CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Society may be obsessed with equality, but it excelled in defining and perpetuating the flavour of inequality. From simple to complex, traditional to modern, in all types of society women enjoy a systematic subordinate position; rectified and upheld by social values, customs and norms. Various subtleties and complexities are weaved around the sexual differences, which results in placing men at the superior position and women at the inferior position in society. From cradle to grave and from generation to generation, variations do occur in terms of degree and place but the system or tradition remains the same. The differences are redefined, represented, valued and channeled into different roles in all types of society. Roles are definitions of those things that people are expected to do in the various situations that they encounter in their lives. “Sex-role” plays a vital role in maintaining and regenerating the sexual differences.

The terms “sex-role” and “gender-role” have been used interchangeably, but the former is the behaviors stemming from biological sexual differences and the later refers to those socially created behaviors assigned differentially to women and men. Sex-role theory acknowledged the biological determinism because it reinforces and usually involves the acting out of one’s biological predisposition. William and Best (1982) describes ‘sex roles’ in terms of activities of social significance in which the two sexes actually participate with differential frequency—that is predominantly male activities, such as, repairing cars and doing construction work, and predominantly female activities, such as keeping house and nursing. For example, in young males this is associated typically with their greater aggressive, combative and competitive nature than is usual with young females. In young females their sex role are usually manifest by nurturing and compromising behaviour, less frequently seen in boys. And, gender-roles are those behaviours imposed overtly or covertly by society. As described by Gagnon and Simon (1973) gender-roles are behaviours that can be considered ‘scripted’
by society. Lipman-Blumen (1984) explained that ‘gender roles’ are social construction; they contain self-concepts, psychological traits, as well as family, occupational, and political roles assigned dichotomously to members of each sex. For example, girls learn how to keep knees together or adjust their dress and apply cosmetics while boys actively memorize the rules of sports and games. Gender has everything to do with the society, in which one lives and may or may not have much to do with biology. Perhaps social construction of “gender-roles” have many imperatives from the biological sexual differences, which is refuted by many scholars and feminists, and holds that propagation of sexual differences draws inferences from various myths, beliefs and religions. Various theories have contributed to the understanding of the male/female differences, accommodating the contradictions and complexities. Most studies on male/female differences often leads to the ambiguous and less effectiveness to find more sophisticated and refined way of conceptualizing the differences between men and women. The discrepant used of the terms often lead to confusion, lack of understanding and misconception. To work effectively on gender issues it is imperative that we clarify and understand the concepts “sex-role” and “gender-role” in a clear cut distinction. Thus, the controversies and contradictions over these theories can be discussed as follows:

**Biological Theory:** Biological theorists rely on Darwin’s theory of evolution as an organizing framework. They emphasized the genes, hormones, and physiology in describing the sexual differences. They described how traits are selected based on their adaptiveness in particular environments. Traits that foster survival and reproduction tend to get passed on to the next generation, i.e., traits that do not die out. Mendel’s (1866) seminal discoveries on the genetic transmission of traits in pea plant and later discoveries revealed that DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) as the “blueprint” of life. DNA is arranged in 23 paired packages of genetic material called chromosomes. One pair of chromosomes is critical for determining sex. The two kinds of sex chromosomes X and Y determines the sex of the fetus. Most of the females are born with two X chromosomes and most male are born with an X and a Y chromosomes. The presence of ‘Y’ is sufficient to produce a male. A mother has always passes her X chromosome
on to her offspring, whether it is a son or a daughter. However, a father passes on his X chromosome only to his daughter and his Y chromosome only to his son. The ‘Y’ chromosome carries a sex-determining gene that triggers the production of a substance called H-Y antigen, which signals the fetal sex glands (gonads) of males to develop into testes. Once testes come into existence, they produce testosterone (a male sex hormone), which is carried by the bloodstream and affect physical development. Biological theories suggest that prenatal androgens (male hormones) may guide the development of parts of the nervous system and influence gender related behaviors such as sexual orientation, aggressiveness, rough-and-tumble play, maternal/paternal behaviors, and certain kinds of cognitive abilities (such as, visual-spatial abilities). The essentialist theory substantiated strongly the biological theory of sex. They believed that sex and gender are same, are ‘God given’. Chromosomal characteristics, visible sex markers and gender cannot be separated. Essentialists usually believe that there are only two genders; these are present at birth; remain unchanged for life; and there is no territory between behaviors or appearances that do not fit these assumptions are viewed as ‘perversions’. Biological theory posited an explicit role for man and woman as an essential and unchanging physical difference. They supported the ‘natural’ differences in contribution of physical differences to social behaviour. The differences in their make up of physiology determine and justify the different roles and functions of men and women. Biological determinism asserts that certain behaviours are justified and unchangeable because ‘boys will be boys’ (or ‘girls will be girls’).

