Chapter 1

Introduction

Introduction

Societies tend to have a binary gender system in which everyone is categorized as male or female, and this is universal. To comprehend about men and masculinity, it is essential to have some knowledge about gender and how to understand the idea of gender. “Gender is one of the most important categories, if not the most important category in human social life” (Eckes & Trautner, 2000). It is one of the significant forces that contribute to the patterning of social life. Understanding gender will help us to perceive more about the social world. In a single glance gender may appear as a simple categorization of male and female, but a closer look will make it clear that it is a highly complicated phenomenon which can influence all individual and societal processes. Gender plays a crucial role in the construction of an individual’s attitudes and behaviors. The social world in a way is organized by gender. It can organize our interactions and attitudes, and to an extent gender influences the allocation of power and resources. “Everyday life is an arena of gender politics not an escape from it.” (Connell, 2005). Common sense knowledge about gender is not at all a fixed one. It is rather the rationale of the changing practices through which gender is ‘done’ or ‘accomplished’ in everyday life.

The significant aim of sociology is to examine the group life, and how the human behaviour is shaped by the group life. The group life is ordered in a variety of ways. This ordering is developed and structured with the influence of multiple factors. Social scientists consider gender as a key component in the development of this ordering. Gender is an essential area of Sociological
analysis, because it can shape individual, social interactions and social institutions. This indicates the relevance of gender analysis in micro and macro levels. “Fundamentally gender is a multilevel system whose effects can be seen at all levels of social life” (Amy S. Wharton, 2004, p. 17). Social constructivist developed the idea that there is no inherent truth to gender. Gender is constructed in accordance with the social expectations and the individual performance of gender.

Gender studies developed as a branch of sociology with the advent of second wave of feminist movements. At that period critics claim that sociology is speaking only about the male world and ignoring women. This gradually gave way to the entry of the term “gender” in sociological literatures. From there for a long period gender scholars devoted more attention to women and women related issues and it is still continuing. In sociology gender studies is considered as synonym to women studies. It is interesting to note that in addition to the women and feminity gender studies developed a huge number of literatures concerning the differences between women and men, but completely ignored the analysis of differences among women and variations among men and masculinity.

Gender is considered as a complex socio-cultural construct: differences in roles, behavior, mental and emotional characteristics between the masculine and the feminine, made (or constructed) by the society. The main aim of gender studies is to consider different aspects of social problems of sex. Both men and women have some culturally constructed forms of behavior. Traditionally differences in behavior and roles have been assumed to naturally reflect sexual difference. Modern social science however, has become careful to distinguish between gender and sex. In the present social context gender studies concentrate more on the changes in gender roles and the problems related with this. But there is a crucial fact that, gender was
largely seen as a matter of and for women; men were generally seen as un
gendered, natural or naturalized.

The rapid social changes have greatly affected the lives of men generally
redefining male identity. Some men have welcomed these changes and made
the adjustment. Others have actively resisted the forces intent upon
redefining them. In the wake of this cultural evolution, many men find
themselves lost and confused, angry and alienated. Cultures were forced to
replace it with a new tradition of equal value. To analyse the problems of
modern men some branches of studies were developed recently for e.g.
Sociology of Men, Men and masculinity studies etc. These new disciplines
study effectively, the changes in men’s roles and responsibilities. Men’s
studies help to investigate many forces and issues affecting men in
contemporary society. It will explore the cultural, social, familial, economic,
historical and psychological aspects of being male in modern society.

The expanding boundaries of sexuality and the changing power relations
between genders have placed man in context unfamiliar and often
threatening and make any reading of masculinity in contemporary society a
complicated issue. These decades also saw the spread of modern domesticity
and the conjugal family. Earlier modes of domestic life and marriage came
under increasing threat due to legislative interventions and economic change,
and as new ideas regarding civilized and modern family life and personal
freedom gained greater velocity of circulation. Older socio-political
hierarchies give way to new ones, and new values become fashionable,
‘economy’ became a watchword in many different domains. All these factors
changed gender concepts and roles. Gender is a living system of social
interactions, not a stack of watertight boxes. So the changes in the gender
system and its impact on patterning the human behavior as male and female
should be considered as part of sociological investigations. The spectrum of
gender studies can be completed by including men and masculinity studies along with women studies.

A Brief History of the Sociological Study of Men and Masculinity

The scientific studies on men and masculinities have only a short history of nearly thirty years. Social scientific research on men and masculinities derive mainly from three different disciplines—Biology, Anthropology and Sociology. The biological investigations examined the biological differences between men and women and the biological and genetical reasons behind the masculine traits. Anthropological investigations detailed masculinity, cross-culturally and explained the different modes of behavior among men. Anthropologists state that the definition for masculinity and femininity is entirely different from one cultural setting to another. At the same time there are some common features of gender found universally, for example sexual division of labour is a universal one. Sociologists try to explore the role of socialisation among boys in constructing the masculine behavior, and the ways in which male gendering take place according to his biological sex. In the sociological explanation masculinity is the collection of attitudes, attributes, and behaviours appropriate for men. Masculinity is always explained in relation with technology, aggression, violence and competition. Comparing to femininity, masculinity is not noticed and discussed much because of various reasons. The most important factor behind this is, it has not been considered, yet as a problem for study. The discussions on women and female subordination started only when it recognized as a problem. In the case of masculinity it is considered as a normal thing and not a problem.

