1997, women workers employed in factories, mines and plantations constituted 14%, 6% and 51% respectively of the total work force. More than 80% of female workers are engaged in the agriculture sectors in rural India. In the urban areas, female workers participation in the tertiary sector has increased appreciably from 37.6% in 1983 to 52.9% in 1999. The distribution of female work participation and status employment indicates that there is a pronounced declining trend in the importance of self-employed category in both rural and urban areas and an overall increase in the casualization of the women work force from 31.4% in 1972-73, to 40.9% in 1997, in rural India with a marginal decline to 39.6% in 1999-2000 (Government of India, 2002: 53).

**Women in Agriculture**

Women farmers provide enormous services at almost every stage of agriculture practice. The tradition of producing, selecting, storing and replanting seeds dates back to at least 5000 years. A major characteristic of the India's labour force is the structural stagnation in its intersectoral distribution. About 70% of the labour force is concentrated in agricultural. The small women force has been at about 28%. With
increased population pressure on land, the choice of determining work status lies with the men folk who cultivate their land and the women land up as labourers. Hence, the occupational division of labour, women have slipped down from better skilled jobs to lesser skilled ones. Apart from poor participation of women in the workforce, there has been an increased uncertainty of women's employment. Acharya and Patkar (1983) have shown that employment uncertainty of poor women is four times more than that of men in the same category. The causes of overall uncertainty in employment have their origin in demographic, technological and social factors like caste, class or genders.

Thus difficult skill access and employers inhibitions contribute to female non-acceptance in the organized sector. On the other hand, the unorganized sector, in the industrial and services sector, employs women in large numbers.

Though gender discrimination is extremely difficult to justify, but far more mysterious mechanisms maintain gender inequality. Amongst them ubiquitous of these is sex segregation. Sociologist Barbara Reskin Writer refers to women's and men's concentration in different occupations, industries, jobs and levels in workplace hexarchies and argues that sex segregation becomes, itself, a sexual division of paid labor in which men and women do different tasks, on the same tasks under different names or at different times and places. Different occupations are seen as more appropriate for one gender or the other, and thus women and men are guided, pushed or occasionally showed into specific positions (Barbara Reskin, "Sex Segregation in the Workplace" in women and work, 1999).
Sex segregation starts early and continues throughout our work lives, which has its significant consequences on incomes and experiences. If sex segregations were simply the product of socialized differences between women and men, we should expect that professions would have roughly comparable gender distributions. But they do not for e.g. In New York city, there are only 25 women out of 11,500 fire fighters, In Europe most dentists are female. In Russia half of the doctors are women.

To discriminate against individuals on the basis of average between group differences ignores the differences within each group. Such behaviours rely on stereotypes and should be prohibited under law. Logically, stereotypes fall into a compositional fallacy – assuming what is true of some is true for all. For e.g. – "all human are animals but not all animals are human".

Another main reason for increasing wage gap in that men and women experiences different in the labour force for e.g. when men enter labor force, they enter for good, while women occasionally take time out for child bearing and parental leave. This has vast effect on women’s wages, and fuels the growing gap across the life span. In fact, women who drop out of the labor force have lower real wages when they come back to work than they left.

Sexual harassment is one of the chief ways that men resist gender equality in the work place. The increased reporting by women of their experiences at work, the re-labeling of behaviours that men used for granted.

The result of several historical and social developments is that the gendering of intimate life – of friendship, love and sex. In this century, we have witnessed a dramatic transformation in the gendered division of emotional labor. Since the 1970s,
studies of friendship have taken a different turn, divided in two different events. One hand, feminism began to celebrate women's experiences as a source of solidarity among women. Women's greater experiences of intimacy and emotional expressiveness were seen not as a liability but as an asset in a culture that increasingly elevated the expression of feelings as a positive goal.

Most women, according to surveys, believe that women's friendship are decidedly better than men's because they involve personal care, concern, intimate sharing and more emotional exchange, while men's friendship were seen as more likely to involve work, sports, business and other impersonal activities.

Sociologists Lynne Davidson and Lucille Duberman, "Even though they report little investment in the personal and relational levels of the friendship". Despite the findings that both women and men say, they disclose equal amounts of personal information and say that they are completely open and trustworthy to their friends, the authors conclude that women actually disclose more to their friends.

