SEX AND GENDER: A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS
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Social inequalities between men and women exist in all known societies. However, nature and extent of these inequalities are not uniform. They differ from one society to another, generally these inequalities are more pervasive in patriarchal than matriarchal societies. Superior-inferior or higher-lower social status of men and women does not merely prevail in fact but also exist in design. Women are believed to be unintelligent and weak who are always dependent upon men for protection and guidance. They are thought to be unfit for any work other than procreation of children cooking the food, washing utensil and clothes, cleaning houses and other household works. In short they can either be wives or mothers such beliefs about women are justified and explained in terms of biological differences between men and women for ages. The word ‘sex’ is used to show biological differences between men and women. These notions about women and their segregation from world outside the home have been vociferously challenged by feminists and other scholars. Many of these scholars accept biological differences between men and women but argue social inequalities among them are the product of culture and not biology therefore they have introduced the word ‘gender’ in order to explain socio-cultural construction of men and women status in society.

Robert Stoller, an American Psychoanalyst, is the first person who has distinguished between ‘sex and gender’ in 1968, he used the word ‘sex’ to
categories population into two categories i.e. male and female according to their physical characteristics such as external genitalia, internal genitalia i.e. the organ that produce the sex cells, hormonal states and secondary sex characteristics. In addition there are differences in physique between men and women which usually mean that men are more muscular and stronger. On the contrary the word ‘gender’ is used to explain socio-psychological and cultural differences between men and women. Stoller says if the proper term for ‘sex’ are ‘male’ and ‘female’ the corresponding terms for ‘gender’ are ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ these later might be independent of biological sex. Bella Abzg’s says that the distinction between sex and gender has evolved to show the reality that women and men roles and status are socially constructed and subject to change.

Hence the word ‘sex’ is used to show biological differences between men and women and consider them as primary source from which social inequalities between men and women emanates, where as the words gender express asymmetrical status of men and women whose main source is not biology but values and institutions of society (Haralambos, 1995; Giddens, 1998; Worell, 2001).

1.1 Sexual Division Of Labour: Biological Explanations:

Biological explanations to the sexual division of labour emphasise physical difference between men and women, they are of the view that our reproductive anatomies, our brain structure, our brain chemistry, our
musculature are different we have different hormones circulating differently in our bodies. All these are the fundamental and universal differences and these differences provide the base for sexual division of labour. Thus the term ‘sex’ is used to categorized the population into two categories i.e. male and female according to their physical difference as mention earlier.

Biologist further argue that the sexual division of labour derived from the difference in our reproductive structure also because female invest much time and energy in ensuring the survival of a baby at a time i.e. gave birth to a baby in a year, where as male fertilise as many eggs as possible at any time, thus there are difference between the two sex i.e. male and female. Similarly there are difference between male and female in their brain chemistry, according to them male brain are heavier or more complex than the female, thus females are not able to seek higher education. Some biologist argue that though there is similarities between the boys and girls but there is complete sexual division of labour from puberty onward because of their hormonal differences, potentiality and strength (Kimmel, 2004: 7-8). Scholar of this group are of the view that among all the animals including human being in which there has been a separation of sexes there is also separation in their role i.e. There is also establishing division of labour (Jaha, 2002:26-27).

Thus biological explanations are in favour of extreme pole of division of labour among the sexes. According to George Pitter Murdock these biological differences between male and female are the prime source of division of
labour. He states man with muscular strength and potential can better handle the strenuous task and women as are not so strong as men so they usually engage in lighter task which can be performed in or near the home. Thus women because of their biological differences play a separate role as compared to counterpart male (Harlambous, 1995: 586).

Similarly Talcott Person also hold the view that there should be a clear cut sexual division of labour like the button and a button-hole. According to Parson women are primarily or solely responsible for socializing the young as they bear and nurse the children they have a strong and closer relationship with them. Thus he hold the view that for the family to smooth function as a better social system there must be sexual division of labour between the sexes (Harlambous, 1995: 582).