Psychological Theory: Psychoanalytic explanation grounds sex-role behaviour in certain anatomical differences of the sexes, (namely, the primary sex differences, especially the genital, e.g., the whole discussion deriving from the Freud’s penis envy). Freud believed that anatomy is destiny. Psychodynamic theories described that mother herself is gendered; she forms distinct relationships with sons and daughters. Boys required to repudiate and renounced their mother. It focuses on family dynamics that influence individuals’ development of gender identity. Refuting the Freud’s idea, some psychodynamics asserted that a child depend and identify with the person who takes care of them, i.e., mother usually. Mothers tend to emphasize their
similarities to their daughters and instilled or emphasized the differences and encourage sons to differentiate from them.

Cognitive approach emphasizes how children develop gendered views of themselves, relationships, and moral orientations. They identified inborn cognitive capabilities and motivation for affective learning. Maccoby and Jacklin (1975) wrote three psychological theories that purport to explain the sex differences, i.e., through imitation, through praise or encouragement and through self-socialization. The cognitive perspective emphasizes stages of mental development. Learning of gender behaviours begin at an early age. Sex role behaviour and cognitive capability are the main concerns of many psychological theories of gender. Cognitive development theories also focus on how individuals learn from interaction with others to define themselves, including their gender.

Social learning theory is another psychological approach that claims that individuals learn to be masculine and feminine (among other things) through communication and observation. McManus (1999) wrote, “Socialization or Social-learning Theory: emphasizes influence of differing ‘learning environments,’ especially of children but sometimes of adults as well

- Imitation of models and examples they see in society
- Response to rewards for gender-appropriate behavior and criticism or punishment for gender-inappropriate behavior (from peers as well as adults)”. Mischel (1967) in her study, “A Social-Learning View of Sex Differences”, outlined some basic concepts of social-learning theory, and then used the concepts to explain how sex-typed behaviours are acquired. She wrote, “The labeling used by parents and other live and symbolic models is of major importance in developing discriminations and generalizations. For either sex the ‘appropriateness’ of certain sex linked behaviours changes both with the situation and the age level”. Lippa (2002) explained three principles of learning sex differences. Classical conditioning, a very concept, for example, ‘sissy’, ‘pancy’, ‘tough’ etc., is conditioned to produce different behavior for boys and girls. A second kind of conditioning - operant conditioning- occurs when voluntary (i.e., consciously controlled and chosen) behaviors are molded by rewards
and punishments. Social learning theorists argue that boys and girls are systematically rewarded and punished for different kinds of behaviors throughout their lives. Constantinople (1979) in her article “Sex-Role Acquisition: In Search of the Elephant” outlined the paradoxes regarding the acquisition of sex role. The error of social learning theory is in its assumption of absence of cognitive structures, and cognitive development theory fail to indicate how they develop. She indicated rudimentary category of sex or gender, provided first by the parents, as the premise or requisite for the development of sex role categories. Children are thus conditioned to cultural meanings and values of sex differences. In overall, psychological theory contended the active role of children in developing their own identity.

**Anthropological Theory:** This is a traditional approach. The emphasis is on sex characteristics. Their position is that primary and secondary sex characteristics are useful to explain the universal cultural patterning of sex-typed role. Anthropologists are inclined to culture in explaining sex differences. They emphasized the analysis of gender symbols and sexual stereotypes and cultural variations. Ortner (1974) in her article “Is female to male as nature is to culture?” assumed the symbolization of female to nature due to her physiological functions and roles which is manipulated by culture vis-à-vis man. She pointed out that women are inferior because they are polluting, and they are polluting because of the “natural” functions of their bodies. Thus, she shows the cultural construction and reinforcement of women’s subordinate position in society. Moore (2002) extended Ortner’s ‘nature’ ‘culture’ duality and suspended the ubiquitous nature of women’s subordinate position in support of cultural particulars. The study of Mead’s three different cultures in New Guinea also supports the cultural variations in construction of gender. She was one of the earliest who questioned the naturalistic assumptions about sex differences in her anthropological study of three New Guinea societies. The Techambuli were described as reversing sex roles, producing strong dominant and nurturing, “maternal” men. The Mundugumor were said to favour a hostile, supermasculine character type for both sexes. Regardless of sex, the Arapesh were seen as emphasizing nurturance and feminine traits for its members. Mead sought to establish that feminine and masculine attributes and roles were largely cultural rather
than natural. Anthropological approach focused on analysis and development of theory to explain the subordinate position of women, which seemed to be universal and cross-cultural.

**Sociological Theory:** Sociologists emphasize the social stance in defining sex differences in society. Sociology begins with a critique of biological determinism. Oakley (1972) wrote that 'sex' is a word that refers to the biological differences between male and female: the visible differences in genitalia, the related differences in procreative function. ‘Gender’ however is a matter of culture: it refers to the social classification into ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’. Masculinity and femininity are taken as products of social, cultural and psychological attributes rather than biological in the process of becoming a man or a woman in a particular society at a particular time. West and Zimmerman (1991) also stated that gender is not a set of traits, nor a variable, nor a role, but the product of social doings of some sort. By social doings they meant that gender were portrayed, exhibited through interaction, and thus be seen as “natural”, while it is being produced as a socially organized achievement. We do gender in a gendered world, in a gendered institution. Acker (2007) “The term ‘gendered institutions’ means that gender is present in the processes, practices, images and ideologies, and distributions of power in the various sectors of social life”. Foucault (1980) in the book “Power and Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1577, edited by Colling Gordon” has commented institution as, “The term ‘institution’ is generally applied to every kind of more-or-less constrained, learned behaviour. Everything which functions in a society as a system of constraint and which isn’t an utterance, in short, all the field of the non-discursive social, is an institution.” Institution is articulated which serves as a means and expression, an imaginary, historical datable object namely gender-role. Institutional structures are organized along the lines of gender.