Without such relationship maintenance, men's friendships experience greater attrition than women's over time for example, Pilcher (1999) draws together a range of British research evidence that shows the gendered character of education and training, paid work, household work and caring, love and sexuality, body related technologies, popular media culture, crime and criminal justice, and politics. Adkins describes her research as concerned with the 'gendering' of the contemporary labour market. It focuses on the processes through which power relations between men and women in employment are constituted and how "advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, and meaning and identity are patterned through and in
terms of a distinction between male and female" (Acker, 1990: 146; Adkins, 1995: 1). Adkins calls 'sex-workers', working both for the public and for their male colleagues and bosses. In other words they were required to fulfill conditions related to the production of an "attractive" female workforce (*ibid*, 145). This gendering of production practices meant that women and men employed in the leisure parks were qualitatively different kinds of workers. To be workers, women had to be "attractive" workers and carry out forms of sexualized work, whereas men did not have to do this (*ibid*, 147). Adkins argues that the labour market is gendered prior to job differentiation. In other words, women workers in the leisure parks had to fulfill the conditions of being sexualized workers regardless of their specific occupation. The thought about gender as a noun, which focuses on the distinctions between men and women can be noticed actively produced by "gendering" process, while the terms of "gendering" and engender give a clear emphasis to the ongoing, processed quality of gendered relations. The gender is said to be a patterned system of ideological and material practices, performed by individual in a society, through which power relations between women and men are made and remade as meaningful and worth. Only a gender order of a society forms codes, norms and standards of masculinities and femininities which are created and recreated and then organizing the relations amongst them.

The concept of the gender order was first developed by fill Matthews (1984) in her study of historical construction of femininity. According to Mathews, the idea of the gender order gives recognition to the fact that every known society distinguishes between women and men, As systematic ways of creating social women and men and
of ordering and patterning relations between them, it is not logically necessary that gender orders should be hierarchal, inequitable or oppressive (1984: 13). In her study she draws an analogy with the concept of the economic order or mode, which shows that systematic ordering of people's relationship to the means of production and consumption, may vary likewise it may be capitalist, feudal or communist in its specific content.

It seems that a gender order could be equalitarian or matriarchal, rather than patriarchal. To cite Mathew "The specific nature of content of any gender order is constantly in process, being formed and changed. It is fashioned by actions of individuals who are themselves formed in that interaction. It is created in the struggles and power strategies and contradictions and unintended consequences of a multitude of social groups and individuals and interest. The femininity and masculinity that are forged of these countervailing forces are never constant but always changing and more often than not internally in consistent if not contradictory" (Mathew, 1984: 14-15).

R.W. Connell (1997) in his study observed that the relationship between the body and gender is a central issue for gender theory and he opines that gender is the outcome of recurrent interpretations of the reproductive and sexual capacities of human body, and its multiple effects are femininities and masculinities. In his analysis, gender is a recurring creation of human agency, which also acts to constrain individual agency. For Connell's empirical research covers three major structures of gender relations which are labour, power and cathexis (concerned with emotional relationships, including sexuality). For Connell, as for Mathews gender relations are regarded as the outcome of human practice or agency subject to resistance as well as
conformity and as acceptance. All this implies that gender relations are open to change in the contemporary gender order of industrialized world. For example, in family relationships the state policies interprets in the legitimacy of men's domination over women such as for ex. – via laws on divorce, domestic violence and rape within marriage, pensions, taxation etc. for married women who work outside home. Connell argues that gender inequality can be eradicated through individuals and groups, collectively and on a mass scale. Marshall (1994) finds the concept of the gender order valuable for the analysis of gender, particularly for understanding the relationship between individual gathered subjectivities and gender as a social structure. Marshall believes the gender order provides the mode of interpretation though individuals constructing an embodied subjective and social identity. For Marshall, though, a fuller account is needed of the formation of gendered subjectivities in the configuration of power relations especially in relation to understanding why it is that knowledgeable acting subjects may nonetheless tend to participate in the legitimation of conditions that reproduce their position (Marshall, 1994: 117).

In evaluating the concept of the gender order, critics point to its advantages over the concept of patriarchy. Pollert (1996) for example describes Connell's theory of the gender order as open to more diversity than patriarchy, emphasizing more on gender as an ongoing process than human agency. Similarly, Marshall also points out that the approach allows a description of a society as patriarchal, without lapsing into the trans-historical, agent-less conception of patriarchy (1994: 116). For some critics however, the concept of the gender order has not overcome the problem of how to theory gender in relation to class and race. For example, West argues that Connell's
(1987) approach fails to include either race or ethnicity or caste as key concepts (1989: 1489). Pollert criticizes Connell's theory of the gender order for its 'dualist' conception of gender and class arguing that it is based on diffuse (1996: 650). Despite the lack of clarity around the interrelations between gender, class, caste and race others (Maharaj, 1995; Pikher, 1999; Fiaser and Nicolson, 1989) feel that Connell's theory of the gender order goes some way toward satisfying the criteria of a postmodern gender theory as in that it is explicitly historical and attuned to cultural specificity in terms of time, place and diversity.

