Chapter 2
Review of Literature

The purpose of this chapter is to detail the relevant literature in the field of study. A detailed review of existing knowledge concerning men and their gendered identity is the foundation of this research. The review helped the researcher to focus the research theme, select appropriate research design and proper measures for the present study. The researcher had used books, journals and online resources.

Gender

Understanding men and masculinity is not possible without a thorough investigation of the concept of gender. Plethora of literature is available on gender, that could be accessed at ease. Before carrying out a detailed examination of gender and its importance in shaping human life, defining and differentiating the two terms ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ are essential. In the analysis of men and masculinity it is very important to clarify the concepts of sex and gender. Sex refers to the biological differentiation as male and female. It denotes the chromosomal, chemical and anatomical organizations. Gender is not a rigid or refined analytic category imposed on human experience, but a fluid one, the meaning of which emerges in specific social contexts as it is created and recreated through human actions. A person’s gender identity is internal; one’s gender identity is not visible to others. According to Kimmel, Gender is constructed from cultural and subjective meanings that constantly shift and vary, depending on the time and place (Courtney, 2000)

Both these terms are used synonymously in day to day life, and also in some earlier sociological writings. We can see a dubiety in differentiating the
terms sex and gender. The development of scientific research in the field of gender studies downscaled the uncertainty associated in using these terms.

Dictionary of the social sciences (Calhoun 2002) describing the use of gender and sex in social science disciplines in detail. Much popular discourse assume that biological sex determines one’s gender identity, the experience and expression of masculinity and feminity. Instead of focusing on the biological characteristics social and behavioural scientists are concerned with the different ways in which biological sex comes to mean different things in different contexts. ‘Sex’ refers to the biological characteristics differentiating male and female. This explains the male and female differences in chromosomes, anatomy, hormones, reproductive systems and other psychological components. Gender refers to those social, cultural and psychological tracts linked to males and females through particular social contexts. Sex is male and female; gender is masculinity and feminity- what it means to be a man or a woman. Biological sex varies very little, gender varies enormously.

Gender is not simply a hallmark that constitutes males or females, but it influences them in all spheres of human life. Social scientists consider gender as product of culture. Amy.S.Wharton defined “Gender is a central organizing principle of social life in virtually all cultures of the world. Gender is being continuously produced and reproduced. Stated differently, we would say that gender is enacted or ‘done’ not merely expressed”.(Wharton, 2004, 156)Gender is a socio-cultural product and it is a way of being human, which exist in all societies and cultures. Thomas Eckes and Hans.M.Trautner explains that, Though at first sight the differentiating between male and female may seem simple and straight forward but a deep analysis make it clear that the fundamental categorisation is a really complex one. Gender is considered as a stimulus, process and product.
Gender is viewed as an inherently relational category and a multidimensional one. Eckes and Trautner in their analysis of the developmental social psychology of gender specify the multifaceted nature of gender. The social influence on gender should be studied at multiple levels. At any stage of individual’s development the gendered thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are being determined by multiple factors which include both the macro societal processes and specific interpersonal encounters with equal importance. (Eckes and Trautner, 2000)

*The activities that men and women are engaging in, and their gendered cognitions, are a form of currency in transactions that are continually enacted in the demonstration of gender. Many authors have examined how a variety of activities are used as resources in constructing and reconstructing gender; these activities include language, work, sports, crime, sex etc* (Courtenay, 2000)

J. Devika (2007) describing Individualization as a historical process. Individual did not simply emerge here, but was engendered. The term engendering is used in two different senses in her work. In the first sense it refers to the engendering, the coming into being of an individual. In the second sense engendering means, covering or surrounding (the individual) with gender. All individuals are covered with their gendered identity. The process of engendering is happening in all societies and cultures in different ways.

Gender is a positional category, by using it a man is differentiated from women in their roles and responsibilities. In the views of Kusum Gopal gender needs to be understood as process of ‘doing gender’ rather than ‘being of it’. Human beings are producing and reproducing their gendered identity in their everyday life interactions. Gender is considered as the most important factor in the formation of a person’s identity. (Gopal,
Changes in society and culture make changes in the gender system also. Gender comes from society and culture. It is a product cultivated by society. It is a mode of being human.

In every society there are some prescribed roles for men and women. With the rapid social change these behavioural patterns set for each gender (stereotypes) loses its rigidity and became more flexible. In the words of Strathern,(1998),  

*Gender is a category of persons, artefacts, events and sequences which draws upon “sexual imagery” in which the distinctiveness of male and female characteristics make concrete people’s ideas about the nature of social relationships. It is important to note that images, attributes, activities and behavior of women and men change through time.*

Men and women have historically occupied different roles in society, as societies have developed, the social roles of, and the stereotypes attached to, men and women have also changed. Esther Lopez and Rocio Gracia explains that we may therefore expect there to be a dynamic component of gender stereotyping that affects the perception of men and women in the past, present and future. In general women’s roles and stereotypes are changing more quickly over time than those of men. (Lopez, Zafra, & Retamero, 2012)

If gender is a historical product, it is open to historical change and if that change is to become conscious, and open to democratic control, we need to know how gender is shaped and how it may be reshaped. Clark and Connell (2000) describing that, *gender is a living system of social interaction, not a stack of water tight boxes. Large number of men now acknowledge that their position is under challenge, that what they once took for granted about must be rethought. They may or may not like it, but they cannot ignore it.* (Connell, 2000).
Seemanthini Niranjana explains that the discourse of gender will have to break out of the framework of both biological essentialism (gender as an essential trait) and cultural constructivism (gender as a culturally constructed). A movement beyond would require not just understanding how gender is defined, structured and experienced within a culture, but also sensitivity to the variations in the content of gender attributions across and within cultures. (Niranjana, 2004) Gender could perhaps be more fittingly rendered a relational terms, rather than a purely oppositional category where one is defined against another. “Deconstructing masculinity: fatherhood, matrilineality, and social change” by TipultNongbri in 2011, a report presented at second annual men’s studies conference which explained about the gender identities. According to him, gender identities are products of culture. (Nongbri, 2011)

There is a strong tendency in many discussions to assume that “gender” issues are issues about women. Any report will a little like a “Gender and development” is likely to be really about women and development. Most politicians, bureaucrats and journalists assume that men are the norm and that “gender” is about the way women differ from this norm. This gender issues often in practice drift into questions about the special need of women. There have been good reasons for this, given the historic exclusion of women’s experience from particular culture. We must examine men’s gender practices and the ways the gender order defines, positions, empowers, and constrain men.