When we talked of social construction paradigm, Berger and Luckmann (1967) in their book “Social Construction of Reality” shows how humans create meaningful from a mass of otherwise undifferentiated experience. They describes, how, in outpourings of human being into the world (‘externalisation’) , reality is produced,
hardening and thickening into ‘facticity’ as social institutions are constructed in a process of ‘objectification’. Lorber (1994) offered a paradigm of gender as social institution, also a process of social construction. Social construction of gender is a constant process. According to social construction of gender theory parents are actively involved in construction of gender identities, occupying pivotal role in gendered institution. They are active in selecting, adapting and rejecting the dimensions that they chose to incorporate or not, in their version of gender. Parenting is gendered, with differential expectations for mothers and fathers. In social construction of gender, it does not matter what men and women actually do; it does not even matter if they do exactly the same thing. The social institution of gender insists only that what they do is perceived as different. As emphasized by social constructionists, it must be seen in an institutional context, as arising from the institutionalization of patterns of interaction and meaning in society leading to a construction of social institutions and institutionalized perspectives and understandings. Sociologists concern the institutional dimension of gender. The institutions are gendered, have their own gendered normative standards, express a gendered institutional logic, and are major factors in the reproduction of gender inequality. The inference is that the individuals who occupy the institutions are not gender-neutral.

Lorber and Farral (1991) in their editorial page of the book “The Social Construction of Gender” wrote that “In the social construction perspective, both sex and gender are socially developed statuses. Biologists and endocrinologists who study hormones now have much more complicated picture of ‘sex’”. They added “Sex is understood more as a continuum made up of chromosomal sex, all of which work in the presence and under the influence of a set of environment”. Kimmel (2000) was critical to sex role theory as it reduced roles into two separate large tanks, i.e., the “male” sex role and the “female” sex role. Sex role theory failed to acknowledge gender as relational and they assumed only individuals are gendered. Kimmel wrote that “when we say that gender identity is socially constructed, what we do mean is that our identities are a fluid assemblage of the meanings and behaviours that we construct from the values, images, and prescriptions we find in the world around us. Gendered
identities are both voluntary and coerced, i.e., pressured, forced, sanctioned and often physically beaten into submission to some rules”. He pointed out that institutional dimension is one of the element sociology contribute to the exploration of gender difference. To explain the institutional dimension, social constructionist moves beyond socialization of gendered individuals who occupy gender-neutral sites, to study the interplay between gendered individuals and gendered institutions. Family is one of the institutions that create gender difference and reproduce gender inequality. Parents possess a set of gender-specific ideas of what their children need; that is, they were themselves socialized to some belief in what girls and boys of various ages are like. The social constructionist approach focuses on rearing, social roles, gender beliefs, social settings and culture as causes for learning sex differences and of individual differences in masculinity and feminity.

The question over the determination of gender difference is still in flux. Biological factors seem to be rigid, and external reality factors are somewhat loose and negotiable for change. Archer (1978) in his essay “Biological Explanations of Sex-Role Stereotypes” quoting Blurtom-Jones (1972), Hinde (1974) and Richards (1974) conclude that both hereditary and environment as essential for behaviours. The genetic material in the chromosomes provides a flexible plan for the sequence of development, but this is by no means a rigid blueprint: it provides the developing organism with ways of acting on the environment, rather than specifying the outcomes of these actions. In the social and cultural stance, sexual difference is considered as mechanical, which is purported culturally and socially. It is wrong to branch off nature and nurture as propagated by some theories, but it is also not enough and appropriate or suffice to explain the gender by appropriation and sublimation of nature and nurture. So, in what ways and how sexual differences were produced and reproduced in social life?

Human being is morose at birth. Unlike other animals, even s/he couldn’t stand its own. S/he has to depend on others for their needs. S/he learns everything as a social being, from birth to death. Socialization is the term what we use to refer to such process of learning. Socialization is more than learning; it is also controlling and shaping the behaviour of the child according to the moral standards of the elders in the particular
society. Gender role socialization, as a part of this general learning process, is about bringing up children along the socially ascribed gender status. Family is the most specialized social institution, where the socialization of gender-role takes place. Berger and Luckmann (1967) wrote that “It is at once evident that primary socialization is usually the most important one for an individual and that the basic structure of all secondary socialization has to resemble that of primary socialization”. Sexual identification is the first thing a child receives as she comes out of the mother’s womb. Parents gladly announce the discovery of gender at birth. It is simply postulated and vigorously defended. From dress to behaviours, ascribed gender roles were conferred. Gender is not only the property of the parents. Parental gender impositions are part of a broad system of social views and values. They have no choice but normative commitments are to be made. Parents have the power, the constraining force of social institutions, which compels them to commit to the purposively designed sex differences to their children. Thus gender role socialization is a learning process of sex differences and of individual differences in masculinity and feminity. The manner and degree of gender role socialization vary from society to society. The different attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and learned through socialization process.