Some of the initial interpretative works on the concept of masculinity are: Marc Feigen- Fasteau’s ‘The male Machine’ (1974), Warren Farrell’s ‘Liberated Man’ (1975), Joseph Pleck and Jack Sawyer’s ‘Men and Masculinity (1974), Elizabeth Pleck and Joseph Pleck’s ‘The American
Man’ etc. Pleck introduced the concept ‘sex-role strain’ among men in his work ‘The Myth of Masculinity’ (1981). Men are always portrayed as ‘problematic’ and ‘deviant’. This approach is changed in recent international researches on masculinity. It is the time to analyse masculinity as a complex, multiple term than a singular one. Each man constructs their own versions of masculinity in different ways. This form of masculinity analysis is common in the late twentieth century works. Michael Kimmel’s ‘Changing Men: New Directions in Research on Men and Masculinities’ (1987), Harry Brods ‘The Making of Masculinities (1987), Tim Carrigan, R.W Connell, and Joh Lee’s ‘Towards a New Sociology of Masculinity (1985), and Jeff Hearn’s ‘The Gender of Oppression’ are some works which gave a different direction for the analysis on men and masculinity. R.W Connell opened a new way for serious discussions about men and masculinity by publishing her renowned work ‘The Science of Masculinity’ in 1995. The most striking explanation by Connell is that there is not a single form of masculinity but rather multiple masculinities.

Men- their behaviours, practices, values and perspectives are the main concerns of the discipline - sociology of masculinity. The sociology of masculinity is discussing more about some common themes like the construction of masculinity in everyday life, the relevance of institutions and economic structures in the shaping of masculinity, and the differences, contradictions, similarities and the dynamic nature of masculinity. Since its beginning in the 1950s the growth of sociology of masculinity can be classified into three stages on the basis of the development of some theoretical frameworks. The first wave developed with the origin of the Male Gender Role Theory by Joseph Pleck in 1995. The second wave started in 1980’s with the development of the concept centrality of male power to dominant ways of being a man. The works of Carrigan, Connell and Lee
were also included in this phase. The concept Hegemonic masculinity is also developed in the second wave. Third wave developed with the influence of feminist post-structuralism and theories of post-modernity.

Earlier sociological interpretations of masculinity based on the sex role approach changed in the recent period and break up from the sex role approach. New theoretical approaches in studying masculinity were developed in the last twenty years. It was not a unique theoretical frame, but some common themes are clear in the field of masculinity studies. The construction of masculinity in everyday life, the importance of economic and institutional structures, the significance of differences among masculinities and the contradictory and dynamic nature of gender are some common frameworks which developed in the recent studies of men and masculinity. The Sociology of Masculinity considers all the areas related with men. The new branch of sociology constitutes the critical study of men, their attitudes, practices, behaviour and interactions.

**Man**

“No life form has had a greater impact upon this planet than the human male. Explorers, inventors, architects, builders, warriors and foresters have almost always been males and they have changed the surface of the earth to a degree that make all other species seem insignificant. In the seas they may have had to take second place to the lowly organisms that constructed the vast coral reefs, but on land the human male reign supreme, both as destroyer of natural features and as constructor of artificial ones.”

(Morris, 2008)

Rampal (2011) detailed about the origin of the term ‘man’ in his text. The English term ‘man’ is derived from the old English Mann. This term had a default meaning of ‘adult male’. And this old English word form is
originated from a Proto-Germanic word ‘Mannaz’ which means “persona” which is also related with the German term Mann. According to Tacitus the mythological progenitor of the Germanic tribes was called Mannus. The Germanic form in turn derived from the Proto-Indo-European root manu-s, man, person. Which is also the root of Indian name Manu, mythological progenitor of the Hindus. Linguists suspects this in turn is connected with a different PIE root, men- meaning ‘to think’, which is also the source of English mean, German Minne and the Latin words from which English has borrowed mental, mind and remember. The question of what is mean to be a man in the contemporary society is a complicated one. Modernity and changing power relations between men and women bring men to an unfamiliar social context. So answering what it means to be a man in modern society is a tough task. Men are usually trained and expected to become protectors and providers for their family. They are implicitly and often explicitly, required to be strong, aggressive and without emotions. Of course not all men and masculinities are the same. Like women, men are also conditioned into society as gendered beings through a complex web of social relations, obligations and expectations. It is true that men are not an internally homogenous group of dominators, but people who experience vulnerability, doubt and anxiety which plays out in complex ways. Masculinity became the norm and it is invisible.

