

GENDER

- distinction between sex and gender.
- **Sex** are the biological traits that societies use to assign people into the category of either male or female, whether it be through a focus on chromosomes, genitalia or some other physical ascription.
- When people talk about the differences between men and women they are often drawing on sex – on rigid ideas of biology – rather than gender, which is an understanding of how society shapes our understanding of those biological categories

- **Gender** is more fluid – it may or may not depend upon biological traits.
- More specifically, it is a concept that describes how societies determine and manage sex categories;
- the cultural meanings attached to men and women's roles;
- and how individuals understand their identities including, but not limited to, being a man, woman, transgender, intersex, gender queer and other gender positions.
- Gender involves social norms, attitudes and activities that society deems more appropriate for one sex over another. Gender is also determined by what an individual feels and does.

- **Sex** refers to physical or physiological differences between males and females, including both primary sex characteristics (the reproductive system) and secondary characteristics such as height and muscularity.
- **Gender** is a term that refers to social or cultural distinctions associated with being male or female.
- **Gender identity** is the extent to which one identifies as being either masculine or feminine

- The **sociology of gender** examines how society influences our understandings and perception of differences between **masculinity** (what society deems appropriate behaviour for a “man”) and **femininity** (what society deems appropriate behaviour for a “woman”).
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# Gender as a form of Social Stratification

- Gender stratification refers to the social ranking, where men typically inhabit higher statuses than women. Often the terms *gender inequality* and *gender stratification* are used interchangeably.
- There are a variety of approaches to the study of gender stratification. Most of the research in this area focuses on differences between men's and women's life circumstances, broadly defined.
- Scholarly debates focus on which dimensions of inequalities are most relevant and the level at which inequalities are generated and maintained (i.e., individual, couple, family, group, or societal level).
- Researchers have been challenged to explore gender, race, and class inequalities from an intersectional perspective, rather than treating gender as independent of race and class.

- The most common explanation for divisions between men and women is that the male 'sex' is stronger, more intelligent and more of a 'natural' leader.
- Women however according to biological determinism are generally seen as child bearers and instinctively house keepers.
- Although this is widely considered a biological point of view, sociologists like Talcott Parsons (1959) have tended to lean towards this idea.

- In addition to age, gender is one of the universal dimensions on which status differences are based.
- Unlike sex, which is a biological concept, gender is a social construct specifying the socially and culturally prescribed roles that men and women are to follow.
- **According to Gerda Lerner in *The Creation of Patriarchy*, gender is the "costume, a mask, a straitjacket in which men and women dance their unequal dance"**

As Alan Wolfe observed in "The Gender Question" (*The New Republic*, June 6:27-34), "of all the ways that one group has systematically mistreated another, none is more deeply rooted than the way men have subordinated women.

All other discriminations pale by contrast." Lerner argues that the subordination of women preceded all other subordinations and that to rid ourselves of all of those other "isms"--racism, classism, ageism, etc.it is sexism that must first be eradicated.

# Socialisation & gender

- Socialisation is the most important process in a person's life, permitting the development of an individual's social capacities, as well as learning norms and values that permit adequate participation in society.
- During this process, the family is one of the most important social environments, in that it permits the connection with the social structure.
- To a large extent, a child's development possibilities depend on his/her family's characteristics and socio-economic position in society. **Socialisation also implies social *differentiation*, as it prepares boys and girls to be part of a specific social group.**

- The socialisation process is crucial for the internalisation of the social and cultural reality.
- The process is also highly charged with emotions: boys and girls identify with these realities, which determine what contents and aspects they consider important enough to be part of their own norms, values and lives.
- The process of primary socialisation goes beyond a merely cognitive learning process and remains firmly rooted in the conscience of girls and boys – to a much greater extent than any subsequent secondary socialisations

- Gender role socialisation is carried on by parents who choose blue for boys and pink for girls.
- Blue is a cold colour where as pink is warm and these colours are used for cards, clothing and even maternity ward tags.
- **Boys are taught to be leaders, strong, active, dominating, and never showing weakness.**
- **Girls on the other hand are taught to be caring, looked after and to be good-natured and well-mannered.**

As girls become women they are socialised into roles such as a wife and mother and taught that it is a desirable life choice to settle down.

This leads to women not having access to as many life chances as men, and being reliant on the opposite sex for income, all attributes that lead to less independence for women

- Even when women do dispel these gender roles and seek to become more independent they often face employers that do not share the same views.
- It is common for the employer to assume that a female employee will want to take leave to have children, and even though there are laws that prohibit employers asking such questions during interviews, this doesn't stop this being a common view.

- Education is different from other forms of socialisation such as family because it involves an instruction that is deliberate expression of a formal institution. Institutions promote the values of the dominant culture.
- There is probably less variation in what children learn from schooling than what they learn as a result of informal interactions with the family or friends.
- For non-white people, family and cultural identity is seen as a necessary tool to counteract the effects of an institution actively promotes and sustains an unequal position when compared to their white counterparts.

# 11 Facts About Gender Inequality In India That Will Truly Shock You

- 1. Over the last three years, there were over [24,000 reported dowry deaths](#) in India.
- 2. [As many as 70%](#) of married women in India between 15 and 49 years of age are victims of beatings or rape.
- 3. According to a [2011 study](#), 72% of acid-attack cases in India from 2002 to 2010 included at least one female victim.
- 4. According to [UNICEF](#), foetal sex determination by unethical medical professionals has today grown into a ₹1,000 crore industry in India.

- 5. Following the 2011 census, a number of activists raised concerns that up to 8 million female foetuses had been aborted in the previous decade.
- 6. Although child marriage is illegal in India, almost half of all women between the ages of 20 and 24 years were married off before the legal age of 18.

## Gender equality in India among worst in world

- When India's Human Development Index is adjusted for gender inequality, it becomes south Asia's worst performing country after [Afghanistan](#), new numbers in the UNDP's Human Development Report 2013 show. [Pakistan](#), [Nepal](#) and Bangladesh, which are poorer than India and have lower HDIs, all do comparatively better than India when it comes to gender equality.

# Global Gender Gap

2014 (Survey conducted in 141 Countries)

RANK Least gap

- 1 Iceland
- 2 Finland
- 3 Norway
- 4 Sweden
- 5 Denmark
- 6 Nicaragua
- 7 Rwanda
- 8 Ireland
- 9 Philippines
- 10 Belgium



- 68 Bangladesh
- 79 Sri Lanka
- 87 China
- 112 Nepal
- 114 India**
- 120 Bhutan
- 141 Pakistan



**Economic Participation  
and Opportunity**  
134

**Educational Attainment**  
126

**Health and Survival**  
141

**Political Empowerment**  
15

Source: The Global Gender Gap Report 2014