Manipur is one of the seven North-eastern states of India. Meitei society patriarchal in nature and the dominant community of Manipur holds distinct features of women, where women enjoy a relative freedom in some social areas in comparison to other Hindu-ridden Indian states. In Meitei society of Manipur, women enjoy an equal position with men in comparison to other Indian Hindu-ridden states (Sircar, 1984). The women’s movements of 1904 and 1939, and the continuous movement against alcoholism since 1970s show their collective strength in social arenas. Arunkumar (1994) wrote that “In Manipur, women has three models of her social action, viz., Imoinu (submissive, domestic affairs in patriarchal setting), Panthoibi (assertive, self-conscious with female pride), and Khamnu (midway of Imoinu and Panthoibi, playing instrumental roles).” He further added that a woman is expected to be an Imoinu in which she has limited share in family decision making. A woman needs to be a
Panthcibi when she is in collective such as Meira-Paibi (woman-torch bearer). And a womar is a Khamnu when she engaged with economy, for example Nupi Keithel (women’s market, where women dominate the buying and selling activities of goods). The reported status of Meitei women is not free from critique. In the sociological study of Meitei women by Meena (1997), the secondary position of women in Meitei household was picturised. Sircar (1984) also wrote that “Do not deceived by the economic role of the Meitei women. In reality they have a much inferior status than men.” In her article “Manipuri women-A study,” Devi (1988) claimed that in spite of the immense economic contribution; the status enjoyed by the women of the Manipur valley is low.

So far, there is no specific research works on the gender role socialization in the Meitei society. But, some insights can be drawn from the earlier works on how girls and boys were brought up along with gender-role in the society. Mao and Maisnam (1994) in their article “Child-Rearing Practices in Ghari Village: A Sub-Urban Area of Manipur” presented a general picture on socialization of children in rural Manipur. They didn’t make any distinction on sex role socialization. They have pointed out the various socialization practices in child rearing such as weaning, spoon feeding, toilet training, defecating, sex training, including corporal punishment like beating, scolding, spanking. They have concluded that child-rearing practices starts when the child reaches the age of two years and the Meiteis perform ceremonies of different kinds. Sircar (1984) in her book “Feminism in a Traditional Society” stated that till the age of four, there is very little difference in the socialization of children in Meitei society. At the age of nine, girls start helping in the housework and became responsible for domestic chores at the age of ten. They are trained for their later role of domination in the household affairs. By conceptualizing changing Meitei society, Suresh (1994) wrote that “The mass media mainly television, has snatched without warning a major chunk of the age old function of socialization from the Meitei society.” Accepting the eroding role of family in socialization process in Meitei society, Singh (1994) in his article “Family and Education in the Contemporary Manipur Society” draw out that “It can be made an effective agency of socialization by means of establishing a co-ordial
relationship with the school, community and other agencies of socialization.” But the
case was not same with the findings of Meena (1997) and Bangkim (2002). They have
confirmed in their findings that household chores remain an active arena of women in
Meitei society. Women in the Meitei society have an exclusive role in early
socialization (0-3 yrs.) and later socialization (3-5 yrs) of the child. Thus Meitei
women’s subordinate position was clearly picturised with their exclusive engagement in
domestic spheres, as happens more or less in other societies. And, gender-role
socialization also possibly plays a vital role in maintaining and perpetuation of such
unequal position of women in the Meitei society. Regarding this, the social
constructionist approach has been adopted to reveal the parental gender-role
socialization in Meitei society.

REVIEW OF LITERATURES

Gender inequality, an undesirable but ubiquitous phenomenon in social life, is
not evolved and processed in a single day. Sexual differences flourish, as early as
human history, and are maintained and perpetuated through various means and ways in
society. The genealogy of sexual difference emphasizes different roles for men and
women. The innate (hereditary) ingredients to imbibe different role are neglected by
social constructionist theorists and rested their emphasis on the interplay between
gendered individuals and gendered institutions, which uphold and nurture sexual
differences from generation to generation. Thus, the question rise as in what way and
how gender differences are socially and culturally constructed.