The gender position that society constructs for men may not correspond exactly with what men actually are, or desire to be or what they actually do. It is therefore necessary to study men and masculinity. Gender relations approach emphasizes that gender issues always concern a structure of social relations. Gender is a way in which social practice is ordered.
The review of literature in the field of gender studies makes it clear that ‘gender’ is one of the most important things which mold the individuals and their day to day interactions. All individuals are consciously or unconsciously producing and reproducing their gendered identity in their everyday life. It reflects in all human actions and interactions. But one of the most important factor is that the gendering is taking place differently even among the same gender with the same socio-cultural background. In a large extent, gender studies dealing with gender differences (between men and women), gives more importance for women and women related issues and derives at conclusions by imagining masculinity/femininity is similar to all men/women. The rapid social change has actually remolded the individuals’ gendered identity. The rigidity of gendered norms is in a state of flux. In such a situation there are no strict rules for men and women to follow. Their socialization about gender and gender roles is not enough to make up their daily life. This situation increases the demand of individual construction of their gendered behavior. Individuals construct and reconstruct their gender identity according to their needs in everyday life. It finally results to make gender a more complex one. This shows the relevance of gender studies in contemporary society. “Sameness is myth that close not fit postmodern reality”, this quote is appropriate when approaching men and masculinity.

Gender identity is a constant process, always being reinvented and rearticulated in everyday setting, micro or macro. Gender identity is the codified aggregation of gendered interaction; its coherence depends on our understanding of those interactions.

**Men and Masculinity**

As mentioned earlier in this chapter the availability of literature in the field of gender studies is plenty, this is not happening in the case of men and masculinity studies. Unlike gender studies, there is dearth in the
availability of literature in the field of men and masculinity studies. One of the important reason for this is, Men are rarely seen (or see themselves) through the lens of gender, especially in a country like India, which follow a patriarchal family system. Vivek Rampal discussed the origin and development of the term man in different contexts. The term man is used for an adult human male. However, man is sometimes used to refer humanity as a whole. Masculinity has its roots in genetics. Therefore while masculinity looks different in different cultures, there are common aspects to its definition across cultures (Rampal, 2011). Sometimes gender scholars will use the phrase “hegemonic masculinity” to distinguish the most dominant form of masculinity from other variants. The term manhood is associated with masculinity and virility, which refers to male qualities and male gender roles.

A detailed information about the masculinity discourses in Kerala is given in (Radakrishnan, 2006). Notions of masculinity exists are attributes not only of men but also of women or even inanimate objects, characteristics and feelings. He made some interpretations about the relationship between male body and masculinity. The male body determines the sex and it is seen as existing in prior to masculinity. Masculinity only becomes some attributes that are added to the prior. Masculinity is seen as an overt articulation of men based on his biological sex.

The most challenging part in the study is to find out an exact definition for the concept masculinity. In the Dictionary of Social Sciences (Calhoun, 2002) defines “Masculinity is primarily a cultural product; it exhibits a great deal of variation among and often within cultures, where its specific requirement and normative power may vary.” This definition itself shows the possibility of multiple definitions for masculinity on the basis of cultural variations.
“Anything that a man think, say and do comes under the concept of masculinity. If men are involved then so too must be masculinity” Goutman (2003). He tries to capture the complex interplay between normative and practical manifestations of masculinity in different social settings and demonstrated how they have been accepted and challenged at times by women and men throughout the hemisphere.

Reywan Connell who made a detailed analysis of men and masculinity gave various interpretations of masculinity. In the words of Connell, “By masculinity I mean the pattern or configuration of social practices linked to the position of men in the gender order; and socially distinguished from practices linked to the position of women” (Connell, 2000)

The scholars in the field of masculinity studies, consider masculinity as a frame of practice in everyday life, so the understanding of masculinity is possible only by making a detailed analysis of the day to day life of men. The social scientists consider masculinity as a social construction. Masculinity refers to male body and is not determined by male biology. Connell explaining “Masculinity: a configuration of practice around the position of men in the structure of gender relations”. By using the term configuration of practice she gave more importance to what men actually do, and not on what society expected or imagined about men. There is no fixed frame or limit for exhibiting masculinity.

It was once thought that gender could be defined as a special type of practice, for instance as social “reproduction” rather than “production”. But masculinities are constructed in the sphere of production too. Research on working class and middle-class masculinities in several countries have documented the shaping of masculinities in the work place and the labour market, large scale organizations and political system. To speak of
“practice” is to emphasis that action has both rational and historical meaning. This is not to say the practice is necessarily “rational”. We would not think rape, sexual harassment or wife beating ‘rational’, but neither is sexual violence a meaningless explosion of inner range.