Gender segregation, which also is one of the most current issues faced in our society, occurs when women and men are located separately from one another. For example, in some countries, where there is educational provision for both boys and girls, rather than being educated together in the same institutions they are segregated on the grounds of gender and are educated separately, in single-sex schools or universities. Gender segregation in education can also be said to occur in the way that boys and girls often study different subjects.

Many researchers have focused on gender segregation in paid work in their analyses of power inequalities between women and men. In Hartman's (1982) account, there is a mutual accommodation between patriarchy and capitalism, which results in a vicious circle of disadvantage for women. Job segregation means that it is men who hold the job with greater material rewards, not relatively high wages compared to women. The lower wages earned by women in their jobs keep women dependent on men because they encourage women to marry. Married women must perform domestic chores for their husbands. This domestic division of labour in turn, acts to weaken
women's position in the labour market. Thus, the hierarchal domestic divisions of
labour are perpetuated by the labour market and *vice versa* (ibid, 448).

Segregation is at the most extreme level of jobs. Since occupations are clusters
or aggregates of jobs, this grouping together of jobs may obscure the full extent of
segregation. For example, if we find in teaching profession 'teacher' obscures the
pattern that women predominate as teachers in primary schools and men in secondary
schools. Similarly the occupational classification 'cleaner' obscures the predominance
of men as 'street cleaners' and women as 'office cleaners' (MacEmen, 1994: 5). We are
not born with perceptions of gender differences, these emerge during the process of
socio-economic change. The conflicts concerning are gender identity interaction
particular ways that boys experience the processes of differentiation of the formation
of sex. Both sexes establish separateness in relation to their mother, but because the
mother is a woman, these experiences differ by gender. Though children of both sexes
are originally part of her, a mother unconsciously and often consciously experiences
her son as more of than her daughter. Reciprocally, a son's male core gender identity
develops away from his mother.

While core gender identity for a girl is not problematic in the sense that it is for
boys. Girls and women do not define themselves as 'not-men' or 'not-male' but as
female. However, girls and women may have problems with their sense of continuity
and similarity.

Men's and women's understanding of difference and gender difference must
thus be understood in the relational context from which they are created. As we all
know that the main stem of relation of boys and girls to their mother is the primary
caretaker, love object and object of identification and is a woman in sexual and gender
organized world. These developments create a gender difference which is central for males and not central for females. It gives men a psychological investment in difference that women do not have.

According to psychoanalytic accounts since Freud, it is very clear that males are "not females" in earliest development. But, because men have power and cultural hegemony in our society, a notable thing happens. Men use this hegemony to appropriate and transform these experiences. Both in everyday life and in theoretical, men have come to define maleness as that which is basically human, and to define women as not men.

Needless to mention that the subject of women is an ancient as the prehistoric period an evolution of man and society. From ancient time woman is always been seen as a part of male. She does not have her own recognition. Even that Eve was created out of a 'supernumery bone' of Adam Michelet describes woman as the relative being. According to Brenda"... Man can think of himself without woman. She cannot think of herself without man. And she is simply what man demands, thus she is called "the sex", which means that she appears essentially to the male as a sexual being. For man, woman is sex – absolute sex, no less. He is the subject, he is the absolute – she is the other (de Beauvoir, 1952: 19). The position of women in Primitive society is difficult to ascertain women's situation in pre-agricultural period. But women worked hard as she was the burden carrier. The terrible obstacle was the bondage of reproduction as menstruation, pregnancy and childbirth reduced their capacity to work. The domestic labour that fell to her lot because they were reconcilable with the cares of maternity imprisoned her in repetition and immanence; they were repeated from day to day in an
identical form, which was perpetuated almost without change from century to century; they produced nothing new" (de Beauvoir, 1952: 71). While the position of men is totally in contrast to women. Initially man has been the inventor through numerous inventions, he proved himself self-realistic. Men's success has always been celebrated with festivals and triumphs. As hunter, as a warrior man proved by endangering his life for a purpose, that life was not of the supreme value for men. "For it is not giving life but in rising life that man is raised above the animal; that is why superiority has been accorded in humanity not to the sex that brings forth but to that which kills" (de Beauvior, 1952: 72). Thus, women's subordination began with the society's development. Men's activities were always appreciated while women's undermined.