At birth and even before it, children are referred male or female according to
their biological feature. They didn’t come out with set of behaviours from the womb of
their mother. Along with their assigned sex, they are brought up according to the
ascribed sex status, by inferring do’s and don’ts for each sex. The allocation of ‘roles’
according to their ascribed sex status generate different functions and status for each
sex. Parsons and Bales (1956) wrote that such role allocation visualizes the father as the
instrumental leader i.e., the goal attainment and adaptation aspect of the coordinate
system and the mother as more expressive, i.e., the integrative and tension aspects of the
coordinate system. Parents are in a sense in representative role vis-à-vis the “community”. They wrote that the instrumental-expressive distinction we interpret as essentially the differentiation of function, and hence of relative influence, in terms of “external” vs. “internal” functions of the system. They claimed that different process of socialization makes possible such role allocation.

The basis for role allocation also does not succeed to overcome the assumption that men and women were born differently. But, many argue and challenge such criteria by providing examples that they are not different. Hampson (1965) claimed for a psychosexual neutrality of human at birth. He wrote that “When a child is born it is the morphology of the external genitalia which dictates or guides the initial assignment of sexual status”. By citing examples of the contradiction between individuals with quandary of anomalous or ambiguous genital appearance at birth and the assigned sex and rearing, he stated that whichever gender role is ascribed to individuals very early in their lives is an important determinant of which gender role they will adopt later on. An individual’s gender role and orientation as boy or girl, man or woman are in accord more with the assigned sex and rearing rather with the chromosomal sex. In support to this assessment, Sears (1965) wrote that “The infant is recognized as a boy or girl at once, and is treated in whatever ways the culture prescribes as appropriate to that gender”. She added that sex typing is a quite complex process, resulted from the imposition on the child of a number of training practices that have the specific consequences of producing masculine or feminine qualities of behavior. The child may be expected to adopt his or her appropriate role to the extent that these trainings are imposed. Regarding child rearing and assignment of sex-role different attitudes and practices on the parts cannot be avoided.

Social learning theory emphasizes that men and women are different because they are taught to be different, and through the process of socialization men and women have become different. By claiming the female sex role as designated, Hartley (1966) wrote that learning gender role is kinesthetic, i.e., a process involve, in essence, a number of ways in which children are directly manipulated into ‘being socialized’. She termed learning sex role as “socialization by manipulation”. She pointed out that sex-
directional training of the girl child takes place early in life through parental applications of sex-appropriate verbal appellations, such as, expressions like “That’s a good girl”; “Don’t be a bad girl”; “Where is daddy’s girl?”; “There, now, is a pretty girl”. Along with this, house play toys are included in the female child’s role; they are joined by many of the actual household services they represent. She pointed out that there is more variation in the sex role expectations individuals girls meet than is the case with boys.

Mischel (1967) wrote that “In social learning theory, sex typed behaviors may be defined as behaviors that typically elicit different rewards for one sex than for the other”. By reviewing the two sex-typed behaviors pattern, i.e., aggression and dependency, Mischel noted the differences between the sexes in degree and model in these variables. Girls are praised for ‘good’ behaviour and suggest a possible antecedent for the development of greater ‘pro social’ aggression. More than the boys, dependent behaviors are more frequently permitted and rewarded for girls. Firmly established gender identity is possible through learning process. In common parlance, the learning process of sex-typed behaviour is known as ‘gender role socialization’. Newsons, Richardson and Scaife (1978) pointed out that gender stereotypes are reinforced through the process of socialization, a mechanism, which provide and pressure individuals to conform to their respective sex roles. Girls are only encouraged to go out when they have somewhere ‘sensible’ to go to such as dancing class, swimming baths or a Brownie meeting, and where adequate ‘chaperonage’ can be more or less guaranteed. Girls are subjected to a firm rule that they should state their destination before going anywhere, and are escorted from school by an adult. They have cited tasks like washing up (washing pots); indoor housework (tidying, vacuum cleaning, dusting, bed making etc. but excluding tidying own room) are more appropriate for girls and tasks like miscellaneous dirty/ outside jobs (gardening, sweeping yard, cleaning car or windows, making or mending fires, peeling potatoes, shoe cleaning, emptying bins, etc.); going errands are considered by mother as more appropriated tasks for boys. Parents see themselves as explicitly preparing their children for life; in as-much-as the
The role of men and women are distinct, children will be prepared both explicitly and implicitly for the sex role appropriate to them.

The social compulsion on the parts of the parents reflected a different implication in the socialization of their sons and daughters respectively. Weinrich (1978) wrote that “Socialization is the transmission of behavior, roles, attitudes and beliefs to the next generation”. She added “In principle, children of both sexes are brought up as people; in practice, gender is highly significant factor in their upbringing and there are differences in the socialization of boys and girls”. An important aspect is that many of the behaviors which parents (especially mothers) regard as desirable are similar in both sexes. These quantities include control of aggression, consideration for others, helpfulness and so forth. Satisfactory performance at school is also required of both sexes. There is difference in socialization between boys and girls in the styles and degree of socialization to which they are exposed Boys receive more punishment, but probably also more praise and encouragement. Parents usually treat boys and girls differently along the line of cultural expectations. Boys’ babies are more likely to be handled and encouraged in motor activity whereas girl babies are likely to receive more verbal stimulation. Boys appear to be more actively deterred from cross-sex behaviour and traits, especially by fathers.