Thus sex differences arise from the distribution of men and women into social roles within the society women play domestic roles where men play the roles away from the homes. In this way sexual division of labour is in turn product of inherent sex differences especially women’s childbearing and nursing and men greater strength and potential, these physical differences in interaction with social, psychological and ecological condition influence the role play by men and women. Such different position of men and women in the social structure due to sexual division of labour create sex differentiated behavior through a variety of processes and one such process is the formulation of ‘gender roles’.
1.2 Sexual Division Of Labour: Cultural Explanations

For the ages there is a debate on ‘Nature v/s Nurture’ i.e. whether it is biology or culture that causes sexual division of labour, scholar is of the view that since 1970’s culture override biology and gender role are culturally produced (Kimmel, 2004). Though the term ‘masculine and feminine’ differ from society to society but there are two universal cultural possibilities that every known society assigns roles on the basis of gender and in no society the status of women is superior to that of men, men were involved in activities away from homes while women were involved in activities inside the home. Thus women are paid economically disadvantage and are paid less as compared to their male counter part, women prefer traditionally female jobs while male prefer jobs with the highest income and greater possibilities for promotions even in societies where women actively participate in labour force they have not any reduction in household duties regardless of their occupational status (worell, 2001: 289-538).

The degree of gender differentiation is related to the level of patriarchy and sexism in a society, such gender bias values that operate in patriarchal family is socialized at an early age. Thus women acquire qualities of submissiveness, weakness and self sacrifice and the process of socialization reinforce these stereotypes at all the stages in the society. That they are unable to retaliate against the system or injustice. In this way culture, rituals, traditional practices frequently make a girl the ‘lesser child’ who is denied to do the
desired job and always force to the traditional stereotype role of caring and households (Jaha, 2002). According to Ann Oakley there is no universal division of labour on the basis of sex, she says it is the human culture which create such type of division of labour rather than invincible biological forces.

Thus gender roles are culturally produced and there is no role which women exclusively performed. Physical differences don’t bar women from performing particular roles. Oakley is of the view that mother roles is cultural construction, employment of a mother has no determinantal effects on the development studies shows that the children of working women in different sectors are less likely to be delinquent than those of women or mothers who stay at home (Harlambous, 1995:588). Actually gender roles are shared expectation, which is culturally recognised, apply to the people on the basis of their socially identified sex.

According to David Bakams women behave in a way that can be described as communal i.e. friendly, unselfish, concerned with others. Thus women roles is associated with care affection which in one way or other refer to familial role, associated within homes, where as men behave in a manner that can be describe as agnatic i.e. independent, assertive or confident and instrumentally competent thus men roles is culturally associated with prestige, power, and outside home (Worell, 2001:1071). Similarly according to Sherry B. Ortner it is not biology as such that is responsible for the sexual division of labour. But it is the culture of a particular society which define and evaluates
female biology as the basis of sexual division of labour, Ortner argues that in every known human society culture considered as superior than nature and women are symbolically associated with nature, because of his biological functions which are more closer to nature. Thus men are associated with up, right, high, culture and strength while women are associated with down, left, low, nature and weakness. According to her all these association are responsible for the sexual division of labour and are not inherent in biology but are cultural construct and define and redefine by various institution of society and through the various process of socialization (Harlambos, 1995).

1.3 Gender Socialisation and Identity

Socialization is the process of learning norms of the social group to which we belong and learning to define ourselves and other within that setting, through socialisation we accept the norms and definitions of the socialization groups. In this life long process some times as part of our socialisation into a subordinated group we are socialized in a way that the norms or rules of the dominant group must be followed even our subordinated group question those rules i.e. there are external pressure to conform those rules or norms and socialized to believe the unavoidable at worst or desirable at best. The process of socialisation influenced by cultural variation related to the area in which we live as well as the other socially significant category to which we belong for example the ethnic and social categories. Thus the process of socialization serve as an efficient way to impose values and norms of particular sex
category on the individual, although we are socialized throughout our lives but the early years have the most enduring impact.

Gender socialization has analytically distinct products; the formation of gender identity, the learning of specific roles such as mother and gendered version of sex neutral role such as student and the learning of how being a member of the culture itself is gendered. West and Zimmerman say one is doing ‘gender’ when one behave by following others and acting like a male or female. Actually the child sees the other behaving differently and he draws conclusions about the norms or rules governing gender here other are the people with whom the child has regular and frequent conduct (Kramer, 2004:60-63). Each culture defines gender and through the process of gender socialization socialized the children and adults to behave in accordance with their sex category. Nowadays children learn to identify gender categories at an early age. Nancy Eisenberg, Carol Lynn Martin and Richard A. Fabes found that about 75% one year children can distinguish between the faces of women and men, primarily on the basis of their hair length by the age two and half they can apply girl or boy labels to themselves and others and try to show some knowledge of gender stereotypes. Stereotype knowledge well develop between the age three and five and closely corresponds with the stereotype of the adults. Actually gender stereotype is so organized that it itself create the feeling of stereotypes, for example the dolls are more often put into the hands of girls (female child) and balls into the hands of boys.
(male child). Thus a doll in a child's hands usually demands hugging, loving, and care in contrast to a ball which requires or demands bouncing, throwing, and kicking. Similarly, males are allowing and forcing to engage in adventurous and outdoor activities demanding independence and strength whereas girls are confined mostly to indoor activities. Thus in the same way different socializing institutions or agencies like parents, peers, schools, occupations, heroes, and so on reinforce gender stereotypes (Worell, 2001). But the important to note that both for childhood and adult socialization face-to-face interaction is the most influential as we see in our daily life how social interaction regardless of setting may be a means for reinforcing the existing version of gender (Kramer, 2004).