**Historical Materialism and Women**

According to historical materialism, human being is not only an animal species, but also a historical reality. In their opinion women could not be treated simply as a sexual organism, their position has also been determined by techniques, attainment and economic organization. Engles retraces the history of women according to the materialist perspective (Engles, 1952: 19). He further explains that in the Stone Age, when land was common to everyone in the clan, the rudimentary character of the spade and hoe limited the possibilities of agriculture, so that women's strength was adequate for gardening. In this primitive division of labour, the two sexes constituted in two classes and equality was found between them. While man hunted and fished, woman ran the home. Thus, women played a large part in economic life. With more inventions and refined agricultural devices, man's work expanded, as he takes on more men to help in production, hence slavery and private property appear.
The man as master of slaves and of the earth becomes the proprietor also of women. According to Engels this was "the greatest historical defeat of the feminine sex" (ibid, 20). With this change in the value of work of man and woman, the maternal authority gave into paternal authority. The property was inherited from father to son and no longer from woman to her clan. Thus, the private property gave rise to patriarchal family, and from here began the subjugation of woman. She was seen as Earth, Mother or Goddess, but not as fellow creature in man's eyes; It was beyond' the human realm that her power was affirmed. Hence, she was 'outside' of that realm. "Society has always been male; political power has always been in the hands of men; public or simply social authority always belongs to men" (de Beauvoir, 1952: 79).

From the beginning of humanity, men's biological advantage has enabled them to confirm their status as sole and sovereign subjects. They have always affirmed their power. Frazer puts more aptly: "Men make the Gods; women worship them. Women's place in the society is always which men assign to her; at no time has she ever imposed her own law" (ibid, 87). With the ownership of land, man claimed also ownership of women. Since woman owns nothing, she does not enjoy the dignity of being a person; she forms a part of the patrimony of a man, first of her father, then of her husband. The crux of the problem is that the two sexes have never shared the world equally. Even today the woman is heavily handicapped as her rights are legally recognized in the abstract, while tradition and custom prevent their full expression. Thus woman's position is lower than man in all spheres of her social, political and economic life.
Many historians have defined the working class 'defector' as working men. Occupational, skills, wages, relations of production, the labour process itself, have been and still discussed as if social production were an exclusive male prerogative. More often than not consciously or unconsciously, the world has been conceived in the image of family, the husband is the breadwinner and the wife remains at home attending to housework and childcare. Both the household itself and women's domestic labour within it are presented as the state to the world of real historical activity. The labour historian has ignored women as workers in the labour market and within the household, consequently women's contribution to production and to the reproduction and maintenance of labour force as well, has been dismissed. This is partly because the labour and economic historians, who first wrote about the working class, wrote about the organized and articulate labour movement, accessible through its trade union records, its newspapers and the occasional autobiography. Only recently have the inaccessible areas of working class life has been approached, but even here the focus has remained on the working man. In every respect women's participation in history has been marginalized (Alexander, 1976).

It was but for the feminist history that released women from their obscurity as the wives, mothers and daughters of working men. The feminist perspective meant that the production is not simply the class struggle between the producer and the owner of means of production. But it is also the development of a particular form of sexual division of labour in relation to the struggle. The relation who is changed drastically can be because of the dislocations created by industrialization and modernization of the industries. The stress of the working class may be due to the
rapid increase in the population, the movement of population into towns dramatized the class antagonisms, which always created anxiety among the class. This industrial and political activity was strict which resulted and gave birth to the Victorian middle class ideology in western context, which is a blend of political economy and Evangelicalism. The natural laws included political economy and the laws of capitalist production. While the woman's roles as wife and mother was centralized and therefore it was expected from them to guard and function the religious and socio-cultural values. Henceforth we can say that women's wage-work was supposed to be in harmony with the home, the family and domesticity.

The biological features and characteristics resulted role determinants of the division of labour and resulted in domestic roles of women received enormous emphasis. Thus for woman 'home' became the primary occupation and if they opted job it was the secondary salaried job. Over the recent decades, women in general have been liberated considerably from the domestic drudgery by the introduction of modern domestic appliances. But despite this and due to changing family structure, the burden of women's work has increased. Their working hours have been doubled. Once Lenin described women's domestic work, as monotonousness and lack of job satisfaction which stands so appropriately in the present period. Housework is most unproductive, the most barbarous and the most arduous work a women can do. It is exceptionally petty and does not include anything that would in any way promote the development of the women (Lenin, 1983 quoted in Alexander). The drudgery of women's work is also accompanied by psychological tensions and depression, fear and anxiety. Rice emphasized the enormous burden placed on women by their 'housewife role…' in the
large majority of homes. The woman is …the slave without whose labour the whole structure of the family tends to collapse (Rice, 1939: 14).