Men are increasingly acknowledged as a critical part of addressing and ultimately preventing violence against women. On one hand, it is recognized that any attempt to prevent this violence must address men as perpetrators. On the other hand, it is also recognized that we must move beyond men as perpetrators only. Vast number of men does not engage in violence against women. Additionally, men too suffer from violence against women when their women friends and relatives experience such violence. Men’s roles and
responsibilities were largely understood through three main roles those of provider, protector and procreator. One of the most important roles a man needs to perform is the role of a ‘provider’. When we look into the history of pre industrial society men played the role of the provider of food and shelter to his family. The provider role is not only played by men, but women also play the role of a provider. If men provide food and shelter, women too were expected to be providers and engage in cooking, agrarian activities, making cloths etc in the pre industrial society. With the advent of industrial revolution men went out to work in factories and women stayed at home as housewives, thus their roles became far more divided. In the present society the number of employed women increased and women started sharing the provider role along with men. But the role of a primary breadwinner of the family is still carried out by men in most of the families. Women started to participate more in earning money became the highlighting factor about work. But it is a notable fact that if a man needs to be successful it became a necessity to earn more money. Gradually the provider role turns out to be a source of strain found in men. Throughout history the roles of men have changed greatly and it is still continuing. But the changes happened to men and their gendered identity is not discussed much in social science.

What is Masculinity?

The concepts ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’, Freud observed in a melancholy foot note, “are among the most confused that occur in science” (Connell, 2005, p.3). Understanding the meaning and broadness of the term ‘masculinity’ is the next order of business in this chapter.

Masculinity refers to the social roles, behaviours, and meanings prescribed for men in any given society at any one time. As such it emphasizes gender, not biological sex, and the diversity of identities among different groups of men. Although we experience gender to be an internal facet of identity, the
The concept of masculinity is produced within the institutions of society and through our daily interactions. (Kimmel M., 2000). The word masculine is derived from the Latin word ‘Mas’, which means “male”. Masculine refers to qualities and characteristics of a man. The term masculine is clearly tied to our conception of gender.

Pierre Bourdieu defined masculinity as: “produced by society and culture, and reproduced in daily life.” Some typical characteristics and qualities which are appropriate for men is considered as masculinity. (Connell, 2005) Masculinity and male behaviours are not the simple product of genetic coding or biological predisposition (Clatterbaugh, 1998). The term masculinity consists anything and everything related with men. It includes the attitudes, practices and behaviours which are commonly associated with men in a specific cultural setting. Masculinities are neither programmed in our genes, nor fixed by social structure, prior to social interaction. They come into existence as people act. They are actively produced, using the resources and strategies available in a given social setting. “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”. Masculinity understood as a configuration of practice in everyday life, is substantially a social construction. Masculinities refer to male bodies but are not determined by male biology. (Connell, 2000). In this study masculinity can be defined as those socio-cultural and behavioural traits associated to men in a particular social context.

“Manliness…. is a contested territory, it is an ideological battlefield. And …. if we look back in time, not only do we see that at certain points in history, one specific discourse of masculinity has dominated overall of the other alternatives…. But we also find that the efforts to control the meaning of masculinity have played a central role in the struggle for power between
Masculinity can be defined as a socially constructed and culturally specific behaviors expected from men. Masculinity is developing in an adult man by passing through a complex set of processes. In this development men make active negotiation in various social relations. The whole process is not simple, by making opposition and conformity to the institutional settings men construct or mould the masculinity. An adult man’s masculinity is partly the product of developmental processes, which defines a person’s capacities for practice, and partly the outcome of the circumstances in which that man acts. Masculinity is not a fixed state of being, it must be viewed as a process. Masculinity is the gendered behavioral trait which is being continually produced and reproduced.

**Multiple Masculinity- Internal Complexity and Contradiction**

The studies on men and masculinity in the contemporary sociological analysis are entering into a new realm which tries to explore the differences among men. The dynamics or variations are considered as central to the understanding of men’s lives. Earlier studies were considering men as a unique feature with similar characteristics, but the contemporary masculinity studies try to explore the varieties of masculine behaviours according to the different social situations. “Men are not born: they are made. And men make themselves, actively constructing their masculinities within a social and historical context.” (Kimmel, Aronson, 2004). Masculinity is differentiated on the basis of cultural, historical and geographical locations. Maleness is considered as biological, but masculinity is a product of culture. Masculinity is constructed and expressed differently in different cultures. Men are not born with masculinity as part of their genetic make-up: rather it is something into which they are acculturated and which is composed of social codes of
behavior which they learn to reproduce in culturally appropriate ways (Beynon, 2002). Masculinity is not a fully historically transmitted behaviour, and not universal. Different cultures and different periods of history define masculinity in different ways. It can be varied according to the different stages of a man’s life. The concept of masculinity in adult age will be entirely different in old age. Masculine behaviour is not completely the product which is transmitted through Y chromosome or the byproduct of testosterone. Over time to time, man creates different forms of behaviours and it varies from culture to culture. Time is another influencing factor in defining masculinity. Different time periods depict masculinity in different ways. Even in the same culture and same period of time we can find differences in masculinity. Men’s lives and definitions of masculinity in India is entirely different from a European country. There are multiple masculinities in the same country and even in a same state. Men construct their attitudes and behavioural patterns in accordance with their life situations, and it is dynamic and multiple in nature. Masculinities vary with each culture and sub cultures. Different social classes and working groups construct masculinity in different ways. In multi cultural societies there will be multiple definitions and dynamics of masculinity. We cannot speak about masculinity by considering it as a constant, universal essence, common to all. Without understanding the differences and the forces behind the construction of different types of masculinities, most of the time, social scientists jump into conclusions by making a sweeping assumption that all masculinities are identical.

