



Bharathidasan University
Khajamalai Campus
Tiruchirappalli-620023
Tamil Nadu, India

Programme: M.A Gender Studies

**Course Title: Concepts and theories on
gender and sexualities**

Code: C-I

Unit- I-Gender Concepts

Prof.N.Murugeswari
Director & Head
Department of Women's Studies

Understanding
Concepts and
Studies

Gender
Gender

Examining
Patriarchy,
Inequality

Sex,
and
Gender



Introduction to Gender Concepts



Definition of Sex: Biological differences between males and females (chromosomes, reproductive organs).

Definition of Gender: Socially constructed roles, behaviors, and attributes that a society considers appropriate for men and women.

Key Difference: Sex is biological; gender is socially constructed and can vary across cultures and time.

Sex Roles vs Gender Roles



Sex Roles: Refers to the roles based on biological sex, e.g., mothers are expected to care for children, men as protectors.

Gender Roles: Behaviors expected of individuals based on their gender identity, e.g., women as caregivers, men as leaders.

Intersection of Sex and Gender: Sex influences but does not dictate gender role expectations.

Gender Stereotypes



Definition: Overgeneralized beliefs about the characteristics of men and women.

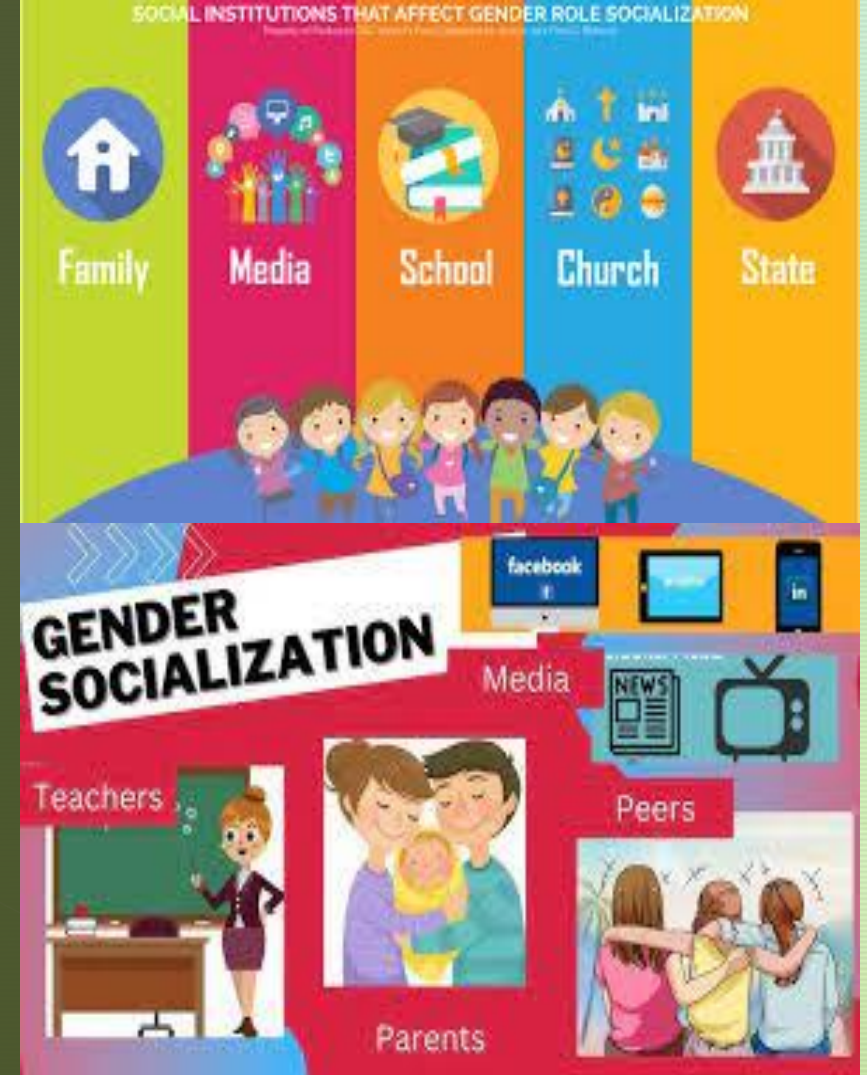
Examples: Women are emotional, men are strong; women should stay at home, men should work outside.