Analyzing the rudimentary category of sex or gender, as a requisite for the development of sex role categories, Constantinople (1979) wrote that since gender is a salient dimension to parents and others in the environment, it seems that terms such as boys, girls, mommy, daddy, man and women would form the initial core around which gender categories would be built. They would thus become the first distinctive features for sex or gender and later for gender identity and sex role. Parents’ referring to the child by sex from a very early age, e.g., “what a good boy”, “such a pretty girl” and in later stage added by clothing, hair styles, toys and other activities enhances differential socialization of boys and girls. She has suggested social learning theory as helpful in pointing towards observational learning, direct tuition, and indirect and sometimes very subtle differential reinforcement of the same behaviour in the two sexes as probable methods for identifying distinctive features.
Parents enjoy as a distinct and vital socializer for initial inculcation of sex role to their children. Bearison (1979) presents the ways in which parents differentially socialize their sons and daughters. The finding shows that mothers and fathers react differently to their children, depending on the children’s sex. In general, parents were more ‘person oriented’ in regulating their same sex children and more ‘position oriented’ with their opposite sex children. Mother tended to regulate daughters’ behaviour by appealing to the psychological attributes (need, intents, feeling etc.) of the self and others, while fathers tended to appeal to the positional aspects (age, sex, race, religion etc.) of social conduct with their daughters. Fathers became more ‘person oriented’ with their sons as the boys matured and mothers became less ‘person oriented’ and more ‘position oriented’.

The differential treatment by the parents to their children by the sex shows the compulsion and values attached to the behaviour of men and women differently. Stockard and Johnson (1979) noticed that although the content of the role assigned to women and men may vary considerably from society to society, male dominance is reflected in the fact that whatever roles are assigned to men tend to be valued more highly than the roles assigned to women. They have pointed out that society gives value, prestige and authority to those masculine related roles over feminine related roles. Regarding the social compulsions and values attached to sex appropriate behavior, parents instill different sex-role to their children on the basis of the sex of the child, also differs in term of degrees. Davidson (1981) pointed out that both men and women would experience pressures both to conform to and to deviate from the traditional stereotypes, although the pressures would be greater for women. Women are passive and emotionally expressive; men are active and emotionally inexpressive, women are passive because they feel intimidated by others, men to avoid intimidating others. Women are active only when they perceive the situation as “appropriate”. Male activeness stems from feelings of self-confidence. Masculine activeness connotes competitiveness, aggression, lack of confidence, and dominance. Feminine passivity connotes the diametrically opposed traits of non competitiveness, submissiveness, inhibition, shyness and self consciousness. Most of the women experienced pressures to
act more passively than they genuinely felt. Pressures to be active tended to be internal, where as pressures to be passive were a combination of both external and internal. Pressure to conform is considerably greater for women.

Difference in compulsion and degree leads to eschew or attach certain behaviours to specific sex, which in turn become an inseparable and tag to that specific sex. Lipman-Blumen (1984) has cited that the traditional female gender role includes expectations for females to be passive, nurturant and dependent. The standard male gender role incorporates alternative expectations – behaviour that is aggressive, competitive, and independent. Women as mothers, nurses, and teachers, men as doctors, generals and legislators are part of this pattern. The difference thus created different expectations for each sex which results in imbibing and inculcation different role.

Differential brought up of boys and girls along masculine tasks and feminine tasks along social and cultural expectations were also accorded by Bhatti (1988) in her study of socialization of the female Muslim child in Uttar Pradesh. Once girls are about 8 years old fathers do not communicate with them much. The father normally communicates with daughter through the mother or grandmother. Girls grew up and spent their entire life inside the walls of the zanana. Every move of hers was watched closely and corrected. ‘Don’t walk like the boys,’ ‘Don’t raise your voice, girls don’t talk loudly.’ Don’t eat so much, girls should have small appetites.’ She was instructed from children to learn to cook, sew and embroider. She was given female and male dolls and she was encouraged and assisted by older women of the household to celebrate dolls’ weddings and other life cycle ceremonies with elaborate rituals. A Muslim girl child is dictated to ‘put her head down in shame’, throughout her life.

Dube (1988) in her study of construction of gender in Patrilineal India focused on socialization of Hindu girls through rituals and ceremonies, the use of language, and practices within and in relation to the family. Little girls are encourage in various games which involve ‘dolls’, ‘household’, ‘kitchen work’, ‘marriage’, ‘baby’, and ‘visiting neighbours’. Beginning with assistance in cooking and other kitchen work, serving of food, caring for younger siblings, preparing for the worship of family deities, and looking after the aged, girls learn to take over some responsibilities themselves. A boy
deviating to feminine tasks becomes the target for derision and teasing. In case of girls, she is compelled and reminded for having been born a female. Thus women become passive, questioning victim of such practices.