The meanings of masculinity vary considerably within any given society at any one time. At any given moments several meanings of masculinity coexist. One of the most discussed forms of masculinity is hegemonic masculinity. It is the predominant form of masculinity which is commonly accepted in a culture. A hegemonic form of masculinity has other masculinities arrayed around it. “Hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the correctly accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women”. (R Connell, 2000, p.77). Connell uses the concept of ‘complicity’ in order to discuss how men relate to power and the hegemonic structures of masculinity. Though the actual number of men practicing and embodying hegemony are few, Connell argues that most men have some kind of complicated, dependent and ambivalent relation to power. If we follow Connell’s definition of hegemonic masculinity, patriarchy is changing gradually, but is still a reasonable stable power structure. The form of masculinity which is culturally dominant in a given setting is called “hegemonic masculinity”. Hegemonic signifies a position of cultural authority and leadership, not total dominance. (Connell, 2000). (Johansson, 2011) made some interpretations of the masculinity by Connell. According to him, Connell stresses the connection between masculinity and power. The concept of hegemonic masculinity points towards possible changes and transformations of masculinity.
Masculinity is complex and at times contradictory. Freud, detailed the presence of masculine features in women and feminine behaviours in men. In Freud’s interpretation masculinity and femininity are present both in men and women, and he analysed how men and women manage the gender contradictions. There are differences in the construction and expression of masculinity. Different cultures construct masculinity in different ways. Even in the same culture different kinds of masculinity exist. Social change normally gives way to change in masculinity (Connell, 2005).

Distinct masculinities exist in different cultures and historical epochs. To speak of the “dynamics” of masculinity is to acknowledge that particular masculinities are composed, historically, and may also be decomposed, contested and replaced. There is an active politics of gender in everyday life. Sometimes it finds spectacular public expression, in large scale rallies or demonstrations. More often it is local and limited. But there is always a process of contestation and change (Connell, 2000).

Gita Rajan describes that Modern masculinities are projected with a certain level of fluidity. And it creates room to prove that patriarchal authority deployed through the unconscious specular in the public culture works form the base to keep these masculinities from straying so far from the norm as to become unrecognisable. (Rajan, 2006)

Masculinity is the set of practices and cultural representations associated with being a man. The plural the masculinities is also used in recognition that ways of being a man and cultural representations of about men vary, both historically and culturally, between societies and between different groupings of men within any one society. In place of essentialism, masculinities are argued to arise from the social contexts in which men live, for example, from their position in the various institutions and organisations.
of their society and/or in the context of a socially available discourses about gender (Pilcher & Whalen, 2004).

Masculinity changes from time to time and place to place in reaction to the varying stimuli. Messner (2000) builds on the explosion of research on men and masculinity to offer a sociological framework for understanding men’s organized responses to changes, challenges and crisis in the social organization of gender. Messner examines three themes of men and masculinities- men’s institutionalized privileges, the costs of masculinity, and differences and inequalities among men. “The closer we come to uncovering some form of exemplary masculinity, a masculinity which is solid and sure of itself, the clearer it becomes that masculinity is structured through contradictions the more it asserts itself, the more it calls itself into questions (Segal 1990 p.123)

In Nolasco’s analysis men experience substantial amount of pressure when they attempt to adapt themselves to social roles that in fact do not correspond to their abilities and desires (Gutman, 2003). David Tacey points out that, Masculinity should not get eroded or washed away by the rising tide of the femininity, but instead remade, reconstructed and allowed to become the intelligent and self-critical partner of the new feminine reformation. He earnestly believes that we need to find a ‘third way’ or a middle path between the extremes of patriarchal nostalgia and matriarchal identification. From an intellectual perspective, any human experience is the product of his culture. (Tacey, 1997)

Masculinities are the patterns of social practice associated with the position of men in any society’s set of gender relations. In recent years a body of international research on masculinities has emerged. Important conclusions of this research are there are multiple masculinities; there are hierarchies of masculinities; often defining a “hegemonic” pattern for a given
society; masculinities are collective as well as individual; masculinities are actively constructed in social life; masculinities are internally complex; masculinities change in history.

Connell (2000) describe that, the new man is oriented towards equality. The gender equality survey shows that especially younger men have adapted to a more gender equal home life and participate more in activities like food preparation and other household chores. A sizeable change in the role of a father can see in the modern nuclear families. Today it is considered as a matter of course for men to participate in childcare, though men themselves would like to do even more. Even though all fathers may not share the tasks of the home equally with their partners in practice, the ideals of good fatherhood, have undergone fundamental changes. We also see changes in male roles in other spheres of society. Men today have more and close friendships both with men and women, than might have been seen in previous generations. The limits to how acceptable it is for men to be concerned with their appearance, their clothes and fashion have clearly been expanded.

In detailing about the Indian masculinity Kulkarni(2007) explain significant changes are taking place in the vast hinterland of Indian Masculine, or rather masculinities. Signs of a new age masculinity are appeared in the urban, upper class mileu centered on the nuclear family typically comprising well educated, employed spouses and their children. In such a setting men often depart from the rigid patriarchal framework by participating in domestic work and childcare, forming closer, emotional or sexual bonds with their wives. New man is less certain about his identity and much more interested in his image.
Men- health and Psychology

The human body is itself a politically inscribed entity, its physiology and morphology shaped by histories and practices of containment and control (Bordo 1993 p. 21) “Nothing in man not even his body-is sufficiently stable to serve as a basis for self recognition or for understanding other men” (Foucault 1991, p. 87 - 88). For men the body, and having a strong physique is a significant factor. They are becoming more brand conscious. Currently marketers use human personality scales to measure gender dimensions of brand personality in the evaluation of positioning and repositioning strategies. (Grohman, 2009)

Radhika Chopra made some detailing about masculinity in Indian context. Anatomy plays a crucial role in defining and providing bodily proof to men of their masculinity. The body thus became a double edged safe creating both anxiety and affirmation of masculine identity. (Chopra, Dasgupta and Janeja,2000)

May (1998) focuses more on group oriented issues rather than matters of individual psychology in masculinity studies. The author made an in depth analysis about, the relationship between masculinity and morality. The biological factors influencing the male comportment are also described in this work. Author argues that morality should not be blemished or diminished because it’s demands are hard to meet.