Impact: Reinforces inequality and limits personal freedom.



Gender Socialization

- Definition: The process by which individuals learn and internalize the values, beliefs, and norms of their culture regarding gender.
- Agents of Socialization: Family, schools, peers, media, and religion.
- Impact: Shapes gender roles and expectations from an early age.

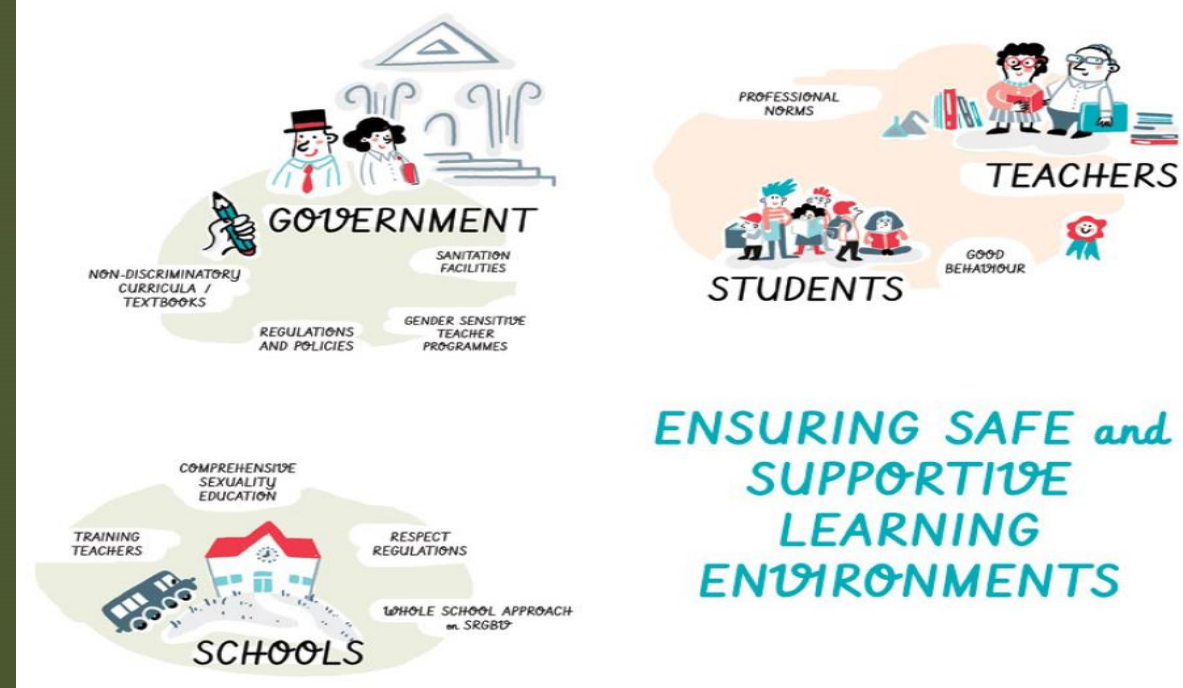


Education: Schools reinforce gender roles through curricula and teacher expectations.

Family: Parental roles and expectations shape gender behavior (e.g., girls in domestic chores, boys in sports).

Workplace: Gender roles influence career choices and pay disparities.

Media: Portrays stereotypical gender roles that influence perceptions of "acceptable" behavior.



Gender Shaping Institutions

Patriarchy and Sexism



- Patriarchy: A social system where men hold primary power in roles of leadership, authority, and control.
- Sexism: Prejudice or discrimination based on gender, typically targeting women and reinforcing male dominance.
- Consequences: Limits opportunities and perpetuates gender inequalities.