Different sex or gender tag along with attitudes is there in the society, which is valued or less valued. Martin (1990) in her study of attitudes towards cross-sex behaviour in boys and girls noted that people are more feeling worse for boys labeled as sissies than girls who are labeled as tomboys. Socially the tag “sissies” were more negatively evaluated than girls who adopt cross-sex behavior. Parents are more prone to seek treatment for cross-sex behaviour in their sons than in their daughters. Parents prefer their children adhere to traditional sex role.

Eccles, et. al. (1990) pointed out that the gender of child effect found for the parents’ confidence in their children’s competence; the children’s competence depends on the expectancy and the role played by the parents in influencing their children to engage in gender role stereotyped activities. Parents perception that boys had more natural aptitude for math and more competence in sports than the girls who were rated more competence in English, have been found to be influenced by their children’s gender, independent of the children’s actual performance. Children’s gender influenced their mothers’ causal attributions, which in turn influenced the mothers’ perceptions of, and expectations of, their children.

By employing social learning and exchange theory in parenting, Simons, et. al. (1990) in their study “Husband and Wife Differences in Determinants of Parenting: A Social Learning and Exchange Model of Parental Behaviour”, noted that “Women experience extensive socialization for parenthoods while men receive very little preparation for the parent role”. They have discussed about constructive versus destructive parenting practices. Constructive parenting style characterized by warmth, inductive reasoning clear communication, and appropriate monitoring is associated with positive developmental outcomes. Destructive parenting involves hostility, rejection, and coercion, associated with negative developmental outcomes such as delinquency, psychopathology, academic failure and substance abuse. Mothers’ preserve, providing nurturant parenting, even when the child is experienced as difficult to brought up. She
periodically resorts to the use of hostile and coercive measures. Mothers are able to prevent a depressed mood from interfering with parental role obligation, while fathers tend to allow feelings of melancholy and irritability to colour their parenting. Fathers were more apt to engage in constructive parenting when they believed that parenting to be consequential for child development. They have confirmed the importance of parents’ value, beliefs about parenting in the socialization of children. Thus, women held major role and men enjoy secondary role in socialization of their children.

The types of family also play a very important role in inclusion of gender role by the children doing socialization process. Fagot and Leinbach (1995) studied two sets of the differences between families in terms of parental attitudes and parental reactions to children’s behaviors and children’s ability to label gender. Mother and fathers in the shared parenting sample response very similarly to boys and girls engaged in either male or female sex typed behaviour at 18 months. By 27 months, boys and girls are engaged in no same sex typed behaviours. They have asserted that children from more traditional families learned gender labels earlier than children from less gender typed families who appear to be later in their learning of gender labels and know less about cultural sex typing at age 4 (sex role discrimination).

Leve and Fagot (1997) pointed out that gender role socialization processes were affected by family structure and parent gender: single parent families and mother had less traditional gender role socialization than two parent families and fathers. The gender of parent and child were also related to the parent’s use of positive discipline and the parent’s perceptions of child behaviour. Regardless of marital status, parents tended to report more positive and more negative behaviour from children of the opposite sex. The result thus suggests that fathers were observed to use less instruction and initiation with their sons than any other dyad. This lack of positive instructional behaviour from father-son dyads can be seen as following traditional gender roles. In the stereotypical role of the discipliner, fathers may pay more attention to boys’ negative behaviours and focus less on the positive instructional aspect of the relationship. Children’s gender is not the sole factor which influences parents when they make parenting decisions, but interacts with other factors in complex ways. Cote and
Azar (1997) wrote that “Parents’ attribution and responses to children’s outcomes involve a number of factors including children’s age, children’s gender, their own gender, domain and outcome”. It is not only the child’s gender but also the children’s age, the domain (academic or social), and the outcome (positive or negative) are also accounted when making attribution by parents. In terms of sex role socialization, girls may be learning that men will intervene on their behalf when they are having problems, whereas boys learn that they will need to take care of their problems themselves. Mothers of boys and girls tended to advise them to take more responsibility when they failed; on the other hand fathers of girls directly intervene for their daughters in failure situation. Thus, mothers and fathers appear to employ different behavioural strategies in response to their children’s failures based on their children’s grade level, children’s gender, and the domain.

Baligar (1999) in her book “Mother and Girl Child: Reconstructing Attitude” also stated that in India, behaviours like modesty, submissiveness, domestic and family skills, nurturance, interpersonal relations, dependence and adaptation are encouraged in girls while male children are taught to be aggressive, assertive, superior and independent. The unequal socialization upholds parental differences in ingredients in beliefs, values and expectations, which signify differences in their gender role ideology. She wrote about the shades of negative attitude, i.e., beliefs about the girl child and her upbringing, and used an intervention based on cognitive therapy to reconstruct positive attitude towards girl child.