A fairy common perception of masculinity is that men, well “real” men, keep their emotions in check, in contrast to women, who are not policed so heavily by society in expressing their emotional states. But the reality is men do have emotions, even those who try to repress them in the face of public scrutiny. (Mayeda, 2012)
One can find among men the stereotypical conception of aggression, ambition, domination, strength, endurance, independence and being driven by competition. Men are further more portrayed as technically gifted, task and result oriented, in contrast with women who are typically seen as caring, emotional and relationship oriented.

The characteristics that are commonly considered as typical to either man or women is called gender stereotypes. These stereotypes are vital in the social construction of gender. They provide a collective, organized and dichotomous meanings of gender and often become widely shared beliefs about who women and men innately are. “Stereotyping meant that men and women were homogenized, considered not as individuals but as types. The fact that stereotyping depended upon unchanging mental images meant that there was no room for individual variations.” (Mosse 1998,p.6)

Restrictive emotionality is a widely discussed stereotype among men. Restrictive emotionality (RE) is having difficulty and fear about expressing one’s feelings. The restrictions on the expressions of emotions that were found among adult men are the result of many years of interactive learning. In other words restrictive emotionality is not a biologically given, but the result of a lack of practice: men do not have the opportunity to practice sensibility instead of toughness.(Janz, 2000). Men generally inhibit the expression of emotions, but anger is a proverbial exception to the rule. Many studies have confirmed that men express their anger for more frequently than women (Averill,1983)

Relevance of men and masculinity studies

The gender position that society construct for men may not correspond exactly with what men actually are, do or desired to be. It is therefore necessary to study masculinity as well as men. McGrath(2011) explains about the initial development of men studies. Women studies gave
rise to men studies, which is also pro feminist. McGrath point out that, Male studies largely the brain child of Edward M .Stephens, a New York City Psychiatrist. The term ‘male bonding’ invented by Lionel Tiger, described in detail in this book. Women studies were morphed into gender studies in many universities. Men studies is “an emerging interdisciplinary field concerned with men’s identity and experience in the present, over time, across space.”

Wesley D. Imms, detailed that psychology, anthropology, history and sociology provide a complex web of knowledge about masculinity as a set of definable and measurable actions and attitudes, as innate qualities embedded in the psyche, and more recently as a complex set of behaviors with different meanings culturally and historically and regulated by interactions with other men, women and power structures in society. Anthropological studies have highlighted the cultural diversities in masculinity, historical studies have focused on its multiple representations overtime elaborating the evolutionary character of masculinity (Imms,2000).

Gender needs to be understood as a process rather than a category of “doing gender” rather than the “being” of it. Gopal (2006) in “understanding masculinities tried to redress the imbalance in the contemporary understandings of what it means to be male and masculine in South Asia “in word, flesh deed affect……. Various archas of social life”. A focused, theoretical discussion on gender, masculinities and sexualities is not lacking in thematic rigour, but is rather carelessly written.

The studies on men and masculinity that has been developed since the mid 1980’s. Masculinity is considered to be socially constructed and for analyzing this a socio-psychological approach of male sex-role is commonly used in initial studies. But sex role theory is inadequate for understanding diversity in masculinity, and for understanding the power and economic
dimensions in gender. Recent research on men and masculinities has moved beyond the abstractions of sex-role approach to a more concrete examination of how gender patterns are constituted and practiced. In 1997 UNESCO sponsored a conference on masculinity, violence and peacemaking. In 1998 FLACSO organized a conference on research and activism about masculinities across Latin America and Caribbean. An international Association for studies of men has been established. The IASOM Newsletter, publishing a journal “Men and masculinities” and serve as a forum for international research on men and masculinity.

Globalization created new institutions which operate on a world scale, and which provide new areas for the construction of masculinities, global market, global media, and transnational corporations. In these complex and large scale social processes new patterns of masculinity may emerge. These “globalizing masculinities” appear, as they do on a global stage, oriented to a global gender order.

A better understanding of masculinities and men’s gender practices is worth having, simply because gender is an important aspect of our lives. If we value living in knowledge rather than in ignorance, this is a significant subject for education, research and reflections. We need to think about the whole of gender equation and all the groups included in it. So there is a purely intellectual purpose for research that illuminates the lives of men and forms and dynamics of masculinities. The studies on men and masculinities may also help to identify men’s interests in change. There have been two polar positions here; the idea that men share women’s interest in changed gender relations, and the idea that men as the dominant group have no interest in change at all. The real position is more complex (Connell, 2000)

Men studies emerged in the 1980’s; Men studies is not all research done on men and their actions, but rather research that is consciously aware of
the fact that men have gender, that men stand in a gender relationship with other men and women. A minor rewriting of an important quote by Simone de Beaviour “One isn’t born to be a man, one becomes one”. There are cultural expectations and perceptions of what it is to be a man in society today. There are traditional and historically based norms that run parallel to the political focus on gender and work for equality between men and women. This work towards gender equality has led to changes in the traditional attitudes. Ideas and ideals of masculinity vary with context. Variables like age, class and ethnic background play their part in the forming of varied expectations and judgements of what is masculine and what is not. The term masculine and feminine are often used, in daily speech in media and in research. But the way in which these concepts are understood is in constant flux.

In recent times, with the increasing number of NGOs in the development sector, the disciplines like sociology, Anthropology and economics have become important tools of interventionist research. Many of the researchers and activities working in the field of masculinity, point to the fact of an important shift in the developmentalist vocabulary of international cloner agencies, including the united nations OXFAM and more recently the ford foundation which has had an impact on the burgeoning interest in masculinity. ‘save the children (UK)’ along with UNICEF had commissioned a set of documentaries on masculinities in South Asia. UNIFEM’s violence against women campaign is also involved in raising questions about masculinity. Andrea corn wall, suggests that ‘men who have already’ began to embrace change are allies, rather than part of ‘ the enemy’, and that opportunities should be made to involve them more in gender and development work’. (Cornwall, 1997 :12)

Men especially those from marginalized sections, gets accentuated as objects of research as gendered beings and therefore as ideal sites for
research into masculinity. The structures of institutionalization of critical categories need to be understood as a part of a longer picture. It needs to be noted that the equation, between ‘men’ and masculinity is not theorized in most of the research that is being carried out. The sites of research are always understood as masculine only because men populate these sites. The men and masculinity paradigm is deployed in such a way that it begins by positing a false equation between the two terms – ‘men’ and ‘masculinity’ – As a premise.