Gender Politics of Privilege and Oppression



- Privilege: Advantages held by individuals based on their gender (e.g., men often have more access to leadership roles).
- Oppression: The systematic mistreatment and subjugation of people based on gender (e.g., women being denied equal pay).
- Power Dynamics: Gendered power structures affect access to resources, opportunities, and respect.

Gendered Conditioning and Cultural Impositions

- Gendered Conditioning: The process of socializing individuals to accept certain gender norms from early childhood.
- Cultural Impositions: Societal expectations placed on individuals based on their gender (e.g., women's dress codes, men's emotional restraint).
- Resistance: Challenging these imposed norms is a key part of feminist movements.

The Historical Existence of Matriarchy

- Matriarchy: A social system in which women hold primary power.
- Historical Examples: Some Indigenous societies, early agricultural societies.
- Contrasting Patriarchy: In many societies, matriarchal structures were replaced by patriarchal systems, often during colonization or industrialization.

Engaging Men in Eliminating Gender Inequalities

- The Role of Men: Men need to be allies in promoting gender equality, not just women's responsibility.
- Approaches: Encourage men to challenge toxic masculinity, support women's rights, and advocate for equal opportunities.
- Benefits: A more inclusive and just society for everyone.

Gender Studies Concepts



- **Definition:** An interdisciplinary field that examines how gender influences social structures, relationships, and individuals.
- **Key Themes:** Gender identity, gender roles, intersectionality, power, and social inequality.
- **Methods:** Uses both qualitative and quantitative research methods.

Gender Studies vs Women's Studies



- Gender Studies: Focuses on the study of gender as a whole, including men, women, and non-binary identities, in various social, political, and historical contexts.
- Women's Studies: Primarily focuses on the experiences and contributions of women, especially in the context of feminist theory.
- Overlap: Both fields seek to understand and challenge gender inequalities, but gender studies is broader.

Need for Doing Gender Studies



- **Understanding Inequality:** Helps analyze how gender influences social structures, roles, and inequalities.
- **Challenging Gender Norms:** Provides tools to challenge harmful gender stereotypes and promote equality.
- **Social Change:** Promotes policies and practices that foster gender equity in society.



Gender and Women's Studies as an Academic Discipline

- **Origins:** Developed in response to the feminist movements of the 1960s and 1970s.
- **Interdisciplinary:** Incorporates insights from sociology, political science, history, anthropology, psychology, and more.
- **Objective:** To question and deconstruct traditional gender norms and promote social justice.

Gender Differences in the Private Sphere

- Private Sphere: Refers to the home and family life.
- Gendered Expectations: Women are often expected to take on primary caregiving roles, while men may be expected to be the breadwinners.
- Challenges: Unequal distribution of domestic labor and emotional burdens

Gender Differences in the Public Sphere



- Public Sphere: Refers to the workplace, politics, and social life outside the home.
- Inequalities: Women and non-binary individuals often face discrimination, pay gaps, and underrepresentation in leadership roles.
- Progress: Efforts to close gender gaps, but challenges remain

Group Discussion: Gendered Experiences



Activity: Capture pictures of gender differences in the private and public spheres.

Discussion: How are gender roles enacted and reinforced in different contexts (family, workplace, media)?

Reflection: How can we challenge these gender norms to promote equality?



Key Takeaways



- Gender is Socially Constructed: It is shaped by culture, norms, and institutions, not just biology.
- Patriarchy and Sexism: Are structures that perpetuate gender inequality and need to be challenged.
- Engagement: Both men and women must engage in the work of gender equality.
- Gender Studies: Is essential for understanding and dismantling the power dynamics that perpetuate gendered oppression

Conclusion and Call to Action



Reflection: Consider how gender roles have shaped your own life and society.

Action: Advocate for gender equality in your personal and professional spheres.

Encouragement: Continue exploring and studying gender to contribute to a more just and equal world.

THANK YOU