Hinduism provides a conception of the world in which women are necessary, but powerful and dangerous. Traditionally this power and danger has been controlled through religious laws prescribing women's proper behaviour as being under the control of men. As such, women provide an alternative role that of the dutiful wife. Women's religious and ritual practices emphasize kinship and family relationship, reinforcing the view of woman's as wife. Thus despite the ideology of the powerful aggressive woman, most Hindu women probably will continue to be motivated by the Hindu conception of the women as dutiful wife, and will perform their yearly rituals for their husband's long life, the presence of many sons, etc. Housework does not matter and is not considered productive, but now everyone throws the importance of women and its work. The same housework if she performs outside the home than it will be considered productive, as because she earns for that. Even men have understood the essentiality of women's productive work and in clearly seen in the society with new more hopes and horizons each day, encouraging women.

Practically seeing the family is the basic unit of production where housework is essential to sustain our social and economic structure. But at the same time it is petty, isolated, monotonous and required virtually unending hours of work, much of it being hard and unrewarding. It requires high labour, yet it is unpaid. In spite of women's labour intensive domestic work, in the modern industrial society it is believed that "woman does not work". Even the housewives themselves express resentment over their not being the part of paid work. This is the result of the process
in which women lost their economic autonomy as producers in their own right as farmers, craft workers or traders and became increasingly dependent on the wages of men. As an outcome, they were more confined to "private sphere" and middleclass ideology pushed women towards unpaid labour.

In the pre-industrial period, the father, who was head of household was engaged in land or urban craft or trade, which determined the family's principal source of income. The law of God and the law of nature, both sanctioned authority to male patriarchy. The entire family, men women and children participated in production and contributed to the family income. A woman's work was vital in the family allocating between domestic labour and work in production as per the family's economic demands. Most of the women in the pre industrial production, which was largely agrarian, worked as weavers, spinners, gardeners, mashers and agricultural farmers. But their work in the fields was ancillary to their work at home and restricted to supplementing for husband's earning.

**Industrialization and Capitalist Production**

The Industrial Revolution Western Europe upset the existing demand and supply so drastically that structure of job composition rapidly changed with the mushrooming of textile industries. As a result the demand for women and children increased. This driving force pulled the women from home to the labour market. Women have always been responsible for the clothing of family, but with the commercialization of the cotton industries they became wage earners rather than small independent producers. By the 18\textsuperscript{th} century the production of textiles came under the control of the merchant capitalists, as a result, women worker's flight was more severe
and miserable. Thus, the change from the home to the factory involved a crucial change in the sexual division of labour. The introduction of technological change brought crucial social consequences. "…when the number of spindles was considerably increased the jinni's were gathered into small workshops and worked by men and after the appearance of the male in 1779, women spinners were soon superseded. Heavier machine required the strength of men, and spinning of the male quickly became highly skilled work monopolized by a new class of men spinners. Thus within the space of one generation, what had been women's hereditary occupation was radically changed" (Pinchbeck, 1981: 111). According to Pinchbecks description since women were physically unable to handle machinery, so male spinning became defined as a skilled male occupation therefore women were excluded. The bodily difference between women and men were socially defined thus inducing discriminatory practices because "A small physical difference in size, strength and reproductive function is developed into an increasingly relative physical advantage to men and vastly multiplied by differential access to technology. The appropriation of muscle, capability, tools and machinery by men is an important source of women's subordination indeed it is a part of the process by which females are constituted as women" (Cockburn, 1981: 144). The physical distinction between the two sexes became the prime cause of their displacements from textile cotton industries. Women's work is always invariably characterized by low paid, lack of craft traditions, weak union and unskilled status. Such radical changes confirmed that the capitalist mode of production was predetermined by the division of labour that had existed within the family in the West when household had been the unit of production.
The capitalist economy, changed the labour process in such a way that women's entry into the trade was restricted and technical know how denied to them because knowledge of the skills involved in the work process was confined to formal apprenticeship. Thus, women who were denied access to socially reorganized skills, formed a source of cheap labour power for the unskilled unorganized units of production developing outside the cooperate sections. This formed the basis of the industrial reserve army, which according to Karl Marx, became "the precondition and necessary product of the accumulation of capital" (Marx, 1971: 495-6). The capitalist intervention into the sexual division of labour confirmed the economic subordinators of the married women. By doing so, capitalism ensured and made distinction between the production for use and the production for exchange. In Alexander's words, "manufacturer provided the economic conditions for the hierarchy of labour from the family into social production which ensured that it was women who moved into the subordinate and auxiliary positions" (1982: 226).