The fact is that gender is continuously learned and relearned; we are socially produced and reproduce make and remake gender in a thousand minor actions in the course of a day. Thus gender socialization is very powerful once a gender is assigned society expects individuals to act like females and males.

**Gender Identity**

This gender socialization is itself reflected into gender identity. Actually the term identity is widely used and as a consequence can mean many things to different people. But gender identity refers to those aspects of a person they are defined in terms of his or her group membership. Thus gender identity is firstly a label or a category, a way of grouping a number of people together on the basis of some shared characteristics. There are many forms of gender
identities categories on the basis of different label like ethnicity, religion, gender etc. in comparison to other identities ethnicity and gender identities are ascribed identity given to one at birth. But such a social identity (gender identity) are develop and define within the social world, one has used that category for example the characteristics associated with women category includes emotional, weak, kind, etc. Thus there are many meaning and implication associated with gender identity as personality characteristic or traits i.e. being competitive are being aware of the feeling of others, role behaviours i.e. Leadership roles, physical characteristics i.e. having broad shoulders or a soft voice so on and so forth (Worell, 2004).

Thus as mentioned earlier some assume that this fundamental sense of gender identity is biologically determined and unchangeable while other suggest that cultural norms may be responsible for this stereotype gendered identity. But it is suggested that culture is much more responsible for stereotype identity of particular sex category as culture has a set of institutional structure and practices to teach sex roles. Studies have shown that parents socialize new born children differently as a function of gender, similarly teacher as early a preschool engage in behaviours that shape the behaviour of particular sex category differently, such as more often asking girls to be quite or to speak softly. Thus gender identity develops not in a vacuum but in social world in which representations and beliefs about gender are well established and actively fostered (Worell, 2001).
There are two major theories of gender identity.

i) Freud’s theory of gender identity.

ii) Chodorow’s theory of gender identity.

**i) Freud’s Theory of Gender Identity**

Sigmund Freud theory of emergence of gender identity is very influential according to Freud the learning of gender difference among the infant and young is central or centered on the presence or absence of male genetalia i.e. penis ‘I have a penis’ mean ‘I am a boy’ while ‘I am a girl’ mean ‘I lack penis’. According to Freud this is not a anatomical distinction but a symbolic one. But Freud theory has been criticize as he gave much important to genetalia.

In this sense according to Freud sex organ is an important symbol in determining the identity of a particular sex category in the society where he or she live.

**ii) Chodorow’s Theory of Gender Identity**

Nancy Chodorow is a sociologist argues that the sense of male or female derive from the infant’s attachment to its parents from an early age she places much more importance to the mother rather than the father. According to her, a child is emotionally attached with his or her mother, this attachment at some point to be broken in order to achieve a separate sense of self. Chodorow argues this breaking process occurs in different way for boys and girls because girls remain closer to the mother able to go on hugging and
kissing but boys have a sense of self and get a radical rejection of their original closeness to the mother understanding the sense of masculinity from what is not feminine. Thus boys develop more analytical ways to looking at the world, emphasizing achievement and responsibilities. Thus according to Chodow girl identity is dependent while boys is of independent i.e. the former is private while the later is public (Gidden, 1998).

1.4. Gender Inequalities: Feminist Perspectives

Gender inequalities existed in the all known societies of the world and in this regard feminist have different perspectives to explain the causes and consequences of gender inequalities. The word feminism is believe to have been invented by Charles Fourier who conceived of women’s emancipation (i.e. free from legal, social or political restrictions) as the strength for global social transformation (Channa, 1998:7-8). Thus feminist perspectives are a generalized system of ideas about social life and human experiences develop from a women centered perspective which are advocating for equal rights (Ritzer, 2004: 436).

