

## GENDER STUDIES

**Dr .D .Pankaja**

*Assistant Professor, Department of English, R.B.V.R.R. Women's College*

*Hyderabad -500027., INDIA*

### ABSTRACT

Gender studies is a field of study that looks at the world from the perspective of Gender. Gender studies is a generic term for the field as a whole .This broad field of study includes specific areas such as gender equality studies ,women's studies, patriarchy, feminism.

***Key Words: Women studies, Gender studies, Feminist studies, Trends in Feminism and patriarchy.***

### I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper on Gender Studies is to understand gender from as many view points as possible. The knowledge obtained from gender studies can be used to improve understanding problems. Gender system exists in every society. It consists of all the notions of female and male who decides how to perceive ourselves collectively and individually. Gender is a term that identifies specific aspect of human life.

Origins of gender studies lie in women studies. Gender is a complex phenomenon which is socially and culturally constructed within the family and within many human relationships. Gender shapes the way we feel, think and behave.

### II. THE OBJECTIVES OF GENDER STUDIES

To bring awareness in both women and men by helping them to understand recognize, and acknowledge the multidimensional role plays by women in society.

To promote better understanding in the process of social, technological and environmental change.

To investigate the causes of gender disparities and analyzing structural cultural factors.

To empower women in their struggle against inequality and for effective participation in many areas of society

To identify problems of women and men relating to their roles and status in society.

To develop gender sensitive, gender aware, gender just, leadership potential among girls and boys and as well as men and women.

### III. GENDER STUDIES AND GENDER THEORY

Gender researchers study how people think, interpret, perceive, symbolize, feel write, dance, wish, experience, define—in other words construct, we call as gender and the word meant in the past and now. Biology is relevant to gender not as an integral component but as a subject of research.

#### **IV. GENDER THEORY**

Gender is specific object of study, but the issues could be formulated with reference to most of the things people do. Gender is about sexuality .It is about power and resources , body and soul, individuals and groups How one gender is superior to the other and how such a situation has arisen and reproduced.

#### **V. GENDER STUDIES AND WOMEN STUDIES**

Gender studies accommodate men. Women’s study exist to study women. Gender studies and women studies are inter disciplinary fields. Gender studies deals with the broad issue of how gender affects people, power, relationships that determine differential impact on women and men.Gender studies hold men accountable for their power, domination, supremacy [patel2002]Over the last two decades groups and individuals are concerned with gender issues likeViolence against women and children, unjust laws, decision making, house hold strategies, health, women’s movement, political participation, gender sensitive counseling.

Gender studies find it impossible to discuss women separately from society such as differences in the role of mother v father.Gender studies allows looking at gender as‘verb in terms of the interpersonal and social practices that create women and men behaviorGender studies helps in examining the unequal distribution of power.

Women studies helps in deconstructing patriarchy which is very dominant in our society. This provides justification for women .Gender studies incorporates two major strands of feminist theory .Gender study involves social behavior analysis in terms of gender.

Gender study has many different forms. Philosopher Simone de Behavior said ‘‘One is not born as woman, one becomes woman.’’

In gender studies the term gender should be used to refer to the social and cultural constructions of masculinity and femininity.

#### **VI. FEMINISM AND GENDER STUDIES**

There would have been no gender studies without feminism.In the broad sense, the term feminism refers to a set of ideas that recognize that women are faced with certain disadvantages because they are women and the belief that this should not be so. It refers to the political practice that emerges from these, a practice which is aimed at changing the situations of women who face systemic disadvantages. The term ‘broadest sense’ has been used to describe this definition because there are different types of feminism, which recognize that in the social world women suffer certain disadvantages in comparison to men. However, the different strands of feminism vary in what they understand the root cause or causes of these disadvantages to be. Some of these different strands of feminism will be examined a little later in this section. Another common feature of the various strands of feminism is that they do not hold the difference in the social positions of men and women to be based on natural factors. They do not Discrimination faced by a person because of their gender can be termed as ‘Gender Discrimination’.

The unequal treatment of girls in society contributes towards hierarchies that exist at all levels. These biases not only exist inside the homes and families but also in public institutions and other parts of the social structure. The means of these biases can be based on physical, economical, cultural, psychological etc. factors. These differences are not natural but they are socially constructed in a patriarchal society which legitimizes these practices and makes them acceptable; also, those who deviate from them are subjected to tremendous social pressure to conform. The discrimination has become part of the life cycle of a woman. It starts right at the time of conception, where the chance of being born is taken away from a many. This has lead to a female-male ratio of approximately 0.93 in India. Food and nutrition is a major concern in India, with many women receiving inadequate food and nutrition.