By and large in all societies both developed as well as developing women's employment shows certain distinct features such as occupational segregation wage differential, unskilled labour, low-paid jobs, low value attached to their work and part time jobs. Occupational segregation is the function of gender norms and biological role of a woman. Gendering in occupations generate 'female' and 'male' jobs. Men are also segregated in some specific jobs, but there is a difference between the segregation of the two sexes. Men's jobs are prize catchy, characterized by higher level of technical knowledge, higher wages, prestige, autonomy and supposed to be 'skilled'. Thus men dominate the labour market, decide, and frame the policies regarding labour
operations. Women's concentration in unskilled and semiskilled occupations arises from two sources i.e. from social construction of men's job as skilled and from the exclusion of women from skilled ones. Male strategies of exclusion are crucial in the assignation of jobs. Fire (1992) discussed about two factors that prominently account for deskillin of jobs. Accordingly, the division of labour is subjected to restructuring as capital accumulation takes place and new methods of production, management and control are introduced. Secondly certain amount of emphasis is given to the ideological role of gendering jobs, with the restructuring of the sexual division of labour depending upon and interacting with the pre-existing notions of femininity and masculinity in the allocation of jobs between two sexes (Tine, 1992: 249 & 77).

Where segregation is high, the associations between different jobs and gendering is strong. Williams (1989) explained this as, "highly segregated occupations take on the 'gendered' attributes associated with the sex of their work force secretaries 99%, kindergarten and preschool teachers 98% and domestic workers 95% are all expected to be emotionally sensitive and nurturing reflecting the feminine quality of workers. Exhibiting stereotypically masculine quality engineers 96%, airline pilots 99%, auto-mechanics 99% are assumed emotionally reserved and detached, concerned more with the caring and support of people.

Apart from the handful of women who are doing skilled jobs in organized labour market, the many of population are performing unskilled or low skilled jobs. History reveals that women have been participating in all kinds of work, but despite this they have been unable to learn and master specific skills. This happens because of two reasons – firstly their participation in paid labour market was not visualized.
Secondly the strategies for capitalist profit accumulation with automation and mechanization, which resulted in men's skills upgraded and women's skills degraded. Any job a woman performs is bound to be less skilled than that of men's.

Today, the statistics show improvement in women's economic participation. Although female labourers are increasing but they are getting jobs as part timer. Women's primary role of motherhood and homemaker compels them to take up jobs that they could manage part time. But gender ideology is the bigger force in making the women looks for part time. Domestic occupation always comes before any kind of employment. Employers have a tendency to strengthen such role biases. This helps them in profit accumulation. Women as cheap labour are readily accepted. Part time suits both the employer and family. These way women supplement the earnings of family and fulfill their roles both as wife and as mother.

It is a fact that gender biases are more acute in Indian society as the socio-cultural prescriptions create hurdles in women's educational achievement and which the difficulty they face in competing with the men in the labour market. In rural India, where agriculture is the central source of livelihood the subsistence production of women become an essential requirement. Technology has struck the traditional work of the women labour more drastically. The social, economic, political and environmental forces combine and force the women workers to take a backward step. The sexual division of labour is both the cause and effect of the virtual monopoly by men of the important positions in the socio-economic hierarchy and their control of main institutions of modern society like law, police, defence, politics, etc. Like these important institutions, history is also male dominated since it recorded only what men
did or achieved. Thus gender biases are reflected in historical experiences too. The classical Marxist theory argues that the oppression of women reflects the inherent inequality and injustice of capitalism and class society, arising from the institution of private property. Hence, women's liberation requires the abolition of class society, through the abolition of private property and capitalism. Domestic activities are considerably out of the domain of commodity production. Since women perform household activities, thus automatically they are out of the sphere of commodity production. Hence, "domestic labour is viewed as private and defined as non social and unproductive" (Acper, 1988: 18-19).