It is worthy enough to note, the period that has witnessed the emergence of masculinity as a social science concept in India, concurrently spotted the emergence of many men’s organizations in the country. Attempts have been made imaging political collectivities of men claiming to support feminist initiatives as in the case with organizations like. The Mumbai – based group men against violence and Abuse (MAVA), the Pune based Purushuvach and other scattered attempts in cities like Thiruvananthapuram. Other groups like Purusha Hakka samakshansamiti based in Nasik and Mumbai, and purushapeedanaparilaravedi in Kottayam, are collectives that organize men as victims of legal reform. The same period has also seen the emergence of popular life style magazines for men in various languages in India, some of which are gentlemen and men’s world in English and Sreeman in Malayalam. (Radhakrishnan 2006)

Kulkarni (2007) writes, the studies based on the feminist provinces of India led to its implicit equation with women studies. Consequently, even though the research on various aspects of women’s lives were portrayed, the domain of masculinity is still remained as a dark subcontinent. The emerging discipline of men’s studies seeks to redress this imbalance (Kulkarni 2005: 57-58). The premise of this argument is that men, like women, are victims of patriarchy and this in turn disallows them to be expressive about their
feelings and emotions (Seidler 1989: 143 - 176) (National organization of men against sexism (NOMAS); a country wide network of academics and activities interested in issues of masculinity active in the united states work about three decades.

**Theoretical Interpretations on Masculinity**

Hearn (1990) describes that, the need to theorise gender, in particular to theorise men and masculinity, arises largely because of the dangers of reification, essentialism, and reductionism. That arise when using such categories as ‘women’ and ‘men’, femininity and masculinity. There are a lot of theoretical disciplines developed in the field of men and masculinity studies.

Anderson & MaGuire (2010) explained about the idea of inclusive masculinity. Inclusive masculinity to theoretically describe is the social process concerning the emergence of the archetype of masculinity that undermines the principles of orthodox masculine values. Inclusive masculinity theory suggests that something different emerges in a culture of diminishing homophobia. Here, men are permitted increased social freedom in the expression of attitudes and behaviours that were once highly stigmatised.

Moller (2007) detailing that masculinity is dynamic or that it is liable to contestation and change. Masculinity is inseparable from ‘other’ social factors such as generation, race, and class. Connell’s model allows the articulation of masculinity to be seen as a response to, or better, as intertwined with, these other factors. If there is a pattern for masculinity, it would seem that men are followers rather than designers. It is more difficult to see how men might themselves seek to connect their masculinity to other aspects of social and cultural life.
Institutional Reflexivity and Modernity by Giddens. (2003) is inherent in the idea of modernity is a contrast with tradition. There is a fundamental sense in which reflexivity is a defining characteristic of all human actions. All human beings routinely ‘keep in touch’ with the grounds of what they do as an integral element of doing it is the ‘reflexive monitoring of action’. In traditional cultures, the past is honored and symbols are valued because they contain and perpetuate the experience of generations. Tracking, in a mode of integrating the reflexive monitoring of action with the time-space organization of the community with the advent of modernity, reflexivity takes on different character. The reutilization of daily life has no intrinsic connections with the past at all, save in so far as what ‘was done before’ happens to coincide with what can be defined in a principled way in the height of incoming knowledge. “The reflexivity of modern social life consists in the fact that social practices are constantly examined and reformed in the light of incoming information’s about these very practices, thus constitutively altering their character.”

Johansson (2011) gives an interpretation of structural-functional theory and family life. Structural – functional theory was a dominant and influential discourse of family life, parenthood and fatherhood / motherhood in the 1950s and 1960s within this framework and theoretical language, the father is described as the instrumental leader and head of the family, whereas mother is characterized with emotional roles. As society is analysed in terms of different systems and these must adapt to a changing environment, coordinate different parts of the system, mobilize resources in order to reach certain goals and reproduce values, norms and behavioural patterns. The nuclear family consists of the central and primary system. To uphold a societal order and stability, the nuclear family must imprint and reproduce values and norms.
Gender studies and its theoretical explanations are highly contributed by the feminist theoretical interpretations. Different feminist views give various interpretations about men and masculinity. Liberal feminism identified masculinity as the enactment of gender roles that limit the women’s access to all aspects of our society and culture. Radical feminism identified masculinity as the enactment of patriarchal, hegemonic values central to men’s very “beings” values that intentionally excluded women from practical and noetic power. For liberal feminist, sex-role theory was understood within a social constructionist approach. Women and men were the same gendered differences being engineered through social practices. The essentialist belief of Radical feminism was that women have distinct qualities unavailable to men (Chodorow, 1978)

Imms (2000) opines that the discussions of gender have begun to explore multiple masculinities, both differences among men and the ways in which the ideas of masculinity change according to time the event and perspectives of those involved. Pro- feminist scholarship has become the predominant vehicle for elaborating contemporary sociological theories of gender. Pro-feminism has two dominant characteristics. It recognized power as the central function of masculinity and masculinity as a complex social hierarchy. Pro feminist authors such as Hearn (1996), Connell (1987, 1995), and Mac an Gaill (1994, 1996) have used feminist power theories of masculinity, not only to explain the marginalization of women, but also of men on the basis of class, sexuality and race. Their work has helped to build an image of masculinity, not as a diverse and varying complex of values and beliefs understanding men’s practices, not a set of characteristics shared by all men.
The essentialist thinking which assumes that masculinity is stable and common in all men, and supposes that masculinity is an innate and inseparable parts of men’s psyches.