Bulanda (2004) wrote about the influence of gender ideology on parenting behaviour, fathers need positive nontraditional gender attributes in order to be actively involved with their children, regardless of mothers’ attitudes. It is a process of enacting, maintaining and perpetuating mechanisms for gender roles. Mothers’ parental involvement is independent of gender role ideology. Fathers need positive nontraditional gender attitude in order to be actively involved with their children. This tends men and women to perform different specific functions. Men and women were specialized to different respective functions; in turn they inculcate this to their children by the sex.
The above discussion shows some reflections on how gender role is constructed socially, despite the controversies and contradictions over the determination of sexual difference in role performance. The social factor as a major breakthrough in shaping gender role is not avoidable, and takes at large by many scholars (as shows in the above discussion). Human beings are psychosexual neutral beings at birth (Hampson, 1965). At birth, a child is categorized as a boy or a girl and treated in whatever ways the culture prescribed as appropriate to that gender (Sears, 1965). Socialization plays an active mechanism for maintaining and perpetuating gender role. In the stream of socialization, gender role also nourishes along with other roles and behaviours. Gender roles are seeded at the time of birth, not ingredient behaviour of human being. Through socialization process a child learns gender specific activities and behaviours (Hartly, 1966; Mischel, 1967; Newsons, Richardson and Scaife, 1978). The gender role varies from society to society, but the accent of the system is the same everywhere. Regarding gender role socialization, parental role and function is unique and significant. Human infant receives their first lesson of survival from the parents. Among the socializing agents, parental role is more protective of the child’s individuality by acting as a long term mediator of those social and cultural demands. Mothers and fathers are tended to equip their children to the expectation of the society. Along the socially prescribed gender role, parent socializes their sons and daughters (Weinreich, 1978; Constantinople, 1979; Bearison, 1979; Dube, 1988; Bhatty, 1988). Certain behaviours are eschewed or enhanced according to the sex of the child by the parents. There is compulsion of acceptation and conformation to the cultural standards on the parts of both agent and recipient. Parents need to integrate their own role performances with the varying social expectations. Various social compulsion and values are attached to the define role for its sex (Stockard and Johnson, 1979). These traditional stereotypes generate different pressures to men and women to conform to their respective prescribed appropriate sex role (Davidson, 1981). In turn female are expected to be passive, nurturant and dependent and male are expected to be aggressive, competitive and independent (Lipman-Blumen, 1981). Any deviation from the appropriate sex-role is viewed negative, worse for the boys than girls (Martin, 1990). In this context, the
subordinate position of women and their role and functions, and men’s dominant role and function cannot be rule out. Different factors have affected the parental gender role socialization of boys and girls, such as, gender of the child (Eccles, et al., 1990); parents’ values, beliefs, about parenting (Simons, et. al., 1990); types of family (Fagot and Leinbach, 1995); family structure and parent gender (Leve and Fagot, 1997); children’s age, children’s gender, parents’ gender, domain and outcome (Cote and Azar, 1997); gender role ideology (Baligar, 1999; Bulanda, 2004) etc. Most of the study has emphasized the role of the mother only in gender-role socialization. They have neglected to treat family as a gendered institution and parents as gendered individuals and the provisions that make-up the gendered individuals and gendered institutions. Various socio-economic factors, i.e., education, occupation, income, etc. of the socializing agents were not discussed by most studies. They have also taken gender role socialization as a passive continuum for the agents. They have also failed to emphasize the imposition and restriction function of the parents, in relation to the gender-role fabrics of the society. Berger and Luckmann (1966) wrote that “although the child is not simply passive in the process of his socialization, it is the adults who set the rules of the game”. Socialization projects itself into the possibilities of future action, a pragmatic projection into the future demands imposed on it by the imperative of efficient doing and making. And, in terms of gender-role socialization, the problems are still treated in a rather discrete and allusive manner, but the fact remains that one finds, in biology, psychology and anthropology, a concern with defining and studying a certain way for socialization. Reconsideration needed because it is still insufficiently elaborated at a whole number of points, and psychological borrowed has been considerably modified if not ultimately abandoned. It needed to be submitted to closer scrutiny. The study socialization of gender role, from sociological perspective, should treat parents as agent who possessed a set of gendered-specific ideas. They not only construct “child” but also construct “boy child” and “girl child”, and they attach different expectations to them. This process enhances in maintaining and continuation the dichotomous relation between the sexes. This is purported and supported by vague theories, which in actual is a social construction. Thus, it would be a mistake to acknowledge gender-role as natural
inferences and one cannot change or approve a theory which could bring a balance in gender role theory.

**OBJECTIVES**

After reviewing the literature the following objectives were framed and the present study seeks to examine the following objectives:

1. To study the socio-demographic and economic characteristics (rural/urban background, level of religiosity, type of households, education, occupation, income etc.), exposure to mass media of communication and gender-role attitudes (traditional/modern) of the respondents;

2. To study the pattern of socialization processes in terms of clothing, disciplining, game and play, health and nutrition, education (formal/informal) and emotional standards and temperaments of the boys and the girls during childhood, i.e., the years from birth to 11 years in *Meitei* society;

3. To assess the pattern of gender-role socialization between parents and children of same and different sexes, for example, mother and son, father and daughter.

4. Finally, to assess the influence of socio-demographic and economic characteristics, exposure to mass media of communication and gender-role attitudes on parental gender-role socialization pattern in *Meitei* society.