Different forms of masculinity and male stereotypes were discussed in social, psychological, anthropological and feminist writings. The type of masculinity which is discussed more is the concept of hegemonic masculinity. It is considered as the dominant form of masculinity. The
concept hegemonic masculinity is derived on the basis of the Gramscian term Hegemony, which denotes the class relations. In most of the writings hegemonic masculinity was defined as a pattern of practice which allows man’s dominance over women. Sociologist R.W Connell popularized the concept hegemonic masculinity. This concept is relevant in the discussions of patriarchal gender system. It meant the power and dominance transmitted to men through the culture and institutions. These power transmissions and dominant nature of masculinity were discussed a lot in gender studies. One important fact is that the gender hierarchies are subjected to change. The contemporary society is witnessing the struggle for hegemony due to the transformations in the gender system. The older form of masculinity is in a state of transition and gave way to the development of new ones. There are not much discussions happening about the restructuring of masculine behaviours and its multiple forms. As mentioned earlier, discussions and researches in the field of gender studies in Kerala context, are considering men and masculinity as a single homogenous entity without any transformation. For getting a real picture of men and masculinity in Kerala we should make a thorough investigation in this field.

Is masculinity common to all men in Kerala? The answer is of course a- No. There are different patterns of masculine behaviour existing in this state. The forces behind the different forms of constructing masculinity varies from person to person. A vast variety of socio-cultural factors influence the construction of masculine behaviour and attitudes those ranging from the broad societal level to specific interpersonal interactions.

The existing global literatures on men and masculinities are evidences for the fact that masculinities are multiple and complex, having internal contradictions. “Masculinities are not simply different, they are subject to change. The notion that the concept of masculinity essentialises or
homogenises is quite difficult to reconcile with the tremendous multiplicity of social constructions that ethnographers and historians have documented with the aid of this concept” (Connell, 2005). Masculinity is different in various cultural settings, even in the same cultural grouping multiple forms of masculinity exists. Masculinities are configurations of practice that are accomplished in the social action and, therefore can differ according to the gender relations in a particular social setting. Masculinity is not a homogenous simple state of being and hence it is not fixed.

**Frameworks for Understanding Masculinity**

Two approaches for understanding men and masculinity to be used in this study include: Individualist and Institutional approaches. Gender scholars commonly use the individualist approach. In the individualist approach the theories from sociology and psychology are commonly use. In this frame, the study tries to explore the perceptions, habits, and stereotypes of men. It helps to get a detailed analysis of men and their gendered behavioral traits. This frame accommodates the dispositions and gravity of masculine stereotypes among men by following three main aspects. This includes 1) The outlook of men towards their work, physical appearance, gender equality, and familial roles.2) Men and their Habits, Interests and tensions and 3) Masculine behavior traits-Success dedication, inhibited affection, Restrictive emotionality and Exaggerated self reliance and control.

Institutional approach is a macro level analysis of gender. Social institutions include large, formally organized public sectors of society like education, work, religion and it also includes some more personal, less formally organized areas of life like marriage, family, parenthood. In this study two important framework of institutions are considered- family and work. Here work which comes under the formal category of institutions and family that falls under a less formal category of institutions are considered for the study.
Changes in work and family give way to changes in gender relations and in turn the changes in gender relations give way to changes in work and family. So gender, family and work can be considered as intertwined. It is evident that, in our society changes that take place in the lives of men and women get reflected in family and work sector. From this it is clear that family and work are gendered institutions. The researcher aims to examine the influence of these institutions in structuring the masculine behavior which is analysed from an individualist frame.

**Men, Masculinity and Social Institutions**

The role of social institutions in human life is discussed in detail by the social and behavioural scientists. They discuss about social institutions in two ways at the same time: both as *agent* and as *setting*. In structuring the behavior of the individual the institutions act as agents. On the other hand the institutions are settings within which the drama of social life is enacted. Social institutions are powerful forces that structure our lives and behavior. At the same time all individuals get a chance to make decisions about how to lay down their prescribed roles.

The pattern of conduct our society defines as masculine may be seen in the lives of individuals, but they also have an existence beyond the individual. Masculinities are defined collectively in culture, and are sustained in institutions (Connell, 2000). Institutions may construct multiple masculinities and define relationship between them. Masculinities result from a sustained active engagement with the demands of institutional setting. Masculinity does not exist in social and cultural vaccums but rather are constructed within specific institutional settings.