The multiple masculinities approach has four key characteristics. First, masculinity is a multiple entity. It is not homogeneous or reducible to a set of simple characteristics. Second, gender is constructed by individuals as well as societal forces. Individuals do not automatically adopt predetermined gender roles; they are continually active in building, negotiating, and maintaining perceptions of their gender. Third, gender is a relational construct. Men do not construct their versions of masculinity apart from the influences of femininity or other men. Fourth, diversity in hegemonic power structures, rendering them more accessibility to rehabilitation. This approach provides a promising environment for analyzing masculinity and it provides a framework for interpreting the interactions of men with men, men with women, and men with society.

The institutional impact on human behavior is explaining in the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interaction is also called interactionist perspective. Symbolic interactionists explain, social interaction, as a dynamic process in which people continuously modify their behaviour as a result of the interaction itself. Blumer explain that, people do not respond directly to the world around them, but to the meaning they bring to it. Society, it’s institutions and it’s social structure exist – that is, social reality is bestowed – only through human interaction. Reality is what members agree to be reality. The ‘end point fallacy is an excellent way to explain the inconsistency in people’s behavior, as they move from setting to setting. (Lindsey, 2005) This mode of explanation is in a way suitable for describing masculinity. The masculine behavior is highly influenced by the
day to day interactions and the institutions in which those interactions taking place.

Sex role theory and social construction of gender were pivotal points for developing research on masculinity and femininity. These theoretical frames consider men are consequently been constructed as objects of study who are not only generated, but whose gendered identity exists only within the power relations between sexes.

The assumption in role theory is that, social expectations about a person’s status in society produce conformity to a given role and its related junctions. Fulfillment of these roles is encouraged through a range of implicit or explicit rewards and sanctions that are brought to bear in order to facilitate conformity. However, difficulties emerge when particular social roles are not fulfilled. For example:- society may expect that one of men’s role is to be a breadwinner and economic provider for his family. If this view is internalized by a new man, who then becomes unemployed, the result will be what ‘Joseph Pleck’ termed - ‘Male Gender role strain’. Thus, the greater the internalization of cultural norms of masculinity roles for an individual, the greater the role strain experienced when these ‘norms’ cannot be lived up to.

One of the important criticisms of role theory is that they are implicitly homogenizing, sex roles are said to lack sufficient historical perspective and, therefore, understanding of change. People are presented as empty vessels at birth that are socialized, or not, into particular ways of being (i.e masculine) and men become homogenized in this process.

A gender relational model for understanding ‘masculinities’ has been developed, predominantly through the work of Connell. Here men and women are not postulated as polar opposites, rather ‘gender’ is understood as being about sets of relations between men and women, but also relations between men and between women. Masculinities are a part of and not
distinct from, this larger system of relations that Connell terms the ‘gender order’. This allows for the exploration of similarity, as well as difference between men and women and for consideration of how other aspects of identity contribute to, and cross-cut, these similarities and differences.

Masculinities are seen as configurations of social practices that are patterned, and ordered hierarchically, in particular ways. They are ordered hierarchically in respect to women but, importantly, there are also sets of masculinity practices that are most valued in any given place and time – what Connell term ‘hegemonic’ forms. Other sets of masculinity practices become subordinated to, or marginalized from, these more valued hegemonic practices.

Connell’s theory of masculinity is explaining in this way, configurations of gender practice, including ‘masculinities’, can be understood as habitual practices that are also open to change in new or differing circumstances. ‘Masculinity’, is therefore, not a character or personality type that men possess in greater or lesser amounts, rather, ‘masculinities’ are understood as being historically contingent. This is not essentially determined (either by biology or processes of socialisation) social practice that is fluid but hierarchically ordered with dominant (hegemonic) configurations acting collectively, becoming incorporated into the social structure of societies and thereby replicating themselves.

Throughout history, changing environments, economic conditions and cultural values have affected how gender roles are played out. This century has seen its share of changing conditions in the above categories, and as a result there has been a shift in gender role and the benefits and costs these roles have on the people who adhere to them. In the theoretical explanations of the concept gender, a wide variety of approaches were developed in a short span of time. Socio-cultural, psychological and feminist
explanations gave different theoretical interpretations for approaching gender.

Pleck (1987) used the term sex role identity to explain gendered identity. According to him, the term ‘sex role identity’ is defined as a set of behaviours, traits and interests that are appropriate for either males or females that embodies, which allows them to reinforce their supposed pre-existing biological predispositions. This notion implies, there are certain sets of behaviours and attitudes that are most appropriate for both men and women, and others which are appropriate only for men or women. Mead (1962) showed in her analysis of primitive societies, that ways of being masculine could be vastly different in different cultures and thus did not hold up to universal ideals.

Gender research emphasizes that norms are things that are continuously being affirmed, challenged or re-negotiated through practice. When an individual interacts with others, norms for what is accepted as male or female shapes the individual; simultaneously, the interactions in turn shape the norms. The personal and social identities are being created and re-created through interaction between people. Identity is not a finished end product, but a phenomenon in the process of metamorphosis.

The involvement of men in feminism is explained in a multi dimensional way by Alice Jardine and Paul Smith (Jardine & Smith, 1987). Feminism is considered here as a subject for both men and women. The work explains the importance of male participation in feminism and men have to learn to make it their affair. Male body and sexuality is considered as the true dark continent of this society.

Psychologist Eleanor Maccoby represents a recent version of this liberal feminist view in encouraging individuality, freedom of choice for both sexes and allowing for a varied play of masculine and feminine
differences across the life cycle. She sees youth “growing up a part” in groups segregated by sex and adults experiencing “convergence in sex and work” (Gardiner, 1998 p. 189). She describes greater divergence within each gender than between the two, notes contradictory components of both masculinity and femininity, and emphasizes that “sex-linked behavior turns out to be a pervasive function of the social context” more than of individual personality.