Getting proper health care is also a luxury for many. Many women are from a young age, conditioned to surrender to the will of their parents in all the aspects. May it be kind of education they would get or other basic facilities, lot of them get a secondary treatment. Early marriage and dowry have been issues that are yet to be uprooted from our sociological context. believe that there is anything that women have or lack that makes them inherently inferior to men, or which makes men inherently superior to women. Instead, the disparities in the social positions of men and women have arisen, over long periods of human history, due to social and cultural factors, and must also be countered through social and cultural means

#### **4.1 Example of a great lady**

Savitribai Phule was the first woman teacher in India. She was married at the age of nine, and was educated by her husband, Jyotiba Phule. Phule’s father was furious at his teaching Savitr bai, but the couple persisted. In 1848 they opened a school for girls in Pune. In 1851 they opened a school for Mang and Mahar girls and in 1853 a home for Hindu widows and their children. Savitri bai also started the Mahila Seva Mandal in 1852, an organization that was aimed at making women more aware of their rights.

### **V. GENDER DISCRIMINATION**

Discrimination faced by a person because of their gender can be termed as ‘Gender Discrimination’. The unequal treatment of girls in society contributes towards hierarchies that exist at all levels. These biases not only exist inside the homes and families but also in public institutions and other parts of the social structure. The means of these biases can be based on physical, economical, cultural, psychological etc. factors. These differences are not natural but they are socially constructed in a patriarchal society which legitimizes these practices and makes them acceptable; also, those who deviate from them are subjected to tremendous social pressure to conform. The discrimination has become part of the life cycle of a woman. It starts right at the time of conception, where the chance of being born is taken away from a many. This has lead to a female-male ratio of approximately 0.93 in India.

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facilities, lot of them get a secondary treatment. Early marriage and dowry have been issues that are yet to be uprooted from our sociological context.

## **VI. WOMEN EMPOWERMENT**

The mid 1980s saw the term empowerment becoming popular in the field of development especially in reference to women. Empowerment of woman, in its simplest form, means the redistribution of power that challenges patriarchal ideology and male dominance. It is both a process and a result of the process. Empowerment essentially entails the transformation of the structure or institutions that reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination. It is a process that enables women to gain access to and control of material as well as information resources. However, empowerment for women begins in the household with equality, autonomy and respect. Achieving equality between men and women in the family is the foundation on which empowerment in other areas is based.

## **VII. MODES OF EMPOWERMENT**

1. Training of women in vocational skills should be mandatory from secondary level education.
2. Mobilization of female workers should be done to equip women to develop independence.
3. Development of positive self-concept is critical for moving away from misconceptions in the society.
4. Women should get additional benefits of health care nutrition at all stages.
5. Village level efforts are equally important for them.

## **VIII. GENDER STEREOTYPES**

Gender stereotypes are simplistic generalizations about the gender attributes, differences, and the roles of individuals and/or groups. Stereotypes can be positive or negative, but they rarely communicate accurate information about others. Gender has appeared in religious, philosophical, and literary works for centuries. Consider the following excerpts, from ancient times to the present: § “Woman is more compassionate than man and has a greater propensity to tears... But the male... is more disposed to give assistance in danger, and is more courageous than the female”. (Aristotle, cited in Miles, 1935). “To call woman the weaker sex is a libel; it is man's injustice to woman. If by strength is meant brute strength, then, indeed, is woman less brute than man. If by strength is meant moral power, then woman is immeasurably man's superior. Has she not greater intuition, is she not more self-sacrificing, has she not greater powers of endurance, has she not greater courage? Without her, man could not be.

If nonviolence is the law of our being, the future is with woman. Who can make a more effective appeal to the heart than woman?” (Mahatma Gandhi, cited in Mind of Mahatma Gandhi, 1960) § “A man will say what he knows, a woman says what will please.” (Jean Jacques Rousseau, Emile, 1762/1955) § “Man with the head and woman with the heart; Man to command and woman to obey; all else confusion.” (Alfred, Lord Tennyson, 1842) Although the past three decades have brought a new level of awareness about the wide range of roles possible for each gender, strong beliefs about gender difference remain.

## **IX. CONCLUSION**

Gender studies recognize that gender has to be taken seriously. It is also a field that recognizes that often, within academic disciplines and also other spheres of society, the perspective that has been applied has been that of the most powerful people in society, and that this is often at the expense of less powerful people. Gender studies then exists as an important means of correcting such imbalances

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