Actually feminism is originated in the seventeenth century it has undergone various kinds of changes or modification in thought since its origin. The develop of feminism is broadly categories into three faces i.e. a) from seventeenth century to nineteenth century, b) from 1960’s to 1980’s and c) from 1980’s onward. Originally feminist movement emerge in the mid 1960’s initially it has two distinct branches, one focused on women men right and
other on women liberation. Thus various shades of opinion and ideologies for the liberation of women have been constructed over a period of time, these perspective can broadly be categorise as under:

i) Cultural feminism

ii) Liberal feminism

iii) Radical feminism

iv) Socialist feminism.

i) Cultural Feminism: Cultural feminism is originated in nineteenth century thought proposed by women such as Margaret Fuller, Charlotte Perkins, Gilman and Jane Addams other important contributor to cultural feminism are Nancy Chodorow, Carol Gilligans etc. It is one of the major development in 1970's as the attempt to create a specifically women culture which liberate them from the male dominant culture (Worell, 2001: 470). The aim of this perspective is to explore the ways in which women are different from men. Cultural feminist is of the view that the cultural conception in patriarchal society about women that they are inferior to male is greatly responsible for their social subordination (Ritzer, 2001: 444). They emphasized that social transformation will occur through the infusion of feminine or maternal values into culture (Worell, 2001) and in order to achieve success women must learn to think like a man. The transformation strategies suggested by cultural feminist emphasise “finding ways for women to experience communal values, achieve personal and intellectual growth in the context of relationships and empower women to
understand themselves as knowers, creators and actors, not just as passive receivers” (Worell, 2001:471).

Thus cultural feminist is of the views that gender difference existed in the society due to differences in roles played by men and women within the various institutional settings in the particular society. In other word the gender differences according to cultural feminist existed in the society due to sexual division of labour in the society which confines women as sister, daughter, wife, mother and household worker i.e. to the private sphere of home and family, whereas male in decision making sphere i.e. to public sphere outside the home and family. Hence cultural feminism come to the conclusion that to liberate women from male dominated world or male created culture we have to construct a culture of their own i.e. women culture (Ritzer, 2004:444-445).

ii) Liberal Feminism: Liberalism has its roots in the liberal enlightenment thought, industrial and French revolution. Liberal feminist values also reflected in the National Organisation for women (NOW) bill of right which called for legislation related to equal right established in 1966 (Worell, 2005:470), thus liberal feminism arouse in the seventeenth century with the awareness to reform oppressive socio-economic practices and structures against women. Actually the effort of liberal feminism are directed toward the reform of patriarchy rather than the structural change of the society (Madson, 2000).
Liberal feminist argued that women have the same capacities as men so they deserve equality in all walk of life (Worell, 2005:470). According to them gender inequality is the result of a patriarchal and sexiest division of labour and this gender inequality can be bring by transforming the division of labour through the repatterning of the key institutions like family, customs, marriage, law, education etc. to allow women to assume their equal place in the society.

Hence liberal feminism pointed out that all person have same capacities and potentials for reasons, moral agency and self actualization and the exercise of these capacities can be secured through laws. According to them problem lies in the society due to prejudices and irrational beliefs about women that are weak and less capable as compared to men and also due to the stereotype gender roles. Beside all this liberal feminist argue that gender inequality is the result of the problem of achieving equality in marriage. In patriarchal society marriage is such an institution which empower the role of husband with authority and with the freedom to move beyond the domestic domain where as wives are ruled by husband and centered on the activities of the isolated domestic household. Thus gender inequality in the society is due to the social construction of gender. The sexist division of labour, the doctrine and practice of public and private sphere and patriarchal ideology is the root cause of inequality.

Thus according to liberal feminist to get rid of this problem of gender inequality and women oppression there must be gender neutral policies. They
ensure that all individual are equal and have equal access to equal opportunities to exercise their free will and skills (Ritzer, 2004:445-449; Worell, 2001:470-471).

**iii) Radical Feminism**: Radical feminism has its roots in new feminist movement of 1960’s i.e. arising within second wave of feminism. Radical feminists argue that the root cause of women oppression lies in the patriarchal gender relations they are of the view that how patriarchal control over women bodies has dominated every area of life (Worell, 2001:472).