Research on gender studies make it clear that all human interactions, and the institutions in which these interactions occur, are gendered in some manner. The gender is an important influencing factor in shaping the structure of
social institutions and in turn these institutions help the molding of gendered behaviour of individuals. In every society there are some predetermined roles for each gender. Social institutions like family transmit these predetermined gendered roles to individuals. Each man and women expected to do their prescribed roles. For example a women/ mother is expected to do the role of a home maker and do the emotional roles, on the other hand a man/father should be the bread winner and fulfils the instrumental roles. The rapid social change due to the impact of industrialization, globalization and various other factors transform the structure and functions of social institutions and it also reflects in the predetermined gendered roles. As a result of rapid social change the patterning of the gendered role became flexible compared to the past society. This created an uncertainty and confusion among people about their gendered behaviours and appropriate roles. The change in the traditional norms and the absence of the development of new fixed norms applicable to all is the important cause behind this uncertainty. Masculinity may vary according to the social context. The institutions like work and family play an important role in forming a man’s social context, and it reflects in the male behavior patterns.

“Masculinity as personal practice cannot be isolated from its institutional context. Most human activity is institutionally bound. Three institutions the state, work place/ labour market and the family- are of particular importance in the contemporary organization of gender.”(R.W Connell,1993). In this work the researcher consider the two important institutions- work and Family for understanding men and masculinity.
Occupation, Family and Masculinity

Men and Occupation

Work is done by both men and women from the time immemorial. Throughout history, the division of labour is based on sex. The system in which the work is determined on the basis of sex is known as sexual division of labour. In most of the societies sex became the important basis for determining one’s work. There are lot of factors responsible for determining sex as a basis for work determination. Historically it is the primary responsibility of women to take care of children. The higher physical strength made, men to be hunters in the hunting gathering societies. Over time societies started the agricultural mode of living men became farmers and women continued the caretaker’s role. The role of ‘primary breadwinner’ is always played by men. So earning for the family is the most important responsibility of a man. This itself shows the importance of work for men. So the work done by a man surely influences his attitude and behaviour. The twentieth century witnessed a drastic change in work and family life in most part of the world. The new globalised economy made dramatic changes in the institutions of work and family. Its impact is high in the industrialized nations. The developing countries also witnessed it’s chain reaction. The growing middle class of managers and professionals is one of the important result of Industrialisation and urbanisation. As a result of increasing need of a globalised economy women started to work outside home. This transformed the familial roles of men that they performed earlier, and take them to the roles they are unfamiliar with. Morgan (1992) suggests, notions of work are central to masculine identities and organisations exist as major sites for the construction and reconstruction of ‘what it means to be a man’.

Sociology of work is only a recently originated branch of sociology, and it makes gender as a central point of analysis. Most of the studies in this area
are pointing out the male female differentials in work sectors. Power differences, gender inequality and the male-female attitudinal differences to job etc are some more enthralling areas of sociology of work. How the different work patterns influence masculinity/feminity is not detailed much in sociological investigations. Economic circumstances and organizational structures contribute a lot to the making of masculinity. As Mike Donaldson observes in Times of Our lives, hard labour in factories and mines literally uses up the workers’ bodies: and that destruction; a proof of the toughness of the work and the worker, can be a method of demonstrating masculinity (Connell 2005). Here in this work the researcher aims to explore the impact of different types of work on masculine behavior.

A large majority of men are interested to think and discuss about their work. Individuals give different meanings to their work. The attitude of men toward their work is a dynamic multifaceted matter. It is a factor of satisfaction for some people and for others it’s problematic. Some people have a committed attitude to their job, but some consider work as a means for achieving goals outside work. A person’s attitude towards his work depends on various factors. The differences in the working environment influence the attitude towards work. The work attitude may vary among people from different socio-economic classes. Age is another important factor which determines the attitude to work. Generally men have a more instrumental attitude towards work than women. Gender is an important factor in determining a person’s temperament to work. There is a clear link between an individual’s satisfaction of work and the total life situation. Work as an institution plays a dominant role in constructing the masculine behaviour. The identity of men and women are constructed and they behave in accordance with that construction. A person’s work is one of the influencing factor in the construction of gendered behaviour i.e masculinity
or feminity. Work and masculinity are mutually interacting discourses. Masculinity is conceptualised as dynamic and complex identity. Men construct this identity by interacting with the wider world, and these interactions to a large extent are determined based on the individual’s work.