**Masculinity as a social construct**

R.W Connell (2000) explains the dynamics of masculinities in detail. Masculinities are configurations of practice structured by gender relations. They are inherently historical; and their making and re-making is a political process affecting the balance of interests in society and directions of social change. Each societal construct of masculinity varies over time and according to culture. The author also explains the historical context of masculinity in his work.

Kimmel (2004) explained the specificities of different masculinities those were recognized, and their origins, structures and dynamics are investigated. Kimmel, Connell and Jeff Hearn debated on many theoretical social science perspectives on men and masculinities. Social science approaches, global development, and social theories on men and masculinities are thoroughly discussed in this work. Masculinities do not exist in social and cultural vaccums, but rather are constructed within specific institutional settings. Masculinities are shaped and re-shaped by the major institutions of modern society; the work place, the media, education etc.

Levant and Pollack (1996) describes that men’s prescribed roles are neither biological nor social givens, but rather psychological and social constructions. Authors show, how some male problems are the unfortunate by products of the current processes by which males are socialized.
Courtenay (2000) proposes a relational theory of men’s health from a social constructionist and feminist perspective. He provides an introduction to social constructionist perspectives on gender and a brief critique of gender role theory. It further examines how men construct various forms of masculinity, or masculinities - and how these different enactments of gender, as well as differing social structural influences; contribute to differential health risks among men. Gender is constructed from cultural and subjective meanings that constantly shift and vary, depending on the time and place.

Researches on social construction and masculinities have placed a good deal of emphasis on the uncertainties, difficulties, challenges and contradictions associated with the process. All these are explained in detail in the works of (Connell, 2001)

According to Leach (1994), Masculinity is a set of culturally and socially constructed behavior and variables, he does argue that, this state is not natural “Unlike the biological state of maleness, masculinity is a gender identity constructed socially, historically and politically. It is the cultural interpretation of maleness, learnt through participation in society and its institutions”. Thus masculinity is an ever evolving process that requires the individual to be intimately linked to social and cultural discourse. The male is expected to identify with the social institutions that construct masculinity and react in a manner that commensurate with, what these institutions view as acceptable behavior. Connell(2005) defining “Masculinities are constructions within a gender order, but the gender orders are neither simple nor static”.

Values, life style and one’s outlook on life are not so much inherited, but to a larger degree something one must construct. In such a situation, where there are many options and uncertainties, gender stands out as the only consent element, which therefore can form the basis of socialisation and self
realization. This makes gender an important factor in identity construction for people.

West and Zimmerman (1987) approach gender as a routine accomplishment embedded in every interaction. They propose “an ethnomethodologically informed, and therefore distinctively sociological understanding of gender as a routine, methodical, and recurring accomplishment. The “doing” of gender is undertaken by women and men whose competence as members of society is hostage to its production. Doing gender involves a complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional, and micro political activities that west particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine natures.”

**Men, Masculinity and Institutions of family and occupation**

Connell (1993) explaining masculinity as a personal practice cannot be isolated from its institutional context. Most human activity is institutionally bound. Three institutions – the state, the work place/labour market, and the family – are of particular importance in the contemporary organization of gender. Segal (1990) narrates throughout 1980s the shifting nature of men’s lives, their behaviours, experiences, anxieties are debated with a new passion and concern. He explains, the relationship of men to home and family has undergone an irreversible transformation over the last three decades. The power and meaning of masculinity derive not just from anatomy or familial interaction, but from wider social relations. Most men today desire for and have a close relationship with their children.

McDowell (2011) wrote about how to theorize the socio-spatial constitution of gendered identities has continued to be a central aim. Masculinity and femininity are defined in relational terms. Sociologists of employment and labour have argued that contemporary societies are characterized by a shift towards a ‘risk society’, in which individual effort is
rewarded. (Beck, 1992). It has been argued that in this new economy/society the conventional divisions of class, race and gender have become less relevant in influencing opportunities and living standards.

Today fathers who live with their children are taking a more active role in caring them and help out around the house. The changing role of fathers has introduced new challenges, as dad’s juggle the competing demands of family and work. (Parker, 2015)

“It seems clear that effective policy must be built upon a nuanced picture of not only how fathers are limited by economic consideration or driven by individual aspirations, but also of how they are constrained by a complex range of structural and institutional factors.” (Browne, 2013). He explains the necessity of the default model analysis on gender equality. And focus more on the structural constraints facing relational fatherhood. How the choices made by the fathers cannot be reduced simply to the particular aspirations.

Laura King examines fatherhood as a cultural institution and a social role. Fatherhood is considered as multi dimensional, complex and often contradictory. Fatherhood could be a positive experience for many men. As Robert Griswold notes “Throughout human history, most men have been fathers, and all fathers have been sons, and thus comprehending men’s experiences as fathers and how fatherhood has been culturally constructed over time is fundamental to understanding human experience.” (King, 2015)

Chopra (2003) gave a different interpretation of men in domestic work. According to her an analysis of men’s everyday speech will allow us to explore another dimension of gender relations that has remained muted, the support that men extend towards their family. However, in the way that women’s work remained invisible in its doing unit, feminist research and analysis uncovered its histories. The doing of support by men may also have
remained unaddressed, if not invisible. It is important to understand those males subjectivities are differentiated within the home by age, work, space and class. Understanding masculinities is an exercise that must address itself to key institutional settings like family, states/ factories. Family plays a comprehensive role in defining relations of gender. These the site of family is an important starting point for the exploration of and maleness.

In modern social life, change tends to be more rapid, bites more deeply into the tissue of daily life, and is much wider in scope, than the characteristic of pre-modern cultures. Family is the most important institution within which to explore the lives and everyday relations and practices of men. It is more accepted to outline public expressions of masculinity. Male subjectivities are differentiated by age, work, space and class.