Thus this theory of radical feminism start with assumption that women form a ‘sex class’ not simply as a class but as a fundamentally oppressed class, that subordination of women is seen to provide the foundation of social inequality and the sexual oppression of women which further lead to the economic, cultural and social subordination of women (Madsen, 2000). According to radical feminist man through participation in patriarchy learn how to control other human being. They argue that in every institutions of societies there are various system of oppression in which some people dominates other, of all these system of domination subordination the most fundamental structure of oppression is gender i.e. the system of patriarchy and according to radical feminist it is the most pervasive and enduring system of social inequality. It create sadism, guilt and repression (Ritzer, 2004) and contributed to world in which thinking is seen as the opposite of feeling, masculine is contrasted with feminine, rationality is contrast with irrationality (Worell, 2001). Radical thinkers
argue that such myth of masculinity and femininity should be abolished and new non-gendered categories must be formulated for organizing personal and social life. Radical feminist believe that women have such potential to reconstructing a world which is free from oppression. Thus radical feminist question the ways in which patriarchy dominates all aspect of human life and call for a radical revolutionary reordering of the society by over throughing patriarchal structure. This will liberate every one from unjust society, because such a patriarchal structure posed threat to women freedom i.e. threat posed by rape, sexual assault, which keep women confine in terms of where they can go and when, violence may also be hidden in various ways, in terms of fashion and beauty, in terms of motherhood and heterosexuality etc. Hence in contrast to the earlier theories i.e. cultural and liberal, radical feminist emphasize the centrality of social transformation which is lesbian in orientation i.e. the refusal of patriarchal structure (Worell, 2001; Ritzer, 2004; Madsen, 2000). Thus the central beliefs on which radical feminism is based is that women are of absolute positive value as women and women are every where oppressed by the system of patriarchy, so it should be illuminate and over through by a just social structure (Ritzer, 2004:452-456).

iv) Socialist Feminism: Similar to the other feminist perspectives socialist feminism also originate in the nineteenth century that focuses upon both the public and private sphere of a women life. The major theorist associated with this perspective are Juliet Michell, Zillah Eisenstein, Alison Jaggar, Iris Young,
Socialist feminism emphasizes that an egalitarian society can be achieved by abolishing or removing the cultural and economic sources of women’s oppression (Worell, 2001:473). Thus socialist feminism are of the view that women are everywhere oppressed by patriarchy and capitalism, so there should be develop some methods of social analysis of historical materialism and an idea of materialist analysis of the determination of human affair. The emphasis here is on the capitalism and patriarchy. Thus socialist feminism is the combination of the Marxist and radical feminism. Marxist feminism are of the view that women’s subordination is not the result of biology but from the social relations in capitalist society, they further argue that this social relational bias for women subordination exist in the society due to the institution of family. Because family is such an institution as it exist in the complex societies of the world in which men command over women both in the public as well as in the private sphere. In this way socialist feminism accept the Marxian views of capitalist social relation as a major structure of oppression (Ritzer, 2004:456-461).

Actually socialist feminism try to integrate all the major feminist perspective to come on some conclusion to abolished gender inequality. Socialist feminism criticized the liberal feminism which start with the assumption about individual right, they argue that individual rights alone will not lead to gender equality but the realization of human potential will also be important, because women are alienated from their strength and potential. Thus socialist feminism gave
emphasis for structural transformation and they see it as a vehicle for achieving feminist liberation and argue that this collectivity of oppression is not some thing that can be easily be blamed on individual men but it is the effect of culture or social relations which define our existence as gendered individual. Consequently a change in society is needed before any significant change in gender relations (Worell,2001;Ritzer.2004).

CONCLUSION

From the fore going discussion it may be concluded that sex is a biological term and gender is a cultural terms both are used to differentiate individuals, former is physically and later is socially. There is a debate on ‘Nature v/s Nurture’ i.e. weather it is biology or culture that causes sexual division of labour. Scholar is of the view that since 1970’s culture override biology and gender role are culturally produced. Though the term ‘masculine and feminine’ differ from society to society. But there are two universal cultural possibilities that every known society assigns roles on the basis of gender and in no society the status of women is superior to that of men. Thus as mentioned earlier some assume that this fundamental sense of gender identity is biologically determined and unchangeable while other suggest that cultural norms may be responsible for this stereotype gendered identity. But it is suggested that culture is much more responsible for stereotype identity of particular sex category, as culture has a set of institutional structure and practices to teach sex roles. The process of socialization and gender identity serve as an efficient way to impose values
and norms of particular sex category on the individual. Although we are socialized throughout our lives but the early years have the most enduring impact on individual with regard to gender bias and prejudices. There are various feminist perspective which explain the causes and consequences of gender inequalities. As the word feminism is believed to have been invented by Charles Fourier who conceived of women’s emancipation (i.e. free from legal, social or political restrictions) as the strength for global social transformation. Thus feminist perspectives as discussed earlier are a generalized system of ideas about social life and human experiences develop from a women centered perspective which are advocating for equal rights and creating a gender just society.