It seems that two mechanisms are important for understanding the structuring of the labour process and gendering of work i.e., the exploitation by men in the occupational structure and the active gendering of both people and jobs. It is observed that if men leave the jobs incase of promotion that women fill gap leftover positions. Women experience gender discrimination in labour market due to many reasons such as: Women have lower accessibility than men to productivity augmentation opportunity like schooling, required training and experience, continuity in career and regional mobility. This is referred to as pre-market discrimination because low level of education work experience, etc. is not consequences of labour market discrimination but the consequences of the discrimination itself. Sex role stereotypes limiting tastes for jobs belong to the category of pre-market gender differentials. Women receive less favourable jobs than do the men or they may not get any job because of their low less education and experience compared to men.
In addition women get lower wages than men for the same job. It occurs against women by creating sex – specific wage groups with lower pay for women. Another is by paying women less hourly wages than men for the same or similar work are. A third wage discrimination relates to the unequal treatment of women in terms of fringe benefits.

It is a well-known fact that men have more power, income and high status than women. These three measures of inequality power, income and status, are closely linked factors and mutually reinforcing dimension of inequality. In the labour market men occupy most of the higher position, in co-operated sector, educational, military religious and political world. Even in the same occupation men's earnings are more than that of women. The power, income and status reinforce male dominance and female subservience.

**Cultural Construction of Masculinity and Femininity**

This socialization process is so strong in men and women that one can notices a deep chasm between them in terms of their perspective, priorities in life, their dreams and life style and their vision of looking at things. Ned Noddings believes life is not just rules and principles but also individuals and responsibilities. And this is where the difference between man and the woman lies. The feminine that is associated with women is characterized as passive. Tenderness, consideration and physical weakness are synonymous to the feminine glare. The masculine is defined as dominant and encouraging male violence against women. Men are supposed to be high on physical strength and process. Both Noddings and carol Gilligan believed that men and women have different moral orientations men speak the language of rights and
women the language of responsibility. It is interesting to note that education teach girls the language of justice and rights, because it is the language they need to learn in order to function in the world. However educators' do not teach boys the language of care and responsibility because as so it would harm their success in the market.

Psychoanalysts believe boys from age 3 to 6 remain under a great turmoil, as they have to give up their identification with the mother and start to hate the women's way of doing things they even go to the extent of suppressing their affection towards. Their mothers but at the same time, it causes great pain to them. Perhaps, this is the origin of some grown up men's fear of intimacy (Hudeon and Jacob, 1979). Contrast girls never lose their identification with the mother. Thus, according to Judith Viorst (1986) in 'Necessary Losses' we all suffer loss, with boys giving up their identification with mothers and girls giving up mothers as a sexual object. Gradually, girls become nurturing and caring, always showering emotions by intimating her mother, whereas the boy is discouraged from showering any form of emotions.

The society does not have one single model of masculinity or femininity as Connell observes that there are many different expressions of masculinity and femininity, which are ordered in a hierarchy; one at the top is the category of hegemonic masculinity, which is dominant over all masculinities and femininities in associated with heterosexual marriage, which includes, authority, paid work, strength and physical toughness. Homosexual masculinity is the most subordinated from yet not accepted by many societies. At the level of society, these contrasting versions are ordered, which has one common premise – the domination of men over women.
In Connell's opinion, femininity can be of various forms. The most popular one is called, emphasized femininity complimenting hegemonic masculinity accommodating the desires and interest of men, featuring the embodiment of motherhood and sexual reciprocity. This type is the most prevalent image of women. Thus we have the subordinate femininity which includes feminists, lesbians, spinsters, witches, prostitutes and manual workers. It is high time that in terms of popularity 'hegemonic and emphasized femininity top the scale. All action heroes like Sylvester Stallone, Amitabh Bachchan, even the comic characters like Superman and Shaktiman represent 'hegemonic masculinity'.

Since women are economically disadvantaged than men and suffer from the effects of poverty in different ways and the multiple roles that they carry out keeps them under stress. Few feminists are of the opinion that women's condition can only improve if they give up their reproductive ability. Some studies observe that the men are biologically weak, but our culture has made women weak. Other than being biologically weak men suffer from stress and pressure because culturally, they are expected to be fulfilling the material needs of their family, and failing to do it builds a kind of pressure on them. However, women are the maximum sufferers of this gender-specific expectations as they suffer not only physically and socially but also mentally. This process of socialization is carried out by various institutions such as family, religion, school, media etc. that promotes the ideology of patriarchy, claiming that women are inferior to men.

The concept of gender has been central to debate on how to empower women to improve the quality of their life. Since women have multiple identities based on
gender, caste, class ethnicity and age, at any given paint of time, any one or combination of factors could oppress them.