**Men in Family**

The institution of “family” is the most fundamental basis of social structure. The changes happening in this institution can make reflections in the whole society. Family is a broader institution which changes perpetually, and which shapes as well as is being shaped by the broader environment in which it exists. The role of family in constructing an individual’s gendered identity is a crucial one. It is a fact that, family is the most important institution which influences the construction of masculinity. It is a central site of socialization and the initial social setting within which the children learn about gender and the meaning of gender in their society. By considering the importance of family, Sara Fenstermarker Berk referred family as a “gender factory”. Both masculinity and feminity are the products of the family as well as the raw materials from which the family is constructed. The expectations of males as providers remain as a defining element of masculinity (Berk, 1985). The importance of family in the socialization of children and the shaping of their gendered identity is discussed in detail in sociological writings. Along with this the influence of family in shaping masculinity of an adult man should be discussed. Gender difference in the family is clearly depicted in the existing literature, as the one that considers the responsibility for children. The role of a father has traditionally been defined as instrumental in nature. “Fatherhood is a cultural construct based upon a man’s relationship to the children born by a women with whom he has sex relations” (Mead, 1962). Men’s familial roles and responsibilities are influenced by social, cultural, economic, and psychological aspects. Beliefs about their role as fathers may vary widely
among men. Father is considered as someone who is authoritative in the family and earns for the family. The rapid social change had made a high impact on fatherhood. Nowadays men are engaged in both instrumental and emotional roles in family. Researches on changing Indian fatherhood reveal that there has been a shift from traditional stereotyped fatherhood to an egalitarian role. The increasing participation of women on economic sector, and the increasing modernization resulted in a transition in male familial roles. The perception of men towards fatherhood can be influenced by their gender role attitudes, motivations and their relationship with their family members and spouse. The traditional gender based attitudes towards domestic labour are remolded with the increasing participation of women in employment sectors, and this is evident in those families in which women having higher earning power.

International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) programme of action stressed male involvement in family matters stating that, “special efforts should be made to emphasis men’s shared responsibility and to promote their active involvement in responsible parenthood (United Nations, 1995). India’s National Population Policy (2000) also mentioned about the responsible fatherhood and active participation of men in family. The spread of modern nuclear families and the increasing participation of women in work sectors jointly help to transform the gendered roles and responsibilities in the family. The transition of women to the status of earning member in the family had shaken the so called status of man as the primary bread winner. The impact of modernization and westernization has lead to the decay of joint family system and gave way to the emergence of nuclear family system. Increasing economic independence and individualism jointly transformed the gender relations in the family system. The modern nuclear family and contemporary life styles have demanded the increasing
male participation in emotional roles along with their habituated instrumental roles. Men in the contemporary society are in a necessity to remold or reconstruct their gendered identity for accommodating the new roles and responsibilities in the family system. Family is a highly influencing institution which functions effectively in coordinating gender relations. Hence it should be examined for the analysis of men and masculinity. The nurturing and maintenance of gendered behavior is largely done by the institution of family.

The researcher aims to explore the familial roles of men in detail in this study. Domestic work participation of men, their approach to fatherhood and attitude towards partner are some major points of enquiry in this research work. Does a person’s work and family settings influence all the above mentioned characteristics of men is also explored in this work for procuring a detailed analysis of men and masculinity in contemporary Kerala.

**Masculinity- Body and Mind**

From the traditional society masculinity is always associated with physical strength. A man is considered as the protector of his family and the one who fights for his country. Physical strength is a stereotypical feature which associated with man. The last few decades witnessed a great deal of change in the moulds of masculinity. The new form of masculinity is much more different from the traditional concept of strong man. The modern man is likely to give less importance for his physical strength and valiantness and is ready to express their emotions. Men do many roles in the family system compared to the traditional men. Modifications eventuate in man from his role as a provider to an equal partner in doing emotional roles and child caring activities in recent times.

Psychological studies have keen interest in studying about men. As mentioned earlier masculinity is institutionalized to a large extent, but along
with the institutional influence a person’s character or personality reflects in his masculine behavior and attitudes. In the words of Kimmel and Messner, a socio-psychological approach is very important in understanding men and masculinity. Men participate more in psychological experiments than women, this reflects in the results of these experiments also. But despite the over representation of men in Psychology, men were hardly ever studied as men. They were generally seen as representatives of human species and treated as if they have no gender (Messner, 2000)

Chodorow described that, the psychoanalytic case studies showed men’s character structures to be internally divided, even contradictory; and showed both masculinity and femininity as the product of psychological compromises, often tense and unstable. (Connell, 2000). According to Levant, Men tend to lace up most of their feelings, a phenomenon called “restrictive emotionality” (Jansz, 2000)-pain, grief and vulnerable feelings. Men commonly try to restrict their expression of emotions, except anger. Anger is conceived as masculine behaviour type by majority of men. Male gender role, which “requires men to appear tough, objective, striving, achieving, instrumental and emotionally unexpressive” (Jansz, 2000, p.22) is an important factor in explaining why men die younger than women. Men live approximately seven years less than women. Restrictive emotionality can be defined as “having difficulty and fears about expressing one’s feelings and difficulty finding words to express basic emotions” (Neil, Good & Holmes,1995, p.176). Restrictive emotionality is one of the major psychological crisis of men and considered as a common masculine character identified in almost all cultural contexts and subcultures. It is considered as a traditional masculine character.