The earlier standardized biography – where each member of the family had a certain role, specific duties and competencies – is transformed into a choice biography (Beck & Beck 1995). The later means that additional questions are raised and there are more decisions to make regarding how to live one’s life and how to construct the family. However, this does not necessarily mean that individuals are free today, rather there are new forms of restrictions and norms.

Family was here investigated and put forward as an example of how modern institutions were transformed. The key concept of the discussion and theoretical elaboration on the family was individualization. Instead of understanding, the family as a hierarchic and organized unit, with polarized gender roles, it is framed and described as an individualized formation. This means that more choices and decisions are moved to the individual level. (Johansson - 2011)

Family, socialization and interaction process (1955), by Talcott Parsons and Robert Bales in an important study of family life and modernity.

When turning to Beck and Beck (1995) a different images of father appears. On the one hand, they describe how the concept of the bread-winner gradually is marginalized. The role as provider and care giver is much more fluent, and also not that closely tied to gender. We can here see the contours of a gender-nuclear family, where roles and identities are exchangeable. People are casting off their old standard patterns, and developing new narratives of the self, and this includes gender identities. (Johansson – 2011). Theories of modernity point towards considerable changes in modern families. A strong emphasis is put on individuals and their decisions to construct equality in gender and to construct democratic relations at par with gender equality.

Williams (2008) in the study of Reflexive father exploring the attitudes of new fathers he describes that. “Though Many men talk about wanting to be different from their own fathers, in terms of many key aspects like, their relationship with partners and children, they also acknowledge that they have to be different if they have to maintain a relationship with their partners. Changes in domestic arrangements are not without conflict, but the men recognize the problems of failure to adapt as well as the benefits of adapting”.

Even a cursory glance would show that there is no uniform picture of the family in the process of change. Family and kinship system provide an important context for understanding gender justice in society. Men’s involvement in child care and fatherhood is changing. Beyond a provider, men’s role as a father and care givers are being more recognized nowadays.
Hansot and Tyack have correctly emphasized the importance of “thinking institutionally” in the case of gender and schooling, and their points have much wider relevance. It is not too strong to say that masculinity is an aspect of institutions, and is produced in institutional life, as much as it is an aspect of personality or produced in interpersonal transactions (Connell, 1993, pp 602).

Men still view themselves as primary bread winners, but have taken on the additional role of father as well. This cause a work – family conflict among men. And this is viewed as a “new male mystique”. For the male identity and male life, work has been a central and indisputable part. Researchers Holter and Aarseth mention work and public life as the core of a man’s - firstness – he is first and foremost what he does in working life. Many researchers stress how central work is for the construction of masculine identity. To be the family provider has traditionally been a dominant criterion for the creation of a male identity. To be the main provider is still seen as of the main characteristics of the masculine. The modern man is supposed to be equality orientated, take part in domestic chores and prioritize spending time with his children.

Kerala context

By comprising three distinct princely states of Travancore, Cochin and Malabar, Kerala became a unified state in 1956 as part of the linguistic reorganization of states since Indian Independence. Although part of the same state, due to distinct historical, cultural and geographical reasons, these regions developed diversities, each with its own patterns of social groupings and interactions. (Menon 2012). Kerala has only 1.18 percent of the total geographical area of the country but has 3.34 percent of the Indian population.
Osello & Osello (2006) made a detailed analysis on men and masculinity in Kerala. In their view the existing ethnography of South India, in which the idea of man, as somebody who will marry a women and became a good provider, a father, a husband is not questioned.

Ganesh (2011) in his work “KeralathinteInnalekal” describes about the historical growth and strengthening of gender differentiation in Kerala. After the Sangam period the existing male centered figures became more rigid and strong. The growth of patriarchal nuclear family increased the gap between the male centered public sphere and the domestic space. The text explains the social change in different periods of Kerala and its impact in the growth of gender concepts.

Community, caste and religion were discursively erased through the valorization of ‘class’ and gender. The high status of women has been the central argument for the existence of the unique developmental project of Kerala. Women in Kerala were highly educated, had high life expectancy an upper hand in sex-ratio and better health conditions. The academic interests in masculinity as a concept for understanding contemporary culture is relatively new in India.

It is important to note that one of the first public discussions of masculinity in Kerala happened in a workshop that was organized at Kerala University (Thiruvananthapuram) as part of the travelling seminars. The first writings on the topic of masculinity in India emerged from this conference. Mrinalini Sinha argued that masculinities are not fixed and need to be asserted and performed again and again. She attempted to explain the colonial relation and masculinity. Works on the modern History of India have effectively suggested ways in which the nations of masculinity (and indeed feminity) were important nodes for the organization of power in the colonial context. Most significant among these is the work of Partha
Chetterjee, who has argued that the disappearance of the women’s question in the mid nineteenth century was effected by a discursive organizing in the nationalist, framework of the ‘public and the private as masculine and feminine domains respectively (Radhakrishnan, 2006)

Devika (2003) argued that years of twentieth century was a moment of engendering, when a certain set of qualities were represented as masculine and feminine. The discourse of social reform which concentrated on community formation through caste and community organizations and on uplifting themselves through modern education, engagement with new economic systems and raising status of women, inadvertently established the normative roles for men and women in Kerala. There are only a few historical and sociological studies on masculinity in Kerala context

**Conclusion**

The existing literature in the field of men and masculinity is comparatively low in number. But there exists a wide range of information regarding gender studies. Recent works on men and masculinity is giving more emphasis to the idea of constructionism and claim masculinity as a social construct. The writings on masculinity explains its multiple nature and claim that masculinity is a complex dynamic entity. The social transformations are reflecting in the male life and their gendered identity. For completing the spectrum of gender studies and for a thorough investigation of the society as a whole, men and masculinity studies must be developed. Men and masculinity studies have only a short history, hence there exists a lot of gaps in knowledge, which needs to be filled. There are information regarding the influence of institutions in gendered identity of a man but the detailed studies are comparatively low in this area. All these information jointly demand for further researches in this field.