There are three leading approaches to women studies which are as follows:

(1) **The Neo Classical School**

The Neo-Classical School of thought considered to be the most dominant school in West which is based on the concept of utility. According to this school, the allocation of time by any individual is linked with the utility attached to it. Women's participation in labour force is a function of the utility derived from work. This participation or withdrawal of women from the labour face does not only depend on wage rate existing, but also on the household i.e. (husband's income). Gender – specific wage differential arises due to discontinuity in employment on account of bearing and rearing of children, or voluntary selection regarding lesser skills. Neo-classicists view pressures on mage gaps as not unjust but a natural outcome of choice.

This classicist explains marriage as a relationship for both individuals to maximize utility. Marriage is a two-person firm where women hire men since men earn more and men hire women because they are superior nursemaids.

(2) **The Institutional Approach**

This approach to women studies draws its theoretical rationale from the rigid quasi – rigid structural institutions among the society. Here the status of men, women and children are determined on the basis on race, caste, education, etc. The origin of gender specific social division of labour is traced to the hunting and fishing theories – where only men would venture and women would look after young ones. Some say or
believe that women have to perform due to biological roles. This school of thought hypothesizes that there is possibility of change through social reforms, legislations and milder forms of rational social interventions.

(3) The Marxist School

This school adopts a historical perspective of any social situation. As per this view, production and capital accumulation is fundamental to the understanding of women's position. There are two different views, According to one view, articulation of the relationship between man, labour and capital and their integration with the larger market system is the key to the understanding of women's status. If refers to some methods such as splitting trade unions by gender, creating wedges between genders to break labour homogeneity exclusion of women from market production which are being adopted by the capitalists in accentuating capital accumulation (Himmdmeit and Mohum, 1977).

The second view within this broad Marxist stream is known as the Marxist – Feminist school. It views history as a system of relations between men who dominate and women who are dominated. In addition to the fundamental contradictions between capital and labour the Marxist feminists add yet another dimension to the system of contradictions and suggest a simultaneous struggle against caste and gender exploitation (Hartman, 1979).

Empowerment of women is necessary not just for their own welfare but the well being of the entire country because it enhances both the quality and quantity of human resources available for development (Economic Development and Women, 259). The success of development efforts depends on the fruits of development
reaching the whole population. Empowerment is the process by which the powerless gain greater control over the circumstances of their lives. It includes both control over resources and our ideology greater self-confidence and an inner transformation of one's consciousness that enables one to overcome external barriers (Sen and Batliwala, 2000). Women's position and degree of empowerment is defined by gender and gender relation in society. Gender not only represents the biological sex of an individual but also the various rights and roles that society attaches to males and females. Whether, it is domestic life or labour market, sex differentiated roles, rights and obligations exist and they vary by class. All this goes to make gender a fundamental dimension of societal stratification (Women in Indian Society, Rehana Ghadially, 206).

The developing countries like India manifest and perpetuate the subordinate status of women. In India custom determines who has the greater access to education and to employment opportunities. Poverty is an over aching factor and a liability of life for vast majority of women in India. A correct solution or remedy to such a situation is women's right to gainful education and employment. Apart from being a question of survival this would increase their self-respect image and provide for greater autonomy within the household. Indirectly, this would also increase their direct participation in the community activities, leading them to under horizons. This will make women economically self-reliant, thus paving the way for their concurrent empowerment in the other factors of their lives.

Conclusion

Indeed, history talks of the interaction between gender and culture. Moreover, our culture is such that only men and their activities have been highlighted. One would
only find women in the feminist context i.e. they have been in focus as somebody's daughter, mother, or sister. E.P. Thomson points and concludes that history needs to register the lived experiences, day-to-day life, aspirations and dreams of common man. Our culture has given enough space for ignoring women as secondary. It could be a deliberate attempt by historian to subordinate women or it could also be a result of our culture for which historians felt that it was not important to register the lives of women. But now the time is changing. Feminist come together and write on the issues of women and their life details.

The ideas and views of Amartya Sen who won The Nobel Prize for economics in 1998 for his work on the interface between Welfare and Development Economics have been enormously influential and can be quite visible in the World Bank's World Development Report, 2000-2001. Its topic was how to expand the entitlements, capabilities and freedom of poor people. The great challenge is to tackle the institutional structures of countries that continue to marginalize, discriminate against vulnerable selections of society. The state has a role to play in helping to empower women. Depriving women of their development rights amounts to violation of human rights. We should not forget that a nations destiny depends on the Mother's (female population) – "The hand the rocks the cradle, rules the world".