The constructionist theories of masculine identity and the elucidation of emotions explain the male sex experience as a “cross-over”. Little boys are
more expressive than little girls, but gradually they try to restrict their emotional experiences. The emotional expressions of their son are consciously or unconsciously controlled by the parents in the socialisation process. The restrictive behaviour of an adult men is a result of long term interactional process. It is not a biologically given behaviour but a constructed one.

**Men Health Conditions and Habits**

It is notable fact that the life span of men is less when compared to that of women. They are less likely to consult with a doctor than women when they encounter health problems. Recent studies reveal that the lifestyle diseases are more among men compared to women. Men are generally in a poorer health than women, with worse diet and unhealthy habits. They are more likely to develop smoking and drinking habits. Most of them don’t exercise to keep themselves fit and there by bringing a progressive change in their health. As per the report of Men’s Health Society of India, financial stress is an important reason behind cardiovascular events. Men are always keeping away from hospital visits and regular health checkups. Men’s Health Society of India (MHSI) is the only organisation which is dedicated to analyse the man’s health conditions in India started in November 2011, Which is associated with the International Men’s Health Society, USA.

There are similarities and differences among men in health related attitudes. Majority of men follow unhealthy habits and are not bothered about the risk factors involved in baneful habits like smoking, alcohol consumption etc. Men believe that for becoming a ‘real man’ it is necessary to take some risk. This attitude denies them from seeking help for health problems. Compared to women, men make use of health services in a quite limited way. The existing health systems are not enough to meet the health needs of men. The utilization of health services should be increased among men. Men always
hesitate to disclose their mental and physical problems with others. This in turn results in the increasing mental pressure and high rates of suicide among men. As per the records of National Crime Records Bureau, Kerala has the highest suicide rates among the states in India.

Men’s health and health behaviours are constructed phenomenons. Social construction of masculinity plays a vital role in determining the male attitude towards health. Studies in this field reveals that in most of the cultures masculine behaviour is negatively related when it comes to the matter of seeking help from others and in expressing their illness. A biopsychosocial approach is essential to understand the men’s health problems and meet their health needs. In this work the researcher aims to explore the health consciousness of men in Kerala. And also tries to find out the role of family and work in shaping the health awareness of men.

**Contemporary Kerala- A Profile**

The state of Kerala, which is located in south west part of India in its present form was formed in 1956 as part of the linguistic reorganization of Indian states by merging the three Malayalam speaking regions- the princely states of Travancore, Cochin and the Malabar district of the Madras presidency. Kerala has had a long history of foreign invasion, and it had a great impact on its culture and traditions. The influence of religion in framing the culture of Kerala is a remarkable one. Kerala has three predominant religions- Hinduism, Christianity and Islam. Both Christianity and Islam took its roots in Kerala as a result of foreign invasion. The affluence of the spices, teak and ivory attracted the foreign traders to the Kerala cost. Caste has played a key role in forming the modern Kerala society and culture. A rigid caste system was prevalent among the Hindu community in Kerala. The unique matrilineal kinship system prevailed in Kerala. Kerala had a long history of educational attainments. The Census of 1891 reported that Travancore
attained the foremost place in education compared to the other Indian states. The achievements in the field of education helped in transforming the existing caste system. Compared to the other parts of the country the practice of untouchability had been abolished at a very early stage in the state. Kerala forms only 1.1 percent of India’s total geographical area. As per the 2011 census, Kerala has the total population of 3.34 crores, it forms 2.76 percent of India’s total population. Kerala has a highest sex ratio of 1084 women per 1000 men compared to other states in India. According to 2011 census Kerala has the highest literacy rate of 93.91% and highest life expectancy of 77 years respectively.

Kerala is one of India’s most advanced and progressive states in terms of social welfare and quality of life. When we take the whole nation into account, Kerala has high literacy rate, advanced world class health care systems, and the lowest mortality rates and highest life expectancy rates. In the UNDP India Report 2011-2012, Kerala attains the highest score (0.911) in Human Development Index, and ranks first among the Indian states. Factors, such as high rate of female literacy, education, work participation and life expectancy, along with favorable sex ratio have contributed to it. An early modernization of women was possible in Kerala due to the favorable gender demography.

**Relevance of the study**

What it is to be a man? What are the gender role stereotypes for men and the variations in the acceptance of these stereotypes? What are the social expectations they face, being a man?, How the masculinity is viewed? are some of the questions which were not discussed much in gender studies in Kerala context. Most of the research works on gender in Kerala have emphasized only on the status of women, without taking men into consideration as gendered beings. When the researchers give some attention
to these areas they are giving an opening to a new realm of debates. In other words, masculinity is a theme which needs scholarly attention. The field of social science in our context has been interested in discussing about the social problems, and men are always portrayed as the one who creates problems and have never been looked as a group that has problems. The feminist movements in our society has a lot of socio-cultural explanations to give, but the attitude of ignoring the other half of the population by our social science researchers should be changed. The masculine-feminine social constructs of gender which prevailed in our culture are drastically transformed with the development of modernity and feminism. We can find these changes getting reflected in the lifestyles, art and literatures. To a large extent, the life situations of women become more comfortable as a result of the transition. There exists a strong interference of women in all social affairs. With the advent of feminism and modernity men and masculinity is never the same. ‘Power’ which was considered as a lifeblood of men has started losing its brilliance, as a result of this transition. They have reached towards strange life situations which are unfamiliar to them. Because of this, it became a necessity to analyse the middle class men who lead an ordinary life in a newly developed social circumstances. The evaluation of the reflections of social change in the contemporary society, will be incomplete, without a thorough investigation of men and masculinity.

In all ages individual lives have repetitions of the past. But it is not possible to repeat the past culture in a same manner, because the socio-cultural reflections of each period construct a new form, by joining them with the transmitted behavior. In this way a new patterning of social life is happening in all ages. This transformation process is much clearer in the contemporary fast moving society. The development of globalization, women empowerment and the growth of new social media are jointly giving a new face to our
society and family atmosphere. This in turn reflects in the roles and responsibilities which were followed by men and women. The equation of power differentiation between men and women is also remolded. When women started to involve more in instrumental roles and other social affairs, the nuclear family system demanded the involvement of men in emotional roles too. In the past societies, the sexual differences were defined with fixed boundaries; it is a reality in the contemporary society that those rules are in a state of flux. In such a situation the change for both men and women are a necessity. The rigidity of rules regarding the do’s and dont’s in the gender roles are lacking its importance. It can be summarised in a way that the gender stereotypes are fading away in the fast flow of change.

Though men are talked about and ignored in various platforms and forums, men’s existence as a gendered being is either taken for granted or still remains unexplored and unexamined. Variety and ambiguity becomes the particular features of masculinity in modern society. Masculinity is rich in its diversity. Throughout history, the ideas and practices of male identity have varied in accordance with time and place. The concept of masculinity is not static and similar with regard to all men. With the development of society the social roles and stereotypes attached to men have also changed. Living, in accordance with the traditional norms and values of masculinity is stressful for many men in contemporary society. The impact of social institutions of family and work in the lives of men and the construct of masculinity is the central problem that has been addressed in detail in the present study. This study is an attempt to understand the various dimensions of male life and the concept of masculinity in contemporary Kerala, with special reference to the impact of institutions of family and work in the construction of masculinity and framing the male life. The behavioural and habitual difference between men and women were discussed a lot in various social science researches,
but the differences found within the same gender group are not discussed much.

The study tries to explore the existence of various masculine attitudes existing in contemporary Kerala and the institutional impact of family and work in creating these variations. Generally there exists a trend that always tries to explore and explain men and masculinity by homogenizing all men and masculinity. The development of feminist philosophies gives way to the detailed discussions about men. But those discussions are keeping a homogenous stance, i.e considering men and masculinity as contrasting entities or that subordinates women and femininity. What is an ordinary man in his everyday life and the multiplicity of which is not much addressed in the gender based discussions. It is equally important to study man as well as women for proper understanding of total societal reality. This study is basically about men and masculinity, it would have to necessarily make an effort to know how the behavior, attitude, expectations, roles, relationships and other aspects of day to day life of a man and how the social institutions of family and work influence the construction of all these. At one level the object of the study is to find out the similarities and variations among men and the construct of masculinity by analyzing the day to day life of men. On the other hand, the study aims to explore the impact of institutions of family and work in the construction of masculinity.

In order to get a clear picture of men and masculinity, we must observe it in a totality. So for understanding men and masculinity in contemporary Kerala the researcher explores different aspects of male life. The attitudes of men, habits, interests, and the level of acceptance of masculine stereotypes are analysed. The other main aim of this research is to catalogue how social institutions-family and work- are making an impact on men and masculinity. Here men and masculinity is viewed through different occupational contexts.
Based on this the researcher tries to explore the different aspects of masculine behaviour and its dynamics which are found in contemporary Kerala. The researcher aims to analyse the masculine behaviour and its dynamics, and the influence of family and work in constructing masculinity.

Conclusion

Social influence in the construction of masculinity is taking place in multiple levels. How a man cognizes and acts towards other people depends on his self-concept, stereotypic believes and attitudes. A number of other factors like the person’s interpersonal relationships, membership in particular social groups, culturally shared ideologies and conceptions like all influence the gendered identity of a man. Because of the influence of these multiple social factors, masculinity itself takes the form of a multi dimensional concept. So the attempt to understand masculinity as a dynamic and multifaceted phenomenon is more appropriate than assuming masculinity as a homogenous entity. In this study the researcher attempts to understand the dynamics of men and masculinity in contemporary Kerala. This work tries to explore the influence of the institutions like family and work in the creation of masculinity dynamics. In a broad definition anything and everything related with man comes under the concept of masculinity, so for analyzing men and masculinity the researcher tries to explore the behavioural traits and attitudes of men towards various fields like work, family relations, health, gender equality, and masculine images are included in this study.